

Sunday 11 October 2009

The final day of the tour wasn't too much of an early start. Everyone woke up around 8am, with breakfast in the manager's room. Some of the boys had to make a real effort to ensure that their number 1s (black polo shirt, black trousers, black shoes) were dry come morning, after the antics at the pool the evening before.

Some of the team headed on an unsuccessful journey to the supermarket; unable to find any, they had to resort to the corner store across the road from the motel. The team then packed their bags, cleaned their rooms, loaded the trailers and were off to the airport.

After checking in and heading through security, the team had about an hour to kill before their mid-day flight to Sydney. It was a short 1 hour flight to Sydney. Upon arriving, the boys had lunch at various food outlets and wandered around the air port for a couple of hours. It was quite a mission heading from the domestic to the international terminal, the team spending quite a bit of time finding the right bus, no thanks to a certain Lachlan Frear!

The team said their goodbyes, as one plane was flying to Auckland and one to Christchurch, one 20 minutes after the other. Elaine even managed to shed a tear after remaining relatively composed during the presentation ceremony the night before.

After a three hour flight across the ditch, the teams arrived back in NZ. The Auckland guys were surprised to find that the stick bag had been checked through to Christchurch. Whether or not this was one last dig at the Auckland guys by Tayler Kennedy, we will never know! It was a very late night, with some of the teams not arriving home until 2am Monday morning! I can tell you that I wasn't in the sharpest mood when I showed up for work at 7am, and neither was Jonathan!

Overall the tour was a tremendous success both on and off the ice. The team bonded really well and worked hard during the small amount of ice time available to them during the camp in Christchurch. They improved their performances with each game, in particular their defensive coverage and re-grouping ability. The tour was certainly an appropriate send-off for departing Head Coach Jonathan Albright, who moves on to the Head Coach position of the Under 18 National Team programme. Elaine Clarke has also done a tremendous job with as Manager of team since 2004, and is well deserving of all the praise she receives. Although the end of an era with the departures of these two figures, the future of the Under 16 programme certainly looks bright.

Andrew Hay
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