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International training centre participant, Alvaro Maguina, poses outside of TRU prior to attending his first live hockey game. LiFei Liu-Calver/The Omega

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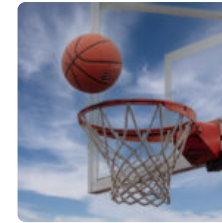
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International students experience hockey night in Kamloops

International students give their thoughts on Canada's favourite national pastime

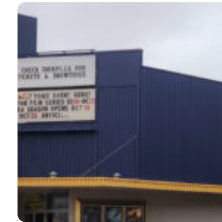
By LiFei Liu-Calver ⓘ March 16, 2024 🗨️ Comments Disabled

TRU welcomes many students worldwide, from India to Korea and the Netherlands to Mexico. Perhaps one of the more intensive programs for international students is offered by the International Training Centre (ITC), where participants come from around the world to learn about Canadian culture in two—or four-week sessions.



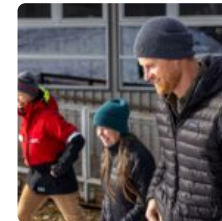
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Of course, one cannot learn about Canadian culture without indulging in our national winter sport—hockey.

On March 1, three students who attended a hockey game hosted by the Kamloops Blazers welcomed an interview to talk about their experience watching it for the first time.

Alvaro Maguiña, a student from Lima, Peru, had seen a few games on television before visiting Canada. Speaking to the Omega, Maguiña expressed how excited he was about his first live hockey game, noting how different the sport was compared to what he would watch back home.

“The game was an interesting experience. In Peru, we only have soccer and basketball,” Maguiña said. “The mechanics of the team and the way they play is the opposite in Peru.”

Asked about choosing his favourite aspect of the game, so far, Maguiña had a hard time deciding.

“In the middle of the game, I saw the Blazers communicate very fast,” Maguiña said. “To understand how they play and

how they move is probably one of my favourite parts.”

Ayaka Imanishi and Sera Ito from Kyoto, Japan, had also never been to Canada before. Like Peru, Japan is not known for hockey. While it does have a hockey team, the country focuses more on ping-pong, tennis, or soccer.

“We have never seen a hockey game,” Imanishi said. “We were so excited.”

Collectively, Imanishi and Ito also struggled to pick their favourite part of the game itself before ultimately deciding that it was the energy from the crowd and how it responded to the drama on the ice.

“When the audience ‘wooded,’ it was very exciting,” Ito said, referring to the crowd’s reactions. The whole audience stood up and cheered.”

“Even when they fought too,” Imanishi added.

According to Imanishi and Ito, other memorable moments of the night included seeing Digger, the Blazers mascot, and seeing shots of the crowd on the monitors suspended above the rink, even if they didn't make it on camera.

"It didn't focus on us," Ito said.

"It was so sad," Imanishi added.

Clearly, for Imanishi, Ito and Maguiña, it was a great night with only one complaint about the game, "It was too cold." Despite this, each expressed what an amazing time they had, suggesting that they would jump at the chance to enjoy another game in the future.

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