

IU East News

European trip 'definitely worth it' for Sanders, Burris

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David Sanders (left) and Brent Burris in their United States uniforms.

The Red Wolves' basketball program remained unbeaten on Italian soil.

Recent Indiana University East graduate Brent Burris (Indianapolis, Ind./Home school) and Red Wolves senior-to-be David Sanders (Indianapolis, Ind./Beech Grove High School) played on an American International Sports Tours team that went 5-0 against European club-level teams during an 11-day tour of Italy (with a one-day stop in Switzerland) in late May and early June.

Burris and Sanders followed the path charted by former Red Wolves Tyler Rigby and Jacobe Edmondson during the summer of 2010. Rigby and Edmondson played for an AIST team that went 4-0 during a tour of Italy.

"We saw a lot of things in 10 days," Sanders said. "We were either touring, playing basketball or relaxing."

Burris and Sanders were part of a U.S. roster that included an NCAA Division I player, two NCAA Division II players, five NAIA players (including Burris and Sanders) and one NCAA Division III player.

Jason Kline, the coach at NAIA Division I program Park University (Mo.), coached the U.S. team

Click http://www.parkathletics.com/news/cat_index_38.shtml to read Kline's trip journal

Burris, Sanders and their teammates enjoyed a whirlwind tour that included stops in Rome, San Marino, Tuscany, Bologna, Florence and Milan, plus a game in Switzerland.

The U.S. team found time to win its games by an average of 32 points per contest - to the delight of the European fans.

"One game we blew the other team out and one of our guys scored 50 by himself, but all of their fans were cheering for us and chanting 'NBA' and taking photos of us and getting autographs," Burris said.

"That's how it was the whole trip. They cheered when a good play happened because they liked to see good basketball."

Sanders said he picked up some moves he can use as he prepares for his senior season in the IU East basketball program.

"I learned from watching other people play, watching their footwork, and seeing their style of play and adding something new to my game," he said.

Burris, who recently became the IU East basketball program's first four-year NAIA letterwinner, hopes future Red Wolves can enjoy the same trip in the years to come.

"If anyone else has the opportunity to do it, they should take it because it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he said. "Definitely worth it."

FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT DURING THE TRIP

David Sanders: "My favorite place was San Marino, just for the city itself. It was the best place for shopping and had a beautiful view."

"They don't just let anyone become a citizen there. You have to live there for 40 years. And they don't sell houses to people who are not citizens."

Brent Burris: "We flew into Rome and spent two days there seeing all of the old buildings."

One of my favorite cities was San Marino, which is actually its own country. It is on top of a mountain and was the most beautiful and all-around best city."

RECAP OF THE BASKETBALL GAMES

David Sanders: "The style of play wasn't terribly different. Every team we played set a million backscreens so it was hard to adjust since we hadn't played with each other."

"The biggest difference was the traveling calls. What they call a travel in Europe is not a travel to us. I got called for traveling six or seven times just doing things I am used to doing."

Brent Burris: "Our first game was the toughest because we had never played together. It was about an eight-point game at the end. Once we got the hang of each other's role we started blowing people out by 40 or 50 points."

"The style of play was less physical. You could tell a real difference in the way we play defense. They weren't ready for our style of defense, running and trapping and getting in your face. That's how we got our big lead, through turnovers."

"Other than that it was just basketball, except for a couple of traveling calls."

BEST PART OF THE TRIP

David Sanders: "The best part was meeting new people from all over the country, people from everywhere, and developing those friendships with them that will go beyond the 10 days we were on the trip."

Brent Burris: "Meeting new people and making friendships while experiencing a different culture. It's one thing to make new friends, but when you are in a different country where no one speaks the language, you become closer with the people you are with."

WORST PART OF THE TRIP

David Sanders: "Probably the eight-or nine-hour flight (from New York to Rome). It seemed like it just dragged on. I tried to sleep, but it wasn't happening."

Brent Burris: "The lack of sleep! We would play pretty late, then we would be up at 8 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. touring cities and walking around, and then playing another game. It will wear you out, but it was definitely worth it."

