

# **AFW ELITE TEAM**

## **TYPICAL IRELAND TOUR ITINERARY**



### **Day 1 – Saturday: Departure to Ireland**

- ❖ Meet coaches for AFW **departure flights** from New York, Chicago or Los Angeles; or be traveling to Ireland with a parent and/or other family members. On your overnight flight enjoy dinner, movies, rest and then breakfast on board. Due to time difference and travel you will land in Ireland the following morning.

### **Day 2 – Sunday: Authentic Ireland and the Cliffs of Moher**

- ❖ Arrive at **Dublin International airport**. Head through Ireland customs, retrieve your luggage and equipment then proceed to meet your **tour manager** who will be at your service for your entire stay on the island.
- ❖ Load your motor coach to begin the journey to festive Galway heading west across Ireland. Your first day starts off in a highly impressive 'all-Irish' way.
- ❖ Your first stop will be a little past mid-way in **Athlone**, an authentic Irish village along the famous **River Shannon**. Stroll the town beginning to enjoy all things Irish and take time for lunch. Also make a brief stop into *Sean's Bar*, reportedly the oldest on the island dating back over 1000 years.
- ❖ After lunch reboard your motor coach for transfer to visit the famous and imposing **Cliffs of Moher** south of Galway. During this second bus leg you may appreciate the time to catch up on sleep after your short overnight flight before arriving at the most photographed spot in Ireland. Upon arrival be stunned at the sheer and imposing natural beauty before your eyes where you will have time to roam these stunning and majestic wind-swept cliffs. This is vintage Ireland and a truly, awe-inspiring and spectacular site!
- ❖ After sufficient time you will continue on to your overnight accommodations in **Galway** known as one of the most festive places not only in Ireland but a favorite visit site frequented by many Europeans and Americans as well. Check-in to your hotel, enjoy dinner then it would be best to catch-up on rest so as to better enjoy the spectacular week ahead.



### **Day 3 – Monday: Festive Galway**

- ❖ Following a needed night of sleep, breakfast will be available at 7:00am for the players. The team and staff will then transfer to the Bayside Athletic Fields for their **first USA-AFW ELITE team practice**. Family members should enjoy a more rest and breakfast a little later having a leisurely start to your day. Feel free to stroll the local streets near the hotel.
- ❖ The team will return to the hotel at approximately 10:30am. After a shower, the tour group will depart to Galway city center to be oriented then freed up to enjoy lunch in small



groups at one of the city center's abundant cafes, diners and pubs.

- ❖ The tour party will gather after lunch at a designated location to receive a **walking guided tour of Galway**. Remnants of medieval walls encircle the town center while old and modern bridges arch over the salmon-stuffed River Corrib. Bohemian in its nature, Galway is known for its relaxed atmosphere and pleasures. Artists and street performers often abound outside the shops, brightly painted cafes and pubs. Galway is often active and lively as students make up nearly a quarter of the population. Galway is often referred to as the 'most Irish' of Ireland's cities and one of the few cities where you will often hear Irish (Gaelic) spoken.
- ❖ Following the tour you will have time for personal exploration and souvenir shopping. Also enjoy the nearby area of Salthill, the source of the areas famous oysters. Prior to the dinner hour you will meet to return to the hotel for your evening meal.
- ❖ After dinner we expect to offer the opportunity for tour group members to head out to local pubs (players with coach and/or parent escort) for a brief, but definitely fun time taking in Irish music and culture.
- ❖ A reasonable curfew will be established.



#### **Day 4 – Tuesday: Trim Castle and Fascinating Belfast**

- ❖ Players and coaching staff will again have an early breakfast then morning practice or walk-through. Parent and family travelers can then enjoy their hearty Irish breakfast.
- ❖ Afterward the group will then check out to proceed toward Northern Ireland and 'Game of Thrones' territory with a fascinating stop along the way.
- ❖ In the late morning you will arrive in **County Meath** for a guided tour of the famous **Trim Castle**, a well-preserved Norman fortress on the south bank of the River Boyne. This castle was featured in the popular and Academy Award winning movie "**Braveheart**". Afterward there will be time for lunch in the adjacent charming Trim Village.
- ❖ Following your meal the group will proceed on to Belfast. Upon arrival you will receive a brief driving tour orienting you to the city, then a walking tour of Belfast City Center. Come to know the fascinating history of this complicated, controversial city that has been at the center of a long independence-seeking, political struggle – and a country currently a critical component of Brexit politics.
- ❖ Afterward proceed to your hotel for check-in and to enjoy dinner.
- ❖ There may be time for AFW staff and tour manager to lead travelers to some of the fun entertainment sites in Belfast. Curfew will be established.



