

Ice Blacks vs HC Storm – Game 2

Another big crowd turned out at Paradise Botany for the second game of the series on Saturday night to see NZ beat Finland's HC Storm by a score of 6 - 3. The Ice Blacks again started strong and this time dominated the entire game, especially the second period.

Josh Hay opened the scoring halfway through the first period. After going back to the dressing room up 1 – 0, the Ice blacks came out firing on all cylinders. They peppered 28 shots on the Finnish goaltender in the second period and led 4 – 1 at the break, dominating the period. KC Ball, Brett Speirs, and Danny Smith all scored for NZ. Just before the second break the game took a dramatic turn when Chris Eaden broke through the Finnish defence, only to be hauled down from behind and given a rare penalty shot. Though he didn't convert, it brought the fans to the edge of their seats.

"Our second period was the best hockey we've played all year," said Jeff Bonazzo, the Ice Blacks head coach. "Everything came together for us and we really showed what we're capable of."

The Storm pulled the score back to 4 – 2 in the final period before the Ice Blacks put the game away with an astounding two goals in under a minute while down a man, killing a penalty. Brett Speirs scored his second of the game and Adam Soffer broke down the ice after grabbing the puck to score the final goal for NZ by rifling a shot over the goaltender's glove hand. In the Ice Black net, Zak Nothing performed extremely well, getting the start and turning away 32 shots on his 20th birthday.

"We have a young, fast, tough team that is hungry to win at this year's World Champs in Dunedin," said Charlie Reid, the manager of the Ice Blacks. "The guys are looking really impressive."

NZ's Ice Blacks finish the 4 game series against Finland's HC Storm with games in Queenstown on March 26th and Dunedin on March 27th. Tickets can be purchased at the door. For more information, go to www.nzicehockey.co.nz or www.iceblacks.com.

NZ Goals: Speirs (2), J Hay (1), Ball (1), Smith (1), Soffer (1)

NZ Assists: Soffer (2), (Lee), Rout (1), Challis (1), Down (1), Nicholls (1), A Hay (1)

NZ Saves: Nothing (32)

Storm Goals: Haakana (1), Yaskela (1), Viltasalo (1)

Storm Assists: Kuoppala (2), Yaskela (1), Karhu (1), Kathunen (1)

Storm Saves: Ruuhinen (48)