SAASTA Stars Official Basketball Diary

Sydney – 10th - 13th December 2012

Day 1:

We all arrived at the Adelaide airport, with everyone looking anxious and some even quite nervous, particularly the parents. For most of the students, this would be a first time to Sydney and the excitement was building, as everyone grabbed their boarding passes and headed to the gate. The flight was very relaxing, with students all laughing and getting to know one another.

We arrived in Sydney and were met by a member of the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence staff, who drove us to NCIE and helped check us in. After being inducted into the rules and regulations of the centre, we had some free time to view this magnificent centre and enjoy all it had to offer.

The Eora Sports, Arts and Recreation Centre features:

- Fully equipped cardio and weights rooms
- Dance and group fitness studio
- 25m outdoor heated pool
- Multi-purpose outdoor courts
- Sports Stadium
- Sports Field
- Ropes course
- Arts and crafts room
- Activity and meeting room
- IT Lab
- Crèche

Dinner arrived and we all met in the food court with the other teams to have a meal together. This was a good opportunity to mingle, as well as scope out the opposition and see who looked good. NT certainly was highly regarded, but our boys and girls didn’t seem too fazed and couldn’t wait to get the games started.

Lights out was 10pm at the Centre, so we had a quick meeting and discussed the next couple of days and then headed to bed. The boys and girls were separated from each other, but tried to stay up yarning all night of course, which was quickly squashed by the adults because we all needed our beauty sleep. Some a little more than others as I couldn’t get much sleep the first night due to some very loud rumblings and the sound of what can only be described as a pack of elephants running through our room; it was until I looked up that I discovered it was only my roommate, Mr Nathaniel Jay Agius and his snoring.

Day 2:

7am was breakfast and the students all arrived on time, in their uniforms and eating breakfast. The games started and everyone was into it and looking ready to play. It was a long day, as the last game was played at 3pm, with SAASTA remaining undefeated.

We managed to hire the NCIE bus for the night and I drove everyone to Darling Harbour for a meal and sightseeing. The students received a surprise, when AFL legend and SAASTA Ambassador Michael
O’Loughlin arrived to have a meal with them, which was great for all and the group really appreciate Mickey O giving us his time. After a tour of Darling Harbour we eventually found our way onto the Sydney Harbour Bridge and down to Luna Park. The students were all pretty excited and taken heaps of photos of the bridge, Luna Park and of course the Opera House. I’m not entirely sure but I think there were just many selfies taken as there was of some of Australia’s iconic landmarks.

As 9pm approached, we had to get back to the Centre for bed to prepare for the next days games. Mr Agius then explained that he knew his way back to NCIE from Luna Park, but somehow we still ended up lost. I guess he missed a turn in there somewhere...

Day 3:

Day two of play began with Team SAASTA winning quite comfortably both of their games, which allowed the coaches to mix up and experiment with their line ups. Everyone looked to be having a good time and really getting along and bonding with each other.

That afternoon we had some spare time and we decided that we would catch the public transport and head to Bondi Beach for a visit and meal. Arriving at Bondi was met with excitement from everyone and we managed to even get the chance to meet and hang out with the Bondi Rescue crew. Trevor Wanganneen showed some brilliance with his backflips from the walkway, which was very impressive. Another big day, as we headed back to the Centre no one appeared tired and instead were keen to hang out longer but we had to make sure it was straight to bed and up early for the finals.

Day 4:

The finals began with Team SAASTA winning our way through to the Grand Finale for both the girls and boys. Everyone was playing so well, considering they were all playing together for the first time! Both the Boys and Girls games were very tense and edge of your seat games. The boys game went down to the wire before they eventually rallied for a 5 point win while the girls had a tough time for 90% of the game, but pulled away to record a 15 point victory.

The last night was a lot of fun with all the teams getting together; there was a touch football game going, groups gathering for a yarn and some dancing. That was until the dynamic duo of Clarry Garlett and Trevor Wanganneen spoiled the NT girls dancing and decided they had better moves. This stunt was very funny and won them some maccas the next day.

Overall, the week was a great success and the students all learnt a great deal from each other. We would like to thank NCIE and Basketball Australia for inviting us to Sydney and thank all involved who made this trip possible.

Big acknowledgment and appreciation goes to Jodie Wanganneen for all her efforts and team management responsibilities and looking after the group, as well as Nathan Agius and Paul Vandenbergh.

Pauly Vandenbergh

SAASTA Stars Squad Coach

Below are the comments from all the students that participated.
Dylan Wanganeen - enjoyed the chance to play basketball in Sydney with SAASTA mob. Both teams got on well considering we were from different schools/communities.

Jordan Wanganeen - was a great opportunity to get away and play ball, but wish the tournament was stronger and better run. Overall I enjoyed myself and the site seeing we got to do. Made new friends from SA as well as NT. It was an experience I would happily do again. I thought the SAASTA teams were very well organised and looked good in their uniforms.

Trevor Wanganeen - I made friends and a great time in Sydney. If I ever get the chance I would do it again. GO SAASTA!!

Nekia Wilson - it was a great experience; wish we stayed longer! We had a lot of fun! Both the SAASTA teams got on well and supported each other over the few days in Sydney. Hope to do it again.

Jasmine Trevorrow - it was great experience, I enjoyed myself. Staying with the SAASTA group was fun, great group of people. The trip was excellent and I'll remember it forever....

Shantelle Kennedy - I really enjoyed the trip. It was a good experience and I have learnt and developed more skills about myself. It was good to communicate and socialise with my team mates but it was also cool to meet new people.

Adele Kennedy - The trip to Sydney was a good experience for me. I had a really good time meeting other people and getting to know them. Both SAASTA (girls and boys) teams were awesome.

Shanice Shevallis - Coming to Sydney was good fun and a good experience for me. I got to play the game I love.... It was interesting meeting new people. Overall I had a good time and if I could do it again I would.

Josh Pitson - It was a good experience playing basketball against other teams from around Australia. The fact that we got to have a look around Sydney was lots of fun too.

Bradley Oats - I had a good time in Sydney playing basketball. It was good to get to know and mix with other people from around Australia. I enjoyed looking around Sydney and would love to do it again.

Billy-Jo Martin - Sydney was a great trip and a good experience! Meeting the other boys and hanging out with everyone was good and hopefully we get the chance to do it again. Team SAASTA... winners!!

Brad Halls - going over to Sydney has helped me develop my playing / communication skills both on and off the court. It was also good meeting new people and learning new things about Aboriginal culture. I really enjoyed looking around Sydney.

Clarry Garlett - Sydney was a great experience for me, meeting new people and looking at other cultures and land. I also had fun playing basketball and getting to know the other SAASTA students more. I wish there were more teams and games.

Kedeisha Kartinyeri - it was a really good experience for me being one of the youngest and not really done something like this before. I think I improved more on my shooting and ball skills over the
days, which is good. I also got to know the other SAASTA students really well and some of the other teams as well.