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Tait Reflects on Italy Basketball Trip

Washington College captain **Meghan Tait** (Oxford, PA/Oxford Area), a rising senior, recently completed a tour of Italy with a team of U.S. All-Stars playing against international competition. She reflects on her experience below:











Ciao! Having had spent nearly two weeks in Italy, one would think I would have picked up more of the language, but "ciao" and "grazie," meaning thank you, were two of the only words I used (correctly). Back in September, I was invited to tour Italy with American International Sports Tours. AIST is a group that puts together tours of foreign countries for college athletes. I was invited to take part in the men's and women's basketball, and women's volleyball tour of Italy. Over the course of twelve days I would be playing five games against club and semi-professional level teams as well as traveling across the country visiting multiple cities and experiencing all that the Italian culture could offer.


My trip was incredible. We visited and toured the Vatican, walked through the Sistine Chapel, stood outside of the Coliseum, walked the streets of Florence, hiked the mountains of San Marino, sailed on Lake Como, and walked around one of the fashion capitals of the world in Milan. I had the most amazing experience. Each day held something different and because of the way the tour was scheduled we would stay in one city for a few days, tour the city, eat lots of food, and shop. After that we would play a game or watch one of the other teams play and the next day we would get up, hop on the bus, and move to a different part of the country. Italy is by far the most beautiful place I have ever been and despite taking over three hundred pictures, they do not even begin to do it justice. Walking through the Vatican had the most profound effect on me, but Florence was my favorite city. It was so picturesque and the architecture was unbelievable.

Beyond actually touring the country, I also had the opportunity to participate in three exhibition basketball games and two tournament games. We ended the tour with a 4-1 record and a first-place finish in the tournament. The competition level was very good. We did not win any of our games by more than ten points and the only game we lost was by eight. The game is played a little differently in Europe. They play with an eight second back-court and a 24-second shot clock. The pace of the game is much faster and defense does not seem to be emphasized as much. Along with the clock differences, they also play with the "Euro step." In the United States, this move would be a travel, but in Europe, players are allowed to take an additional step after picking up their dribble. It definitely took some getting used to both offensively and defensively. Those were the major differences between our style of play and theirs but we adjusted as well as we could have for five games. Overall, the entire trip was amazing; the worst part was having to come home! I loved every second of it and I hope to return to Italy and see more of Europe someday.





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