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Five Women's Lacrosse Players Traveled To England And Ireland

On July 16-26, five Holy Cross women's lacrosse players (sophomores **Caitie Shea**, **Kat Sutton**, **Kayla DiBari**, **Cami Thompson** and **Catherine Furman**) traveled to England and Ireland with American International Sports Tours. 2007 Holy Cross graduate and Kat's sister, **Patricia Sutton**, accompanied the Crusaders serving as their coach. Patricia, who was the 2007 Crusader of the Year, is currently an assistant coach at Albany. Along with playing competitive lacrosse games, they each had a rewarding experience. Here is their experience told directly by the student-athletes.

July 15-17 by Caitie Shea

Our trip began once we arrived to the Newark airport. As Kayla, Catherine and I were checking our luggage, we saw Ryan Gosling! As we waited in the terminal we started to meet the girls from the other schools who were going to be our teammates. We boarded our plane and departed at 6:25 p.m. "American" time. The plane ride was seven hours and we arrived at Heathrow airport in London at 6:45 a.m. Once we arrived we boarded our coach bus we found out that Kat and Trish's luggage didn't make it! Aboard the bus we met our tour guide and began our bus/walking tour of London. We saw Westminster Abbey, the changing of the guard, Big Ben, Houses of Parliament, Covent Garden and Buckingham Palace.

We broke apart from the group and had lunch and saw a street performer. We boarded the bus once again and drove to the Tower of London. Along the trip everyone fell asleep because we were so tired due to the time change. At the Tower of London we toured and saw the Crown Jewels and the Bloody Tower! Once our tours were finished we went to our hostel to get ready for dinner. Dinner the first night was a welcome dinner and the whole group attended so we could bond.

The second day of our trip we had free time to explore. We decided to go to Harrod's, a huge department store in the shopping district and in order to get there we had to take the "tube", which is equivalent to our subway. Afterwards we had practice and played with our team for the first time to get ready for the tournament! After practice we had free time to do what we pleased!

July 18-19 by Kat Sutton



Saturday morning was a very early morning in London as we had to get to the field for the first day of our tournament. After a short bus ride to the fields, we got off the bus and prepared for our first game against West London. We started off to a slow start just trying to get adjusted to playing with each other and fell behind after the first half but fought back and ended up winning. The rest of the day went very well as we ended 3-1. It was fun to play international rules, such as no goggles and the most noticeable was only keeping three players behind the restraining line. The play is also much more aggressive and the refs didn't blow the whistle as much. After a long day of lacrosse, we went back to the hotel and went out to dinner and explored the city and the night life of London.

Sunday was a very exciting day because we had one game in the morning against the Zenith team which we won and then we anxiously waited to see if our 4-1 record was good enough to get us into the championship game! We did end up getting into the championship game and had to play the strong West London team again. We ended up losing in the championship but it was a lot of fun to get to play all different age groups and teams from different parts of London. After thanking the teams for having us and saying our goodbyes it was back to the bus and off to Manchester.

July 20-21 by Kayla DiBari

After a long afternoon and night of traveling from London to Manchester we unpacked our bags at our next hostel. In the morning we had the opportunity to visit the Manchester United soccer stadium, shop in the gift shop and also become more comfortable with the city. After the tour we headed to the field for our next game against a team from Wales. The game was somewhat even, however we pulled through in the end. The team was nice enough to invite us for a tailgate after the game with food, drinks and friendly conversations.

The next morning the team packed and headed to the ferry for our trip to Dublin. When we arrived we were immediately immersed into the authentic Irish culture by having the opportunity to see an Irish step dancing performance before venturing out into the city.

July 21-22 by Cami Thompson

We woke up early for a long day of traveling from Manchester to Dublin on Tuesday. The ferry from Hollyhead was the size of a small cruise ship complete with a souvenir shop, restaurants, an arcade and most importantly comfortable chairs to nap on. As the ship approached Dublin, we were able to walk on the upper deck and look across the misty waters for our first glimpses of Ireland. On our first evening in Dublin, we walked to the Arlington Hotel to see live Irish dancing and music.



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After a traditional breakfast of sausage, ham, eggs, and beans at O'Shea's we took an hour and a half bus ride through the countryside. The rolling green hills clearly had an effect on our team as for the first time on our sleep deprived trip everyone on the bus stayed awake during the drive. The bus stopped at Glendalough, a scenic park with Early Medieval monastic ruins. Waterfalls, rivers and lakes surrounded us during our walk through the forest trails. While London felt like any other big city, this park was so unique and something you could only see in Ireland.



We played our final game against a developmental Irish team. After our win we were able to talk to some of the Irish players and then meet them later in the evening at some of their favorite spots in the city. They were very friendly and sweet, but two of our Irish friends admitted that they did not actually play in the game because they were too scared. While Irish lacrosse clearly remains in the developmental stages, their combination of several talented players and other aggressive players eager to improve, bodes well for their future.

July 25-26 by Catherine Furman

Saturday was our last full day in Dublin, so AIST planned a bus tour for the group. The driver was really nice and pretty enthusiastic about Irish step dancing. His dancing in the aisles made the tour even more enjoyable than we were expecting. He took us to see a bunch of famous sites through Dublin including the Dublin Spire, St. Patrick's Cathedral and Trinity College. After the tour, we stopped at Trinity College and we saw the Book of Kells which was located in a stunning library inside the college. This concluded the tour, and we ate lunch on our own at a local restaurant in Dublin. We went shopping at a few stores before it was time to meet up with the group.

After meeting with the group we drove to the Guinness Brewery, where we took a tour of inside and learned how the factory was run. We got to see the different stages that were necessary for the making of Guinness and we ended the tour in a room with 360 degrees of windows which overlooked the city. Aside from being a gorgeous view, it was interesting to look down on the city and see all the places we stopped at earlier in the day. For our last night on the trip, AIST organized a farewell dinner at O'Shea's where they thanked everyone for participating in the tournament, and gave us our itineraries for tomorrow's trip home. After dinner we went out to celebrate at a place in town near our hotel.

In the morning we all woke up early and packed up our things for the last time. We took our bus to the airport and prepared ourselves for the seven hour flight. The plane ride wasn't too bad considering we watched a few movies, and we were all sitting together. Everyone arrived safely, and most importantly Kat's luggage wasn't lost this time.

We have all discussed the trip and we agree that it was one of the best experiences of our lives. AIST planned the trip really well therefore we saw a lot in a short amount of time. The balance between sightseeing and lacrosse was perfect so we were able to interact with the Ireland and London players on and off the field. Our trip was truthfully an amazing experience, and we were all very fortunate for the memories we have created.



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