



## **U17 MEN'S TEAM SELECTED FOR UK TOURNEY**

Canada's U17 men's team has been selected for the Wellington College tournament in the UK over the Easter holidays in late March and early April.

An extensive series of camps, a tour to the USA and a domestic tour were used to select the final group of athletes that will participate at the Wellington event, that replaces the Millfield Tournament that Canada had previously attended on an annual basis.

Canada will play three games at Wellington College event against Portugal, Italy and Scotland

The U17 team will depart for Wales on March 26th to have a one week preparation camp, and then will move on to Wellington College located 50 kms south west of London.

Head Coach Jim Delaney comments that, "This year there was an attempt to broaden the net and give more athletes an opportunity to experience the elite level of rugby in our country and begin to build stronger relationships with the provinces."

The work of Coach Delaney and his team in this area is evident in the broad range of representation in this tour party. The selections for the Wellington Tournament include players from Manitoba, Alberta, Quebec and Saskatchewan.

"The process for this final selection has been some of the most detailed ever for this team. We started the selection process back in August of 2009 at Nationals and at Canada games and 65 athletes from all over Canada were chosen to trail in November by the Canada U17 staff. Input was also received from the provincial unions and academies. The process then included two week long events - Santa Barbara and the recent BC tour were the athletes had an opportunity to showcase their talents"

The tour of California saw an initial tour party of 28 players play a two game series against the United States High School All-Americans (U18's). That tour played a valuable part of the selection process, and allowed Coach Delaney and his staff to take their observations into their developmental team's tour of British Columbia.

"The BC tour was an opportunity to invite provincial coaches to attend and work with the athletes and see firsthand the techniques and how elite rugby is managed at this age group and it was another opportunity to talk to coaches from around the province to get their input on the process and the initiatives we have implemented this year"

Delaney has been consistent in his feelings that this year's selection process has been the most collegial and collaborative in the program's history. The end result has produced a set of athletes that have begun to experience the high performance pathways that Canada's stars of tomorrow will need to be competitive in the international arena.

I'm happy with the process and I was impressed with all 65 of the athletes at the 3 events we held this year. I am excited about this final group of talented athletes, it compares favourably to other groups from other years. They have all worked hard and have shown how much it means to them to play for their country and with the normal butterflies that accompany playing at this level reduced, the Wellington trip should be yet another opportunity for them to produce performances that they can be proud of."