

Going for Gold in Sochi



By David Pietrangelo

Sitting in the top five in the overall medal standings, there was only one left to hand out on an early evening hockey game in Sochi.

Head to toe in Canada gear, I boarded the hotel shuttle to Olympic Park with my family and our new good friends from all over Canada.

The arena was buzzing with fans, it felt different being there for a game of that magnitude; I think we were all nervous but excited at the same time.

The opening ten minutes were tightly contested, but once Jonathan Toews tipped in the first goal of the game past Henrik Lundqvist, a burst of relief and excitement washed over the Bolshoy Arena and its Canadian fans.

Up in the stands we cheered, high fived the Toews family and chanted 'Go, Canada Go!'

Leave it up to Sidney Crosby to lift the country on his shoulders and make an amazing defensive play, score on a breakaway, and put Canada ahead 2-0 late in the 2nd period. Once the 3rd came around, the amazing play by the defense continued, goalie Carey Price shut the door on the Swedes, and Chris Kunitz's goal delivered the final blow for a 3-0 Canadian lead.

In the moments leading up to the game's final buzzer the arena erupted with more 'Go, Canada, Go' chants, the players hugged on the bench, and friends and family grabbed their cameras, and each other, in anticipation.

When the game clock finally read zero, I jumped in the the air and cheered my loudest as I hugged my parents and girlfriend in one of the proudest moments of our lives. Team Canada, and Alex, had won an Olympic gold medal in hockey, one of the most incredible feats any athlete can ever accomplish.

The players celebrated with their teammates and coaches until they were all presented with the medals and the Canadian anthem was sung around the arena.

After what was sure to be quite the celebration in the locker room, the players came out one by one to loud cheers from family and friends. Once Alex emerged, we all exchanged hugs and congratulations while we marveled in what had just happened moments ago.

My proud parents took turns holding and wearing the gold medal with tears in their eyes. When I had the chance to do the same, it was hard not to have an emotional reaction as well. The medal is surprisingly heavy and was beautifully designed.

After about an hour of celebrations with Alex, we departed for our hotel and he went with his teammates to continue their party at the Athletes Village.

It's hard to describe what it felt like to be there for the Olympics and the gold medal hockey game. What I can say though, is that I had an amazing time experiencing the spectacle that is the Winter Olympics.

I was lucky enough to experience it with the people I love and made many new friends along the way. I want to thank everyone that sent all their best wishes over the last few weeks to my family and my brother. Your support and enthusiasm is greatly appreciated. I also want to thank and congratulate my brother Alex, without him I wouldn't be able to even dream of the amazing stories I have from the last couple of weeks.

I very proud of him and wish him all the best as his hockey career continues.