

# International Mounted Games Exchange 2019

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In December 2019 I received the most exciting news, I was selected to represent Australia at the International Mounted Games Exchange in Denver Colorado. My wish to ride internationally and represent my country was going to come true.



On July the 22nd I hopped on a plane and headed to Melbourne Victoria for a three-day training camp where I met the team Coach, Tim Ling (Vic), Manager Karen Pearce (Tas) and my fellow team members, Caitlin Seini (Vic), Asha Lamprey (Tas), Aaron Newham (NSW), Tiarni Kenderdine (QLD). We stayed at Kangaroo Pony Club grounds, practiced on borrowed ponies and had lots of fun playing lots of Uno and a little sightseeing of Melbourne. We also went to Crown and watched the new Lion King movie.

On the 25th of July we headed to the airport to start our journey to the United States of America, with a 15-hour flight and lots of movies we arrived in Los Angeles airport, then a couple hours later flying out again to Denver, Colorado. When we landed, we headed to bag check and meet the Great Britain team. We then drove to Denver University our first accommodation and meet the Canadian and US teams. The first three days we stayed at the university getting to know each other, watch the local American football team the Broncos train, attend a clay and anatomy class, visited a museum and much more.

Our next stop was the YMCA in the Rocky Mountains which was my favourite place with the amazing views and fun activities we stayed there for 5 days, played a volleyball tournament against the other teams with Australia winning, played kickball, swam in the pool, hiked to beautiful places and enjoyed a 2hr trail ride through the Rocky Mountain National Park. We had a quiz night in which team Australia won as well. The night before we left, we went on a carriage ride and stopped to roast some marshmallows by a toasty warm fire, Americans call them Smores, they place the roasted marshmallows and chocolate in between biscuits.

Leaving the Rockies we visited some Alaskan sled dogs and learnt about the breed and how the sled races are done. We then went to Fairfield Inn and Suits which we stayed there for another 3 days. The rooms were luxurious after staying in cramped dormitories compared to a 2 x queen size bed suit with a TV that had basically anything you wanted to watch and a pool on the bottom floor. That night having dinner at a beautiful Mexican restaurant. The next morning, we went ten pin bowling and lunched at one of the Colorado pony club president's house which was lovely and very generous of them. Next was a ranch tour which had an old castle and we learnt its history, later on going and watching a polo game and having a barbecue at the polo club.



The next day was my favourite day, we headed down to a fox hunt where we got to ride horses through a beautiful clear field with rolling hills and followed the hound dogs who were trying to find a coyote scent. It was heaps of fun and such a thrill to be back on a horse, and going for a gallop.

Approximately 30 horses had been loaned for this adventure and I got the best of all, his name was Scout. He was the only western horse which was lots of fun as I was in the comfiest saddle. It was very relaxing for me and made me feel at home on a horse again doing what I love. We then had a beautiful lunch made by the Hunt club and we got to watch the hounds being treated to their meal too which was very cool to watch. Later on, we went to the races and watched not just thoroughbreds race but an Arabian and an extremely fast Quarter horse sprint race which was finished in a second. That night we headed to the Texas Roadhouse, it was my favourite place to eat with steak cooked to perfection. The next day we watched a baseball game, the atmosphere was huge and it showed how popular baseball is in America. That night we went to Rosie's Diner for tea which was just like the old diners you see in the movies and had fabulous milkshakes.

Our final location was the Colorado horse park where we would be staying in RV's with a couple of stops on the way including the USA Olympic training centre which was amazing seeing how all of the different athletes in different sports train. There was an altitude training room which could change the temperature and altitude to the set training where the athlete would be competing next.



There was a local PPMG competition being held at the horse park. We helped at the competition as gear runners and line stewards. Afterward we spoke to the competitors about our trip and gave the riders some tips on how they can improve and what to work on. A Gala dinner was held where we were able to dress up and take lots of photos with all the amazing people we had meet.

The next morning was the big Competition day, we were all nervous and excited. Throughout the competition there were lots of thrills and spills with many loose horses, but it was heaps of fun and was an amazing experience. To top it off team Australia won! Taking home the title of International Champions. That night we headed to a lovely family's house for dinner and the next morning set of on our journey back to Australia.

It was an absolutely amazing experience where I was able to meet international competitors and learn about a new country and culture. I recommended anyone who gets an opportunity like this to take the chance. I promise you won't regret it; you meet such amazing people, make friends for life and have the opportunity to represent your country.

In 2020 the International Mounted Games Exchange will be held in Perth, Western Australia. I am excited for the future teams and hope that we can showcase WA in all its glory. I will be offering my ponies and hope to be helpful in the planning and during the exchange to make it a successful program that people will be talking about around the world.

