



## **2009 Canada Summer Games- Team Manitoba Male Soccer**

**Pedro Daza, Head Coach: “this training experience in Brazil has provided us all with a new perspective, valuable lessons and memories we will all carry with us for a life-time.”**

### **Daily Team Journal from Brazil:**

#### **Training Day 1: Tuesday December 30, 2008**

The boys were up bright and early at 6:30 am for the 7:00 AM breakfast. The first training session then took place from 7:45 am to 9:15 AM.

It has rained in Belo Horizonte for the past 2 weeks which made conditions at the practice field very sloppy and wet. The coaches all agreed that this session was sluggish to say the least given the heat and humidity, field conditions and jet lag. The boys had lunch followed by a technical meeting.

The second training session took place at 2:30 pm and as expected was much more productive as the rain appears to have stopped and the boys are slowly starting to adjust to the 4 hour time difference and the hot weather.

#### **Training Day 2: Wednesday December 31, 2008**

After an early breakfast the boys took the field for their second day of training. The warm up was done by Armandinho Manjate and the training session was done by Coach Pedro Daza. The field conditions were a bit better which helped quite a bit with their control. The session was intense and the boys are slowly adapting to the conditions although the heat and humidity are still; believe it or not; difficult to deal with.

The afternoon session was a more relaxed one and was done by Club Atletico Mineiro's Gustavo Cupertino . It consisted of technical drills with the ball in the club's beach soccer / sand box area. The boys enjoyed working on their bare feet and the training session ended with a soccer - volleyball competition.

Free time and dinner followed after which the boys began getting ready for the New Year's Eve Party.

Armandinho arranged to have a bus pick everyone at the complex and take us to the Club Belo Horizonte Yatch and Tennis Club which overlooks a lake. The bus trip to the party was quite interesting as just prior to leaving it started raining heavily and the boys got to experience the skills of our bus driving negotiating heavy traffic and finding a parking spot near the entrance. The party was held in a huge concert area with a main stage and several dancing areas. Our group was located in the VIP dining section which has a terrace which overlooks the lake. The attendance I would estimate to be 2,500 people all there ready to have a good time. The service was first class

with good service and plenty of security. The arrival of the New Year was greeted by an spectacular fireworks display which lasted well over half an hour. The boys were well behaved, had a great time and got to witness fancy dance moves by the coaching staff

### **Training Day 3: Thursday January 1, 2009**

Everyone got to sleep in given the evening's festivities and after lunch the boys were ready to get to work. The afternoon session took place at 2:30 PM and consisted of 15 - 20 minute run up and down a steep hill leading to the fields and a recreational / team building session in the sand box area by Mick Gale. After dinner most of the boys took part in a Video Game / Play Station 2 Soccer competition. There have no injuries and the boys are looking forward to tomorrow's activities which will include a training session by Club Atletico Mineiro coaches and an afternoon game against their youth team. The bus picked us at 3:30 am and everyone was in bed by 4:00 AM..

### **Training Day 4: Friday January 2, 2009**

After breakfast, the boys took to the field and trained for 1 1/2 hours under the direction of 2 of the Club Atletico Mineiro's Coaching Staff. The session consisted of possession and crossing and the boys put a good display for the coaches.

After lunch, everyone got ready for the training game against Club Atletico Mineiro's U15 Team. The training game was held at a field located about a 30 minute ride from the complex. Both teams travelled to the field on the club's bus. Prior to the games, the coaches decided to play 3 30 minutes periods with a 5 minute break in between. One of the Atletico's coaches acted as a referee. His performance however was not a balanced one.

The coaching staff opted to give everyone playing time and made numerous changes during the 3 periods trying a couple of different formations. The boys however were somewhat flat and did not perform to their normal level. The first 30 minute half ended with no score. The second half saw Atletico score 2 nice goals on combination passes and a third on a questionable penalty call. The third period also ended 0 - 0 . The boys gave it a good effort and had a least 2 good scoring opportunities and a couple of non calls in their penalty box which would have resulted in a different score line.

Following dinner the coaches had a technical meeting with the players to go over the game analysis. Everyone went to bed early to rest for the next game on Saturday.

### **Training Day 5: Saturday January 3, 2009**

For their first official exhibition game, the boys travelled to the town of Sete Lagos ( 7 Lakes ) located about 60 kms from Belo Horizonte to play against Inhaumense Football Club U 17 Team. The game was held at the town's stadium with a 10:30 am kick off time. The game was obviously advertised and about 100 fans witnessed the match, In attendance for the game was the town's mayor who greeted the Manitoba delegation prior to the game start.

