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New Zealand Under 11 Tour Diary

By Tyler Seabrook – Shepparton Zone

Friday 29th Jan

Our team had to meet at the airport at 6.45am. I am so excited because this is my first overseas trip.

At 8.50am our plane took off. Yippee!! I watched a movie on the plane and we had eggs, sausages and potato cakes for breakfast.

When we got to Wellington it was 2.20pm local time which is 2 hours in front of Melbourne time and then we had to show the customs people our football boots to make sure they were clean.

We then met Chris our bus driver and he took us on a quick tour of Wellington, we then went to our hotel The Bay Plaza. The team then had a training session, we practiced our headers and juggling, then we played a mini match.

We got back to our hotel nearly 1 hour late for tea because the traffic was busy but the food was really nice.

Henry (Henry Navas Torres - Team Manager) took us for a team meeting. We had to write down what we had been eating and gave us a lecture on drinking lots of water.

At 9pm we finally went to bed!!!

Saturday 30th Jan

We had breakfast at 7am and at 8.15am we left to play in a tournament against the Wellington Under 12 regional representative teams. It was played on a synthetic surface and the ball moved really fast.

In the first game we lost 1-0. It was a very close game and our defence worked really hard. We won our second game 1-0. Everyone moved the ball around and played very well. Our third game was really tough. The opposition were older and much bigger than us. We started off slowly and they got a quick goal. At half time Jim (Jim Smart - Coach) told us not to give up and pass the ball and try to keep possession. Our mums started singing and dancing and that helped us to score our first goal. They were very loud and I think they put the other team off. We lost 3-1 but I think we got better in the second half.

We then went back to Wellington and had a cable car ride to the top of the city. We could

see all over Wellington and had team photos taken.

When we got back to the hotel we had a team meeting. Henry told us what a good job that we had done so far. Then we had to write down what we thought we needed to improve on. I need to pass the ball better and position myself better.

We then had dinner and the team went to the pool for a swim. After dinner my mum, David, Henry and some other mums went to the AC/DC concert. Mum got home very late!!!

Sunday 31st Jan

Today we had a 5-hour bus trip to Napier. We left Wellington at 9am and it was raining and really really windy.

The players sit in the back of the bus with Henry and the oldies sit up the front!! We stopped at Woodville for lunch and our team made up a team song. We had a quiz on the bus, I had Tinashe and Henry on my team and we came second. I knew we wouldn't win when Henry thought the longest bone in the body was his skull!!!!

We finally arrived in Napier and it was still raining. Our team then practiced signing the Australian National Anthem because on Tuesday we are singing at a traditional Maori Cultural Show in Rotorua.

We then had an early dinner and then went to an indoor training session including a mini match and practiced shooting.

Monday February 1st

Today we went to Ocean Spa and swam in the hot pools. There were 7 pools and the water was a different temperature in each pool, one pool was 38 degrees. Henry took us for a training session, we had to make a tsunami by running around in circles in the water and then we had to do push ups and sit ups. We all worked really hard.

We then went across the road to the Hogs Breath Café for an awesome lunch.

Our game against Napier City Rovers was cancelled because of the constant rain forced the closure of the ground. We were all really annoyed because we really wanted to play in the rain but the pitch was under water. David and Henry tried to find an indoor venue to play against Napier but they couldn't do it so we trained on our own.

Henry's quote of the day: "Instead of being a man of success, rather be a man of value." Albert Einstein.

Tuesday 2nd February

Man, what a day!

Today we thought it was Henry and Shelter (Tinashe's Mum) Birthdays. We found our Shelter was 40 but Henry only had his birthday because he put a fake birthday on his Facebook page! What a loser! But the funny thing is Henry started getting birthday

messages from his friends as well.

We left Napier at 8.30am and drove 1 hour to Taupo. Chris let us stop at Taupo Bungy so that David, Henry and my mum could bungy. They jumped 47 metres over the Waikato River. I think that they were all brave and I told mum that she was cool!

We all got back on the bus and went to the Huka Falls Jet Boat rides. On my boat there were 14 people from our tour and our driver, Steve, was the best. He told the mums that they wouldn't get wet but when he did 360's we all got drenched. The boat went really close to the rock faces and trees. We saw the Huka Falls and Steve told us that over 1 million people visit there every year, it was one of the most awesome thing I have ever done.

After a quick lunch we got back on the bus and drove for 1 hour to Rotorua. We went up a huge mountain in a gondola and then we came back down on a 1.5 km luge track. It was so good and coach Jim Smart was heard saying 'Eat my dust!' as he zoomed past us. A few of us then went to the Sky Swing. We were pulled up by a cable and then released at 150 km/h in 2 seconds.

