

Samoa Thumps Canada

Written by Peter Elliott
Friday, 09 November 2012 23:35

The Canadian National Senior Men's team lost 42-12 to Samoa on the first game of their Fall Tour, at Parc Eirias, Colwyn Bay Friday night.

A tough opening period saw the Samoans take the game by the scruff of the neck, and with a 22-0 half-time deficit, Canada were left to chase the game during the second half.

Despite going into the last ten minutes at 42-0 down, two late tries by Connor Braid and John Moonlight gave the team some consolation.

Head coach Kieran Crowley said afterwards that his side had plenty to consider going in to the next fixture against Russia: "The way Samoa came out, they scored three or four tries with the little kicks behind, they attacked from the kick-offs wide which exposed us, and a couple of quick tap penalties which we didn't react to, so pretty disappointing in that respect" he said.

"I thought our guys faced up pretty well, but we just got outplayed a little."

Despite a high penalty count against his side, Crowley didn't want to get dragged in to the debate about some dubious decisions which went against the Canadians: "I want to look at the video, as I felt there were a few things going on there, but that's not going to change the result. They just outplayed us. The way they play the game, and the speed at which they play was a massive step up from what those guys who played in the ARC are used to, but that's where we need to be" he added.

"We haven't been exposed to that sort of game plan for a fair while. But although they scored a few tries, I would say that our tackle percentage would be right up there, I think we were very good at that. I think that Samoa were just very good at creating space."

The game started at a frantic pace, with Samoa running hard at Canada's defensive lines. Debutant Ray Barkwill did very well early on to make a try-saving tackle just metres from his line, but that was in vain, as from the resulting reset scrum, Taiasina Tuifua charged through to get the first score of the night after only five minutes, with James Sooaialo converting.

Canada's first opportunity to score came from James Pritchard's boot, but the fullback was denied by the outside of the right hand post after ten minutes.

The Samoan's almost had a second try after Setaimana Sa chased a grubber down the left wing, but referee Francisco Pastrana of Argentina requested help from the TMO, who decided no try.

Sooailo added his second penalty on 16 minutes, with Robert Lilomaiava scoring in the corner just a minute afterwards, taking advantage of a kind bounce from Tusiata Pisi's neat cross-kick. Sooaialo missed the conversion, for a Samoan lead of 15-0.

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The TMO was called in to action once more, but this time, it was a thumbs up for Lilomaiava, who touched down in the corner once more. A Soialo conversion gave the Samoans a 22-0 half-time lead.

Tyler Hotson had put pressure on the Samoan defence before that try with a charge down, but the ball had too much momentum, and ran dead before he had the chance to catch up.

Phil Mackenzie was replaced by Nick Blevins on 32 minutes after suffering a head knock.

The first half ended with Canada on the ascendancy. First of all, Chauncey O'Toole was through towards the line, before being pulled back by the referee, before a fantastic driving maul which pushed the Samoans back towards their line, but with possession lost, the whistle blew, allowing the side to regroup for the second period.

Less than two minutes in, Samoa added to their score, as Faatiga Lemalu went over on the overlap, with Soialo converting.

Yet Canada showed they could threaten, as Sean White broke the Samoan line, but with two defenders ahead of him, he opted to kick and chase instead of using his support runner.

It was that man Soiala who punished Canada once more, kicking from near the halfway line to take the score to 32-0 on 52 minutes.

Front row changes came, as debutant Ray Barkwill and Doug Wooldridge were replaced by Ryan Hamilton and Jason Marshall.

Nick Blevins felt the wrath of the referee on 55 minutes, yellow carded for an offence at the breakdown. Soiala punished that one for a 35-0 lead to Samoa.

Canada's pressure almost paid off despite being down to 14 men, as referee Pastrana again consulted the TMO when Sean White went over, but the decision went against the men in red on this occasion.

The front row saw its final change with Andrew Tiedemann replacing Hubert Buydens on 61 minutes, before Brett Beukeboom, John Moonlight and Jeff Hassler replaced Jon Phelan, Tyler Ardron and Matt Evans after 69 minutes.

Samoa's scoring came to an end on 72 minutes with another Soiala penalty on 72 minutes, and it was now that with fresh legs, Canada gave themselves something to cheer, as John Moonlight scored on 74 minutes, ending a move that stretched the Samoan defence.

Eric Wilson had replaced Sean White moments earlier, and with the fresh legs and a determination to take some pride out of the fixture, Connor Braid earned the Canadian's second try in the last minute, ending a period of great runs at the Samoan defence.

Pritchard converted, for a final score of 42-12 to Samoa.

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Connor Braid, who returned to the side after a two year absence praise his team-mates for their contribution to his try: "I think most of the players on the team touched the ball in the build-up, so I was just lucky enough to be there at the end of it" he said.

"I had wanted to attack the line, and I had some decoy runners, who let me get through the line a couple of times. I think in the first twenty minutes, we were a bit too eager to hit the ruck, but minus that period, the positives we can take are that we played right to the end, scored a couple of good tries, and I think we played some good rugby"

CANADA

- 1 Hubert Buydens
- 2 Ray Barkwill
- 3 Doug Woolridge
- 4 Jon Phelan
- 5 Tyler Hotson
- 6 Tyler Ardron
- 7 Chauncey O'Toole
- 8 Aaron Carpenter (Capt.)
- 9 Sean White
- 10 Connor Braid
- 11 Matt Evans
- 12 Phil Mackenzie
- 13 Ciaran Hearn
- 14 Taylor Paris
- 15 James Pritchard

Replacements

- 16 Ryan Hamilton for Ray Barkwill (51)
- 17 Jason Marshall for Doug Woolridge (51)
- 18 Andrew Tiedemann for Hubert Buydens (61)
- 19 Brett Beukeboom for Jon Phelan (69)
- 20 John Moonlight for Tyler Ardron (69)
- 21 Eric Wilson for Sean White (71)
- 22 Nick Blevins for Phil Mackenzie (32)
- 23 Jeff Hassler for Matt Evans (69)

TEAM 1ST 2ND FINAL

CANADA	0	12	12
SAMOA	22	20	42