Switzerland – Tom Rix

Hey everyone,

It has been quite some time since I wrote a bounder as I missed July due to being in the middle of summer holidays and spending 10 hours in Switzerland over 3 weeks. So since then I have done an incredible amount. I am traveled through a great deal of Europe; Italy, Germany, France, England, Austria, Czech Republic and the tiny countries of San Marino and Lichtenstein.

Most of these trips were done on my Eurotour, however I did spend a wonderful week in France and England with my Mum & Dad and fellow District 9600 Outbounder Phoebe. Also I spent a week with my Aunt and sister in Italy, visiting Florence, Rome and Pisa. It was such an amazing experience. And as soon as I got home from this trip I spent 10 hours, sleeping and washing before packing to go to Germany with my first host family for 4 days living in a castle just outside of Frankfurt. I stayed with the Prince and Princess of Braunfels and lived like a king.

Oh and for all you rugby lovers out there, I thought you may appreciate this photo of me at Australia's first game against Japan in Lyon, with Australian Reserve hooker Sean Hardman. We managed to snag tickets in the row behind the rest of the Australian squad. Apart from this photo I also met Phil Waugh, David Lyons, Sam Cordingly and Scott Staniforth. I also saw South Africa play Samoa the next day in Paris, which was also an amazing game of rugby to watch.

On the subject of rugby, my Swiss rugby career is coming along in leaps and bounds. I am a regular now on the 1st team bench and after breaking my finger in the Swiss National trials I am back on the paddock. Although I am not technically eligible to play for Switzerland, I did run on as flanker in a trial game against Germany in Geneva. It was quite entertaining to play and when we were in our final training session we discovered that in the 22-man squad there are only 8 Swiss nationals. We all lined up and mumble along to the Swiss National anthem, which I had never actually heard before, but it must have inspired us because we won 43 – 5. So that is the extent of my international rugby career, I have decided to hang up my boots. I hope it doesn't affect my chances of playing for the Wallabies. Haha, like that is going to happen. The photo is of the North Switzerland team from our 7's tournament in Neuchatel, Switzerland. We came 4th and I scored my first and only try all year. Spot the Aussie……I am the only one with thongs on.

So to cap this off, I have had an absolutely amazing time this year. I have learnt German and Swiss German and the absolute basics of French, Italian and Spanish. I have had the opportunity to help out in a Rotary Project, in which a myself and another South African exchange student and his Rotary club headed into a remote part of the Swiss Alps to help rebuild a dairy that was demolished by a land slide. It was an amazing feeling to help this man and his family, as this was his only form of income and to help them start to receive that income once more. It was a tough 2 and a half days in which I moved 4 and a half tones on cement on my own off the back of a truck into the mixer. It was such a rewarding experience.

Anyway, I have to wake up at 6:15am to walk through the snow to the train station, to sit on a train for an hour to get to school. I am getting over that pretty quickly. Have a great Christmas and New Year everyone, I hope mine is white.
See you in 2 months.
Tom