

International Mounted Games Exchange Report 2013 Guelph, Ontario

First and foremost, I would like to give a big note of thanks to the organizers of our trip and competition. I'm sure that, along with the heart attacks and scrambling, there were a lot of sleepless nights and tape-on-the-eyelids going on. It really means a lot to us to have this opportunity, because some time in the future, that might be me too. But for this year, I was one of the lucky ones who were able to experience it.

Training Camp- Breslau, Ontario

On August 6th, everyone from Team Canada really met each other for the first time. Though it started out as quiet and reserved, our practices (at Dawn Peace's or Old Orchard Farm) and shopping trip together helped us to bond and we shared lots of laughs the whole way through. We had an awesome time at Dawn Peace's who is firstly my coach, but also our host for the camp. But quickly and surely, the tour approached, and soon, we packed up and left for the Holiday Inn Yorkdale Hotel to begin our adventure.

Touring Ontario

Our tour took place in Ontario from August 9th-25th. We started at the hotel, where we first met the Australian and Great Britain teams, followed by the USA team later on. At the first meeting, it was really cool to see the Canadian team, not sitting at their own table, but everyone in a different spot! It was amazing to see how well our team weaved our way in with the others. In the end, I believe that this year, all the kids got along really well on the tour and really fast. During the trip, we had a ton of amazing opportunities; there was never a dull moment. We visited universities and colleges, markets and popular cities. We were also on boats a lot, should it be in Algonquin (I had a chance to taste the water outside the canoe), Niagara Falls for the Maid of the Mist, The Thousand Islands cruise, or even at the African Lion Safari! Along with the latter, we visited theme parks and monuments such as Canada's Wonderland and the sound and light show at the Parliament Building. I ended up discovering a lot about my own province that I never thought I would.

Billets

The billet families were definitely a first time experience for me. But I can't thank those families enough for providing me with an experience that turned me from nervous and questioning to loving every minute of my stay. Lesley, Louise and Jill from SLOV gave me my best first experience. Daina in COR made us right at home and like a family. And the Dave, Ann, Danielle and Jacquie from WOR, reminded me of all the friends I have in my very own region. I have had a great time billeting with families and realizing how important they are to our trip and us.

The competition- Fergus Fairgrounds

The competition, though only a small part, was something special. The IMGE and the National Master's competition took place at the same time, on the same grounds. I don't know how, but forty games with at least 40 ponies participated that day and it was amazing to be in and to watch. The races were exciting, speedy and action packed! The ponies were put together in fairly even teams and with the pony switch-ups, we were always kept on our toes. In the hours that we played, every minute we spent on the field, I had the time of my life and I know that Team Canada gave it all, taking risks that paid off or didn't pay off, and even learning a little more about each other, including our competence at our own sport in the game: Canadian. In the end, Australia took first, followed by Great Britain, the USA and then Canada.

Saying goodbye

As I'm sure everyone who has done the IMGE knows, the hardest part about the tour is the end. Saying goodbye to my newfound friends, my extended family, I never could have imagined how much it would mean. But now I know that this once in a lifetime experience has left me with friends around the world, and memories to cherish from an amazing adventure!

With many thanks and memories,

Alyssa Yu, Team Canada