Written by Alex Goff
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USA Selects players Nick Civetta and Miles Craigwell are adjusting to a national team assembly, so they write in the daily Eagles diary released by USA Rugby.

Naval flying team the Blue Angels were flying overhead during the first few days of training as part of Fleet Week in San Francisco. The Blue Angels F-16 airplanes were inspiring, but loud.

"Walking onto the pitch after a long day of travel, most of us felt a bit unprepared for the session ahead," wrote Civetta. "Our attitude, or at least, my attitude, was improved when the six F-16A warplanes comprising the Blue Angels screamed overhead, scorching the air with their afterburners and disappearing over the San Francisco Bay.

"The true All-American Awesomeness that is the Blue Angels soon became a bit of an issue," added Civetta, as the jets drowned out the beeps of the yo-yo test.

The players pushed on, though, eager to impress Coach Mike Tolkin.

A big meal at Brennan's and they were back for more later in the day (Civetta and Taylor Mokate left their boots at the hotel, but made it through the session with some backups).

Day 3, said Craigwell, was a tough one as the players were really feeling the aches and bruises of the first two days.

But, added the Old Puget Sound Beach wing, "it's great to see our team chemistry, attack patterns, and overall fluidity come to shape prior to our departure to Victoria. This morning's practice started with a great counter attack session; high balls, motions with the back 3, a bit of 'chip 'n chase' action, and footwork in the open space. From there, we practiced on our defense; a long period of 5-on-5 tackling drills, with a high focus of being physical and aggressive at the breakdowns of the ruck. This session was pretty intense as most of the smaller guys had a point to prove to those of bigger stature, and the bigger guys, well, just wanted to show who was boss."

A defensive alignment session finished up the morning. In the afternoon, it was, as Craigwell put it, "Thunder Dome time!"

Tolkin wants to see his players make tackles, and make smart offloads out of the tackle. This was followed by a session identifying mismatches and exploiting them.

"Overall, it was a great day, miles ahead of our performance the day prior, and can only imagine leaps and bounds to what lies in store tomorrow!"