

Postcards from Tokyo – day 2

Hi again!

Got up this morning to find the weather had turned a bit and it was raining. Well, maybe not raining, but misting. Just wet, really. Humidity here in August is generally over 80% and today it hit 100%. The temperature is in the low 30's (Celsius) and the humidity sucks the energy right out of you. Luckily, I remembered to bring some electrolyte powder – and the locals swear by salt tablets too. However, when we come back for the World Cup next November, it will be autumn in Tokyo and will be cooler and drier, with average high temperatures around 17°C and much less rain.

The tap water here is perfectly safe to drink, so that's a bonus as I am drinking lots of it. It takes a while to get used to the humidity, but it makes me feel better to see that the locals are just as affected by it as I am! There are lots of people with small fans – hand-held or battery operated – and loads of people carry a small towel to mop up the sweat... sounds gross, but necessary. Luckily, all the buildings are air conditioned – and so are the trains! Everyone scurries from the train to the next building and soaks up the cool where they can.

Adventure time – off to explore! It's about 25 minutes' walk from my hotel to the hockey stadium, so I thought I would try it out. The pathways are wide, but often shared by cyclists, so you need to watch out for them – just remember to keep to the left. The Japanese people are very polite, and don't like to ring their bells, so make sure you keep out of the way and don't walk in big groups and fill the whole pathway.



Luckily, my walk took me through lovely parklands in the Omori area. There's loads of trees and lush parklands, with communal areas for meeting up and having a group gathering (picnics and barbecues) as well as fitness areas for exercising and playgroups for the very young at heart. There are some HUGE insects, squawking birds and lots of cats everywhere, but the place is very clean and always feels safe – even when walking after 10pm!

I walked past the Oi Racecourse – horse racing is very popular here and the grandstand at the racecourse is very grand indeed! The stables have accommodation above for the jockeys and handlers, and the place is full of people even in the middle of the week...

Past the racecourse, over the river and into the Olympic Hockey precinct – wow! There is a massive



entrance to the Olympic Hockey area, with pathways weaving between tennis courts and baseball fields before you arrive at the hockey pitches. Both pitches were completed in July 2019, and are the Polytan blue – bright, fresh and apparently great to play on. The dugouts are good but the changerooms are amazing! The north pitch has four huge changerooms, with access straight on the playing field. The south pitch has four slightly smaller changerooms, but still has great facilities. The smurf-blue turf laid by Polytan is super-quick draining, so any heavy

rain is quickly drained away and the pitch is back to play very quickly. And there's two more warm-up pitches scheduled to be built before the Olympic Games – so plenty of room to prepare. Excellent facilities – can't wait to see people playing on them!