The boys attitude and play was far better and than the previous game and this was shown on the score 4 - 2 in our favour. The scoring was opened by Club Inhaumense at 15 minutes on a combination passing play. Manitoba tied it 5 minutes later on a Sean Dong header off a Kyle Fernandes cross. The boys went ahead in the 30th minute on a Ben Allen goal after a nice through ball on the right side by Andrew Benga. The first half ended 2 - 1. In the second half Club

Inhaumense equilized after a scramble in our box however Manitoba once again went in front on a Kyle Fernandes penalty shot. Manitoba`s 4th goal came 5 minutes before the game`s end from a header by Andre Silva, a guest player from Ontario. The games performed close to their normal level and had a great deal of the possession as well as scoring chances during the game.

After the match, the Club Inhaumense held a reception lunch for the Manitoba delegation at their club house. The boys certainly appreciated the hospitality and many had their photos taken with the local kids.

Following the lunch reception, the bus took everyone to Belo Horizonte`s Del Rey Shopping Centre for an afternoon of shopping. Scheduled for tomorrow Sunday is a morning training session with one of Club Atletico Mineiro`s coaching staff. In the afternoon, they will do some sightseeing and visit the Cruzeiro Soccer Stadium.

### **Training Day 6: Sunday January 4, 2009**

Following breakfast and prior to their morning training session, the boys got to tour Atletico's (Professional Team) training headquarters and hotel located within Cidade de Galo's complex. The professional players are due to check in tomorrow following the Christmas break to begin their pre-season training.

Everyone is looking forward to seeing them and attend their training sessions. The morning's training session on transition was run by Armandinho Manjate. Following the training session, the boys had a quick lunch and then everyone got ready for the visit to Club Atletico's recreational complex. Initially they were supposed to do a short city tour including a visit to the Cruzeiro stadium, however, our hosts opted to take the boys to the recreation complex for an afternoon of swimming. The complex is located adjacent to the main highway and a private airfield. It has several outdoor swimming pools, futsal fields, restaurant, picnic and green areas as well as shop specializing in Atletico's merchandise. The club is exclusive to club members and supporters. Everyone had a great time swimming and relaxing after an intensive week of training.

Following dinner at the training complex the boys had a team meeting at auditorium with the coaching staff to assess and discuss the week in general.

Tomorrow's activities include a training session in the morning and the team's second official game against Cruzeiro.

### **Training Day 7: Monday January 5, 2009**

The morning training's session ran by Atletico's Gustavo Cupertino was focused on shooting and finishing. As mentioned earlier, it has rained everyday since we got to Belo Horizonte and today was no exception. We had light rain in the morning, a slight break around noon and then a constant rain the rest of the day.

Our game against Club Cruzeiro's U 17 Youth team was scheduled for 3:00 pm at their Training Complex about 15 minutes away however it did not get underway until 3:30 PM as their U15 Team was practicing and using their artificial turf field. For this game we were shorthanded as both Kyle Nikkel and Graeme Holford did not have medical clearance from the Club 's medical staff due to minor muscle strains. The rest of the boys however had a strong and respectful showing against a very strong and physically impressive Cruzeiro side. The final score was 4 - 2 in favour of Cruzeiro. The first half ended 1 - 0 for Cruzeiro after a 34th minute direct free kick. The boys competed hard and held their own considering the field conditions and the level of the opposition. Cruzeiro went up 2 - 0 at the 4th minute of the second half on a nice combination passing and through ball on the left side. Hassan Kamar put Manitoba on the scoreboard with a nice header off a free kick from

Andrew Benga. Following this goal, the boys began to pressure the Cruzeiro defense however, a quick counter attack after a Manitoba corner resulted in Cruzeiro's 3rd goal at the 24th minute mark. A questionable offside not called by the referee made the score 4 - 1 for Cruzeiro however the boys continued to fight hard and were rewarded with their second goal on free kick from Andrew Benga on the 40th minute. Following the game, the boys headed back to Atletico's complex for a quick shower and then dinner. After dinner the boys relaxed by watching a movie at the auditorium. Tomorrow's activities include Futsal training in the morning and a Futsal game in the afternoon against Atletico.