#### **Day 5 – Wednesday: Titanic and Game of Thrones Tours**

- ❖ Players will be up early for an early morning practice then return to the hotel to shower. Parents and other family members can enjoy a later breakfast and a stroll through historic Belfast and possibly visit the Titanic Museum.
- ❖ With Northern Ireland coming to be known as the "Home of Thrones", the group will then depart for a **Game of Thrones** tour just north of the city. Marvel



at now famous Winterfell Caste as well as other recognizable sites which are integral parts of the most decorated mini-series ever.

- ❖ Lunch will be enjoyed while north of Belfast.
- ❖ In the late afternoon the group will return back to Belfast for some free time to shop, explore and visit local establishments.
- ❖ Dinner will be provided and then travelers will prepare for departure to Dublin, the capital and heart of Ireland, the following day.



### Day 6 – Thursday: Dublin

- ❖ Players will again practice early in the morning to correct offensive and defensive execution as well as finish the installation of special team schemes.
- ❖ Afterward, all will load the motor coach and depart for Dublin.
- ❖ During your final extended drive toward **Dublin** we plan to take time to disembark in the picturesque coastal town of **Skeerries**, derived from the Gaelic word “the Rocks”. Stretch your legs, enjoy lunch then possibly dessert at ‘the world’s smallest ice cream shop’ as you view the Irish Sea that lies between Ireland and England.
- ❖ Following this charming stop complete your drive arriving in Dublin by mid-afternoon where your tour manager will familiarize you with Ireland’s largest but certainly friendly capital city.
- ❖ You will receive a **walking guided tour of Dublin** with local guides. Visit the imposing **Dublin Castle**, beautiful **Christ Church**, the ever-present **River Liffey**, holy **St. Patrick’s Cathedral** and more.
- ❖ After a very full day and afternoon the group will proceed to your Dublin hotel to refresh, have dinner and enjoy a relaxing evening.



### Day 7 – Friday: More Dublin

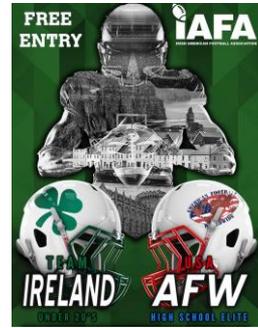
- ❖ Following an early breakfast players will proceed to their final pre-game practice. Parents can enjoy another delicious Irish breakfast during this time.
- ❖ After returning from practice the group will proceed to enjoy a visit to **Croke Park and the Gaelic Athletic Association Hall of Fame** where you will receive a guided tour and come to know the of the rich tradition of Irish participation in sport. Gain a greater understanding of the demanding and entertaining Irish culture athletic games of rugby, Irish football and hurling.
- ❖ Afterward the group will transfer back to Dublin Temple Bar area where free time will be provided for lunch. Immediately afterward, the group will have an assigned time to enter prestigious **Trinity College** which hosts the **Book of Kells**, the legendary manuscript created by Celtic Monks that is arguably the best illumination of the Gospels and was critically in helping preserve the written Christian word of God.
- ❖ There should be additional free-time for last minute shopping for Irish souvenirs and gifts. Then in the very late afternoon the group will enjoy a tour of the **Guinness Storehouse** that for a long-time served as an international economic engine for this city and country.
- ❖ After a very full day, the tour group will transfer to its hotel for a late dinner. It will be a quiet evening in the hotel as players will rest to gain strength for tomorrow’s game. Family members having the option to explore more of Dublin.



## Day 8 – Saturday – International Game Day!

- ❖ Expect a team meeting and walk-through. Parents should begin breakfast with the players following after their meeting.
- ❖ Plan to load our motor coach with everything needed for the day and to play American football. Get ready to play American football - US Style. Make sure to enjoy your participation in this **rare and special game involving US high school student-athletes against Ireland's National best.**

### USA AFW ELITE vs. Ireland's National U20 Team Play Hard, Play Smart, Play Together.



- ❖ After the game, the Irish American Football Association customarily arranges **a social and a meal. Team members, staff and officials from the Irish Association** should gather with you to enjoy time sharing stories of the game, future dreams in football – and hopefully making plans to stay in touch and meet again.
- ❖ After the social and if time allows, we hope to provide a little free time in Dublin's city center with a planned departure back to our hotel at an hour that allows for us to pack up and be ready for the morning departure to the airport.
- ❖ Upon arrival at the hotel players will be required to return AFW gear, get fully packed including laying out your attire for the next day.

## Day 9 – Sunday,

- ❖ Breakfast in hotel secure luggage to load the bus. Transfer to Dublin international airport and return home to the USA with incredible memories from this once-in-a-lifetime journey.

