



### **LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCES FOR SIX NCAA DIVISION III TEAMS THAT TRAVELED TO EUROPE TO PLAY FOOTBALL**

In 1995 Global Football provided Mt. St. Joseph High School of Baltimore with the chance to travel overseas, visit the historical sites of Great Britain, experience the culture there, and play an American football game in London against the British National Team. The following year, John Carroll University traveled to Spain for a similar experience, and since then more than 100 teams, primarily from NCAA Division III colleges, with in excess of 6,000 players, coaches and families have taken advantage of similar opportunities. These squads have traveled to and played in 18 different nations, serving to export the game of American football, while expanding their own views of the world and its peoples.

John Carroll Head Coach Regis Scafe, who takes advantage of the NCAA rule that allows a school to travel and play overseas every three years, has been with his Blue Streaks team in Spain, Italy, Germany, Ireland and France. He noted after his game in Amiens, France on May 29: "These tours and games are so special for our team and their families. They learn and grow during the trip much more than they would otherwise, and our football team gets better. I don't understand why every D3 team does not take advantage of this!"

John Carroll toured some of the most beautiful areas of France, including the Loire Valley, the beaches of Normandy, and the city of Paris, before traveling slightly north of Paris to Amiens to play a Belgian team, Tournai Phoenix. The Belgians enjoy testing themselves whenever possible against a US college, and despite struggling to put any points on the scoreboard, again relished the chance to play against such talented and well coaches student athletes.

Five of the six teams that went to Europe returned victorious after their games with local club teams, with the Austrian National Team being the only Euro winner, topping the Augie Vikings 10-3 in a downpour at the annual Charity Bowl in Vienna. This game is now one of the biggest and best American football showcase events of the year on the continent, with sellout crowds in the Hohe Warte Stadium, as well as an expansive VIP tent area for sponsors who support the charitable efforts of the Vienna Vikings who host the game. Augustana won this Bowl in 2007, but could not pull off another win this year against a determined national team.

"We have had a wonderful trip through Switzerland and Austria, but our boys missed out on a chance to win a football game today," said Coach Jim Barnes from Vienna following the May 30 game. "They will all learn from this, just as they will learn from the overall experience",

Elmhurst College had the unique chance to visit both Germany and the Czech Republic, focusing on the cities of Berlin and Prague.

"Berlin is fascinating to those of us who remember the Berlin Wall and the Communist control of East Germany," stated Coach Tim Lester. "Prague is a classic European city with all the charm and appeal that I imagined. I am thrilled we brought our team here."

While Elmhurst easily dispatched of the Prague All-Stars on a perfectly groomed grass converted soccer field, the 50-member Czech squad continued to play hard throughout the contest. Afterwards, Coach Zach Harrod of the Prague Lions commented on how his team enjoyed playing against Elmhurst, and how they learned a great deal about playing low and fast from their US counterparts. Coach Harrod, like many in Europe, is an American who is sharing his love and knowledge of the game with others with similar passion in different nations.

Ohio Northern returned to Europe for the second time in three years under the direction of Coach Dean Paul, who also served as offensive coordinator for Team Stars & Stripes in Mexico last December in the Tazon de Estrellas (Bowl of the Stars). This time the Polar Bears traveled through the beauty and rich history of Italy, starting in classic Milan, visiting mysterious Venice on the Adriatic Sea, wandering through Tuscany onto lovely Florence, and finally ending up in Rome.

The game against an all-star team from Italy was staged in a magical setting of Pontremoli between Florence and Rome, and was the prelude to a regular season league game. Ohio Northern was welcomed by the town mayor, cheered on by the local fans, and enjoyed a dominant victory before sharing time with their opposing players afterwards.

While Luther College had been to Europe a few years ago, this is the first trip that Coach Mike Durnin has led them there, and he was totally thrilled at all his team got to do in Germany. “We have visited some incredible sites in Bavaria during this trip, and been treated wonderfully everywhere we have gone,” he said. “It was very special to conduct a youth clinic in Munich for the youngsters there, as they certainly are excited to get a chance to play football our way.”

On gameday Luther ventured further north to Ingolstadt, where they visited a local hospital to bring positive cheer to some patients there, were welcomed by the city officials, and then proceeded to handle the Dukes on the field of play. While the Dukes were effective early on, Luther took over in the second half and left with a satisfying victory.

Hanover College actually was the first team to travel this May due to their school schedule, and the student athletes also were able to earn school credit for the trip and what they learned prior to and during the journey. Coach Joe Austin took the largest group to Europe among the six teams, with more than 80 travelers enjoying the Bavarian region before playing against one of the top German Football League teams, the Stuttgart Scorpions. In a hard fought contest, Hanover was able to outman their German counterparts, 44-13. But as many players commented, ‘this was much more than just a football game’.

When describing his team’s trip experience, Coach Austin expressed his thoughts, saying: “We came to Germany for many reasons—travel, education and football; and I feel we succeeded in each facet. Even before we left Germany we were talking about where to go next time, in three years.”

As the touring season wrapped up for US teams, Global Football President Patrick Steenberge is excited about the experiences he provided. He added: “I personally got to be with four of these six teams while in Europe, and it is magical to witness the wide-eyed enthusiasm the players have while they travel together. It is also enjoyable to share these places with the quality men who coach and direct these teams, as I applaud their vision and efforts on behalf of their student athletes.”

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