### **Training Day 8: Tuesday, January 6, 2009**

After breakfast everyone boarded the team bus and headed to Clube Recreativo Mineiro located in down town Belo Horizonte. This complex is a bit smaller than the one the boys swam at, however it has an indoor Futsal Field along with 2 adult swimming pools, a kid's pool, lounge areas, pool tables, table tennis, fitness center, restaurant and daycare. The boys had an introductory session of Brazilian Futsal ran by Atletico's Gustavo Cupertino, followed by some free time to relax prior to a buffet lunch at the club. After lunch, we were all taken to the Atletico's Pro Shop where they got to purchase team jerseys, apparel and souvenirs. One interesting note is that today is the first day it did not rain.

After returning to the Club Recreativo, the boys got ready for their Futsal match against Atletico Mineiro's U 17 Futsal Team. This team is made up of 15 and 16 years old players who only play Futsal as opposed to normal 11 v 11 soccer. The game is played with 4 field players plus the goalie on surface slightly bigger than the one at Skylight Complex in East St. Paul for comparison. The coaches prior to the game agreed on playing 3 20 minute games. Pedro then opted to split the boys up in to 3 teams to allow them playing time. As expected the level of play demonstrated by Club Atletico was very impressive with superb ball control, skills and quickness. Club Atletico won all 3 games with scores of 4 - 1, 4 - 0 and 4 - 0. Manitoba's goal was scored by Ben Allen. The boys again competed hard and gained valuable experience. After the game, the boys returned to Cidade de Galo just in time for dinner. In the evening the boys ordered pizza before turning in.

### **Training Day 9: Wednesday January 7, 2009**

Following breakfast, the boys got ready for the morning training session. The warm up was done by Mick and consisted of fun physical work in the sand box. The field training session was conducted by Armandinho and consisted of dribbling, passing and shooting drills. It did not rain for the second day in a row thus field conditions, yet not ideal, were better than in previous sessions. After a quick shower, everybody boarded the Atletico Bus and headed for a tour of the Mineirao, the State owned stadium used by both Atletico Mineiro and Cruzeiro Soccer Clubs. The boys learned about the history of the stadium and got to visit the change rooms, chapel and warm up areas. The highlight of the tour was getting to walk out the player's tunnel on to the field. The stadium is used exclusively for soccer and seats 75,000 spectators. The stadium will be fully refurbished as Belo Horizonte will be one of the host cities for the 2014 World Cup scheduled for Brazil.

After lunch the boys had another training session in the sand which consisted of a short Soccer tennis/volleyball tournament. For this tournament the boys were divided into 7 teams of three (16 Manitoba players and 5 Ontario players) based on their room assignments. Coach Pedro Daza, Carlos Hidalgo Mazzei and Jorge Barahona Sr. made up team No. 8 and despite their lack of fitness manage to make it to the final. In the final, they met Team Scotland (Gareth, Shea and

Hassan) who came up on top. After supper, the boys had some down time to relax and do homework while the coaching staff worked on player evaluations. Tomorrow's activities include a morning training session followed by a visit to the Professional Team's training area to watch their practice and meet some of the players.

### **Training Day 10: Thursday January 8, 2009**

Following breakfast the boys had their regular morning training session this time by Armandinho Manjate. After the session everyone had the opportunity to watch the professional team practice. Once the practice was done, the boys got to meet some of the players and get their pictures taken with them. The highlight of the visit was meeting Atletico Mineiro Head Coach Emerson Leao, former Brazilian International Goal Keeper (Mexico 1970 back up to Gilmar and West Germany 1974 starting keeper). After lunch the boys had their rest prior to the afternoon game against Atletico's U17 Team.

Kick off time was at 3:30 PM. Atletico's team was stronger than Cruzeiro and includes four U17 National team players. The boys played a great tactical first half, holding their own and trailed 0 - 1 after 40 minutes. Atletico scored 3 unanswered goals in the second half as they were finally able to break our strong defensive play. The boys fought hard something which was appreciated by Atletico's Coaching Staff who mentioned that their game against us was the toughest one against any international team in a while. The Atletico coaching Staff invited 8 of our players to join their Friday Training session.

### **Training Day 11: Friday January 9, 2009**

Training session was fairly light as the boys prepared for their return trip to Canada. 8 of our boys were lucky enough to train with the U 17 Professional Atletico Mineiro Team an experience they will remember for a long time. They depart Belo Horizonte airport at 4:10 p.m. Brazil time for Sao Paulo and will arrive in Canada on January 10<sup>th</sup> (first group at 10:00 a.m. AC 8459) with two smaller group arriving early in the afternoon.