

# **USA-AFW ELITE**

**Italy Tour March 26 – April 3, 2022**



### **Day 1, Saturday, March 26 – Departure Day**

- ❖ Have your passport, football gear and luggage in possession as you head to the airport for your flight to Italy. For those flying on an AFW group flight from New York, Chicago or Los Angeles refer to the Departure Day instructions that will be sent to you and have your AFW coach's phone number with you.
- ❖ Once you board your overnight flight enjoy dinner, movies, and **importantly get some sleep** as it is a challenging first day. You will be provided a breakfast before arrival. Due to time zone travel you will land in Rome the following morning. It will be a quick overnight so sleep as much as you can.

### **Day 2, Sunday, March 27 – Classical Rome and The Famous Coliseum**

- ❖ Morning arrival at Rome Fiumicino International airport. Disembark and proceed through Italy Passport Control then to baggage claim to retrieve your luggage and equipment. After securing all of your belongings proceed through Customs and out to the reception area where you will be greeted by our full-time, bilingual tour manager who will be with you until departure in Milan the following Sunday.
- ❖ While waiting at the airport if you have not done so prior to departure, you may want to secure some Euros from an ATM or currency exchange. Early arrivals that have to wait on other incoming travelers may enjoy an Italian pastry, espresso or even a Sunday morning gelato!
- ❖ When everyone in the AFW tour group has arrived we will load our motor coach and depart to **Rome city centre** seeing several historical sites along the way.
- ❖ Upon arrival in Rome, you will receive an introduction to this famous city. We anticipate organizing in the beautiful **Piazza Navona**. You will then have free time for lunch (traveler's choice) and a little exploration within a defined area. Your tour manager and AFW coach-chaperones will be present to make recommendations. ATMs will be available here as well.
- ❖ After lunch the group will gather at a designated location to meet professional local guides who will provide a **tour of the Eternal City**. See the famous classical buildings, architectural wonders, fountains and squares of Rome including **the incomparable Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, the beautiful Spanish Steps and more!**
- ❖ Following the tour familiarizing you with Rome you will move as a group to the one-and-only **Roman Coliseum**. Here you will enter one of the most recognizable structures in the world - and a true architectural marvel - where the original gladiators did battle centuries ago. Guides will take you through the Coliseum as well as to the adjacent **Roman Forum** where the Roman Empire and western civilization was shaped and influenced for centuries.
- ❖ Immediately afterward the group will move to a nearby restaurant for your first of many delicious Italian dinners.
- ❖ Following your meal we will proceed to your Rome hotel for check-in. There may be a brief team meeting, but after what will be an exhilarating but challenging first - with an early morning practice scheduled - it will be time for 'lights out' shortly after arrival at the hotel. Know that there are many full and exciting days ahead to further enjoy **la vita dolce**.



### **Day 3, Monday, March 28 – First AFW ELITE Practice, Vatican Museums & St. Peter's Basilica; Free Evening in Rome**

- ❖ The team and staff will be up earlier for breakfast then proceed promptly to a nearby field for its **first USA-AFW ELITE team practice**. General position drill work and the first installation of offensive and defensive schemes will establish a foundation for future success.

- ❖ Parents and family members can arise a little later and enjoy breakfast with other guests. You can then stroll the local area and wait on the team or head into city center on your own meeting the full tour group in the early afternoon.
- ❖ When the players return from practice there will be time for a shower before an early lunch at the hotel. The tour group will then head into city center for a full and outstanding afternoon and evening in Rome. Players should bring their helmets and game jerseys in the hopes that team and individual photos can be taken with the Coliseum as a backdrop.
- ❖ The first visit destination will be Vatican City. Here you will receive a **guided visit** of the well-known **Vatican Museums**. Learn more of the fascinating heritage of the Popes and the Roman Catholic Church, witness the beautiful **Sistine Chapel** by Michelangelo then be awed by the immense nature and beauty of **St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in the world**. Exiting the basilica, you will have time in St. Peter's Square. There will also be time for those who are interested to purchase some religious items.
- ❖ You will then be led back into the Piazza Navona area where you can visit some new historical or architectural sites, do some souvenir shopping or revisit some of the more impressive sites you saw the day before. You will have free time for dinner of your choice in small groups.
- ❖ By middle evening the team and tour group will gather to return to your Rome based hotel with time to gather in the lobby or rooms to discuss the fantastic events of the day.
- ❖ Players, there is another opportunity to improve in the morning so get some rest after a very full but **spectacular day in the Eternal City!**



