



Hockey Thunder Bay.com

Orientation camp wrap-up



The competing players salute the fans of a sold-out Pengrowth Saddledome following the completion of the Red-White scrimmage wrapping up the Canadian men's Olympic hockey orientation camp in Calgary. Photos: Bruce Rakoczy



Marc Staal (#18, red) and Patrick Sharp (#10, white) look up at the play from behind the net at the Red-White scrimmage.

CALGARY – As the Canadian men's Olympic hockey orientation camp concluded this week in Calgary there is little doubt that this country has the talent to ice a more than competitive squad at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

The following is a wrap-up of some of the highlights of the event's marquee attraction, the Red-White inter-squad match-up staged Aug. 27.

OH CANADA: Only in Canada can you stuff 19,289 fans into a jam-packed Pengrowth Saddledome in Calgary for a so-called scrimmage.

That was exactly the case as it was a sold-out crowd for the contest.

The all-Canadian affair had a rousing beginning with the throng standing as one and signing the national anthem.

The crowd cheered loudly throughout the event with only the maligned Dany Heatley drawing the ire of those in attendance being booed mercilessly in his home town every time he touched the puck.

LOCAL COMBINATIONS: The forward lines and defensive pairings used by the Team Canada coaching staff remained pretty much in tact throughout the week.

Eric Staal skated with Jason Spezza and Corey Perry on the white squad while Patrick Sharp teamed up with Ryan Smyth and Vincent Lecavalier.

The red side featured Jordan Staal with Shane Doan and Patrick Marleau, who was arguably the best player on the ice in the high-paced scrimmage.

On defence Chris Pronger and Dan Boyle teamed up as did Duncan Keith with Mike Green.

Marc Staal played the contest with Francois Beauchemin.

ONE FOR RICHARDS: Kenora's Mike Richards was the only one of the area players to record a point in the 3-2 shootout victory by Team Red. He set-up Philadelphia Flyers line mate Jeff Carter for the Red's opening tally.

Jordan Staal had two quality chances to score hitting the goal post against Martin Brodeur in the opening frame and was then robbed by a quick glove save by Columbus Blue Jackets netminder Steve Mason in the third period.

GOALTENDERS SHINE: If the first period of the contest was any indication Team Canada's goaltending won't be an issue.

Robert Luongo of the Vancouver Canucks and Martin Brodeur of the New Jersey Devils took turns dazzling the Alberta faithful with numerous outstanding saves.

Among the stops was Luongo stoning Kenora's Mike Richards with a cross crease pad save early on while Brodeur slid across to thwart a sure assist for Eric Staal who fed Jason Spezza for a great opportunity.

Richards was also thwarted Luongo with a big early save as the Canucks goalkeeper was stellar turning aside all 17 shots he faced.

BIG BUCKS: Adding up the numbers of the 46 players invited to the orientation camp it's a pretty substantial salary that is being paid out.

Factoring in just the 2009-10 wages for these players they will be paid an incredible \$222,467,000 U.S. That's an average salary of just over \$4.8 million per player.

Leading the way was Vincent Lecavalier who will pull in \$10 million U.S. this season while hard-hitting Milan Lucic of the Boston Bruins was the low man on the pay scale making \$685,000 this upcoming campaign.

Considering the fact that Hockey Canada stepped up to pay the complete insurance costs of all the invitees there is no doubt their bill in this matter was a hefty one.

LOCAL FLAVOUR: While the Red-White scrimmage featured plenty of area flavour on the ice there was also some local fan support enjoying the game.

Among those watching was Thunder Bay's Haley Irwin, a current member of the Canadian national women's team.

Also in attendance was Lakehead native Allan Maki in his capacity as a sports reporter for The Globe & Mail as well as fans Andrew MacKenzie of Terrace Bay and Jessica Fitzpatrick of Thunder Bay.

THIS AND THAT: Over 170 media members were accredited for the four-day event from coast-to-coast including all avenues from print, television, radio and online outlets ...Every forward dressed took part in the shootout, which was won 6-2 by Team Red...None of the local forwards managed to score with Eric Staal coming the closest ringing his chance off the goal post...Shots on goal favoured the Red side 42-22 in regulation.



Marc Staal, #18 red, defends Sidney Crosby