



ALBERTA SOCCER ASSOCIATION

The Governing Body of Soccer in Alberta

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Whitecaps FC – High Performance Player Week Vancouver, BC Sunday November 4-8, 2019

Day 1

The Alberta Academy Centre landed in Vancouver for the 2019 HPP Combine alongside BC High Performance and two squads comprised of talented players from Provincial Academy Centres including Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

The boys enjoyed a team training session lead by Ewan Fisher (Alberta Head Coach), Chris Lourenco (Manitoba technical Director) and Bart Choufour (Pre-MLS Head Coach). The players worked on attacking principles in preparation for the week ahead and there was an intensity to the training session which pleased the coaches.

The day finished with a welcoming presentation and orientation. The boys enjoyed dinner and rest before early lights out after the long day of travelling and training.

Day 2

Following breakfast, the Boys met for a mobility session lead by Whitecaps staff. Following this, the players participated in a workshop with Craig Dalrymple (Whitecaps Academy Director). The presentation was focused on the different traits that the club looks for in a Whitecaps player and some key motivational points on making the most of an opportunity which was well received by the boys.

After a pre-game meeting, the team stepped on to the field to play against a very strong BC Soccer squad. Both teams showing attacking and defensive qualities in the first half as the game ebbed and flowed. The second half saw the boys up the tempo, dominate possession and win the ball high in the opponents half. Eventually, the relentless pressure resulted in a goal as Matteo Samori (2006 born underage player) weaved his way inside from the right wing position and hit a powerful shot from the edge of the box low in the corner. The whole team were playing exceptionally well at this point and Sydney Wathuta scored a fantastic volley from the edge of the box following some great combination play in the wide area from Will Antoniuk, Matteo and Hudson Bergdoll.

The defense and goalkeepers also played their collective part in a quality team performance and remained composed under pressure against a skilled BC group of players.



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After dinner, we analysed the game on video. We highlighted areas we did well and some things we wanted to improve on for Wednesday's game.

Day 3

On day 3 the boys came up against a strong Provincial Academy Centre showcase team consisting of the best players from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, PEI, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

In the first half we were excellent out of possession. The boys executed high press tactics really well and dominated inside the opponents half. Wyatt Davies, Li Ramaholison, Niko Myroniuk and Will Antoniuk all played key roles in the half. The players got their reward when Niko Myroniuk struck a shot which the keeper saved with Brennen Fuerst quick to react on the rebound and score. The disappointing aspect to the first half was the lack of composure in front of goal. We created a lot of opportunities but could not add to the goal tally.

During the second half, the intensity dropped a little and we created less chances. However, we scored a great goal as Griffin Cress timed his run into the box to receive a perfectly weighted pass from Myroniuk and finished low in the corner. Just the composure in front of goal the team needed. Nolan Sowell pulled off a couple of great saves in the second half as well. Another good team performance with plenty to build on for the third match.

During the evening the players had a fun team activity lead by Bart Choufour. We then had our video analysis meeting of the second game. We were looking to become more unpredictable in the final 1/3rd for the next game, particularly in our ability to break lines in central areas created through timely movement and rhythm changes.

Day 4

The boys had a College Transition Workshop in the morning with the Whitecaps Transition manager Ryan Clark. His role is to connect our Academy players with College/University schools and is looking to implement his strategy with our Academy Centre.

We played against another Canada Whitecaps Academy Centre showcase team and the boys tried to implement the key things we were looking for in this game. The ideas were right, the final pass or shot execution let the boys down at times. Finn Linder and Victor Akoum were immense defensively reading danger, denying space and intercepting to win possession back on many occasions. Sydney Wathuta eventually won and scored a second half penalty which was the only goal of the game. Sawyer Hiebert pulled off a couple of cracking saves.



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It proved to be a good test for the boys and the coaches were delighted to see the boys implement more creativity in the final third despite not scoring more goals.

In the evening, the Boys were given a presentation by Bart Choufour and then staff announced to the players who would make the Game of Distinction against the Whitecaps Academy the following day. Alberta would have 9 players selected for this game. The players not playing in the game of distinction would look to impress in a training session with the U15 and U17 Academy staff at the Whitecaps training facility beforehand.

Day 5

The Alberta boys not playing in the game of distinction enjoyed a quality training session and their impact on the session was noted by staff. The players playing against the Whitecaps Academy 04/05 team excelled in this environment. Matteo, Brennen and Victor all scoring quality goals with every player playing in this match making the Alberta coaching staff proud.

By late afternoon, it was time to fly back to Calgary after a hugely rewarding week for the players. It should be noted that the boys never conceded a goal from open play all week. Winning is an important part of development and the boys found a way to win games while having a style of play in line with the Whitecaps FC game model.

Alberta South Academy Head Coach Ewan Fisher had this to say about the week, "The players who were here last year have improved significantly over the past year. In addition, we have added some talented new players to our Centre who have made a big impact in our environment. The players were motivated to showcase themselves in Vancouver and every player in the squad contributed to influence each training session and game. Overall, a successful week with plenty to build on we look to continually better ourselves. A big thank you to the players and families for their commitment and to the coaching family in Alberta for their hard work".