Back on the bus to our hotel we got picked up to go to the Tamaki Maori Village for the cultural dinner and show. Henry was our chief and he had to accept a peace offering. After that we experienced a traditional welcome dance and then entered their traditional village. After the cultural show we had a traditionally prepared dinner, called a Hangi, which is cooked for 3-4 hours underground on hot volcanic rocks. It was really yummy. After dinner we had the closing ceremony and our team was given permission to sing the Australian National Anthem. We did such a good job that they allowed us to perform the Haka with the Maori tour guides. Back at the bus, Chief Henry had to sing a song. It was really bad to we helped him by singing our theme song. Our driver said we bad to but I think that's only because Melbourne Victory smashed Wellington a few days earlier.

Back to the hotel and bed at last!

Wednesday 3rd February

From our hotel rooms we could see the bubbling that is cause by volcanoes. It looked awesome but smelled disgusting.

We then left Rotorua and then went to the Agrodome. This was like an extreme sport fun park. There was bungy jumping, sprint boats, a freefall air ride and a sick ride called the Swoop. My favourite thing was when mum and I went in the sprint boat and the driver lined up coach Jim up from the side and sprayed him with water. Jim got drenched and then threatened to bench me for the afternoon game. We then left the Agrodome and went to the Zorb which are hug plastic balls that you climb inside and they put water inside it and rolled us down a hill. It was awesome!

We then stopped for lunch and headed to our game against the Waikato Bay of Plenty Development Squad. We tried our hardest but we lost 4-1. I think we played better than the scored showed and some players were carrying some small injuries. The other teams parents put on a BBQ tea for us after the game and they were all very friendly people. Tinashe and his mum Shelter had a very special visitor come to see them. Shelter jumped out of the bus and gave her friend such a big hug that she nearly knocked her over. It was nice.

Quote of the day – “Listen to advice and accept instructions and in the end you will be wise.”

Thursday 4th February

We left Hamilton and went to Auckland where we arrived at Rainbow’s End, New Zealand’s largest theme park. There was heaps of things to do including log rides, rollercoasters, pirate ships ride and others. It was the best time so far; everyone went on the rides, even my granny!! The bad part of the day was gone Henry and David’s money got stolen.

In the afternoon we played against the Wynton Rufer Soccer School of Excellence, which is run by Wynton Rufer who was a famous New Zealand football player who was awarded the Oceania Player of the Century Award. The team we played had just come back from Switzerland. The kids were a bit bigger than us and they won 6-0. The score was really bad, they got some lucky goals and we were a bit tired by the second half. As the main game we played some 5 a side games with the other team. We mixed the teams up a bit and it was really fun.

Finally at 7pm we checked into our hotel and had a really nice tea.

Friday 5th February

At 10am we were on the bus and headed to the Waiwera Hot Mineral Pools. This place was great. They had heaps of pools and they were all warm. The coldest pool was 31 degrees and the hottest was 48. It was so hot no one could get in. There was also heaps of different waterslides. I was racing Michael’s dad Mario on the Speed Slide but he was cheating.

At 1:30pm we went to the shopping centre for lunch and free time. I had a 45 minute Chinese Massage. It was fantastic.

Over the road from the shopping centre was where our last game of the tour was about to take place. It was right next to the North Auckland Stadium where the 2011 Rugby World Cup will be played. We played an Auckland club side called United 1. They were about the same size as us and we played a close game but we lost 3-1 in a close game. The pitch was an awesome new synthetic surface. We did not keep possession of the ball and we missed a couple of goals.

I think our team as gotten a little bit better with each game and I don’t think we have played as bad as the scores have shown. I have learnt a few new things and I have lots of ideas on what I need to improve on.

When we got back to the hotel we got changed and headed to a Chinese restaurant for tea. On the way my crazy mum, Henry and Samuel Di Natale went on the Sky Screamer. It is like a backwards bungy jump. They got strapped into a seat and then a big bungy rope flings them from the ground into the air at about 200 kph. Henry looked scared, Samuel screamed and mum laughed all the way.

After tea the team had a pajama party in Lucas and Jenni’s room.

Tomorrow we go home and I have had an awesome time but it will be nice to sleep in my own bed on Saturday night.

Saturday 6th February

Another early day. 8.45am we went across the road to visit the Sky Tower, the tallest structure in the Southern Hemisphere. We left our hotel at 10am and head to the airport to fly home.

This trip has been one of the best things that I have ever done. I have made 10 new friends and teammates. I didn't know anyone when we left on this trip but all the kids and mums and dads were really nice.

We have played some good and some bad football and Jim has taught me lots of new things. David has tried hard to get us to the bus on time to go to and from each activity but we are still not good at that!! Henry has been the person who motivated us, got us into trouble with our mums and found a quote of the day from a new local lady that he met each day.

Thank you to:

Chris Hannah – our very patient bus driver.

Jim Smart – for his coaching and singing (“Jimmy, Where’s You’re Trousers?”)

David Watts – for trying to keep us organized.

Henry Navas Torres - for just being Henry.

And last but not least, our Support Crew. You are awesome!

GO THE CHIHUAHUAS!!!!

By Tyler Seabrook – AFS Shepparton