#### **Day 4, Tuesday, March 29 – Tuscany featuring Siena**

- ❖ Players and staff will be up early for breakfast then off to *AFW ELITE* Practice 2 increasing the tempo, improving the timing, unit coordination and growing closer together as a USA-representative team.
- ❖ Family members will have a little extra sleep time but then need to be up for breakfast and packed beginning the checking out and bus loading process.
- ❖ Upon return from practice, players will shower then check out to load the bus. Grab a snack to bring on board for the ride.
- ❖ Once all are on the motor coach we begin our journey to **Tuscany - Italy's "Green Valley"**.
- ❖ Due to regulations there will be a motor coach stop in route for a relatively quick lunch snack.
- ❖ In the early afternoon you will arrive at the first Tuscany experience in the quaint and beautiful city of **Siena**, a strikingly well preserved medieval gem and home to the famous '**Palio**' horse race. The convenient city centre – with its unique 'shell' main square (the 'Campo') and narrow streets – will leave a lasting impression. Upon arrival the group will receive a guided tour of this city that rivalled larger and powerful Florence for centuries.
- ❖ The later afternoon is free for shopping or relaxing at an outdoor 'Campo' café.
- ❖ The group will re-gather for dinner to be thoroughly enjoyed at the **Gallo Nero Restaurant**.
- ❖ After dinner the group will proceed to Montecatini Terme, a town west of Florence known for its spas and relaxation, for your overnight rest.
- ❖ Late arrival and hotel check-in. After a very full and fabulous day it is suggested you seek a nearby gelato shop then get some overnight rest.



#### **Day 5, Wednesday, March 30 – Florence: "Birthplace of the Renaissance"**

- ❖ After breakfast load your motor coach to depart for Florence. Players need to have all of their gear packed in anticipation of our later afternoon co-practice with an American football club.
- ❖ Upon arrival, you will be treated to a **guided walking tour of Florence** starting from Piazza della Signoria, Ponte Vecchio and its old shops, Palazzo Vecchio to the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore and its imposing duomo. Florence will reveal itself as one of the most beautiful cities in the world.
- ❖ The group will then proceed to the impressive **Pallazzo Borghese Restaurant** for lunch. You will then have free time to take in Michelangelo's David at the Accademia, one of the other world-

renowned art galleries located in the Uffizi or Pitti Palace or explore Florence's fascinating outdoor markets featuring leather. At the end of the day, be certain to take in the fascinating artistic sites that Florence displays in abundance.

- ❖ In the late afternoon near, the team will gather and move to a nearby local athletic field to practice and scrimmage with members of the Guelfi American Football club. Family members are encouraged to continue to enjoy the many phenomenal sites that Florence has to offer.
- ❖ After a good workout and co-practice with the members of **AFW ELITE** and **Florence Guelfi** will have time to socialize over dinner and drinks at the sports complex restaurant.
- ❖ In the early evening the team will return with the motor coach to pick-up family members at a designated meeting area. The group will return to **Montecatini Terme** to pack for the following days departure and a much-needed night of rest.



#### **Day 6, Thursday, March 31 – Cinque Terra: "The Italian Riviera" to Como**

- ❖ Early team breakfast for the players followed by morning practice at the nearby, turfed Palagina Sports Center. Parents can come to breakfast later then enjoy time strolling beautiful Montecatini.
- ❖ After returning to the hotel, parents need to be packed and ready with the players hustling through a quick shower. The group will checkout and promptly depart to the Mediterranean Coast to enjoy **Cinque Terra** – the "Italian Riviera" – which consists of five authentic Italian villages situated beneath or on steep hills where the Ligurian Sea laps against the shores. The five villages are linked by a convenient rail line that begins in **La Spezia** where you will begin and return at the end of your afternoon. During the day, enjoy a picturesque lunch in a hillside restaurant overlooking the sea or at a quaint beachfront bistro. For this stop you may want to take off your shoes and stroll in the Mediterranean fed waters on the sandy beaches of **Monterosso** or the rocky shore of **Vernazza**. Critical Note – do not miss the time for your return train to La Spezia!
- ❖ Depart La Spezia in the late afternoon heading north to the Lake Como region north of Milan. This is our second, and last, lengthy drive taking us from central to northern Italy.
- ❖ Arrive at Hotel Cruise, check-in, freshen up, and have a later dinner followed by overnight rest.

#### **Day 7, Friday, April 1 – Lake Como and Final Pre-Game Practice (Co-practice with Italian National Team?)**

- ❖ The team will be up early one last time for its final pre-game practice before their international contest the following day. Parents can enjoy breakfast later on their own and then stroll the local area.
- ❖ The team will return to the hotel to shower then the entire group will proceed to a lunch to take place during the noon hour at a local restaurant.
- ❖ After lunch the tour party will experience a special excursion crossing another international border to nearby **Lugano, Switzerland** – a lakeside city with the Swiss Pre-Alps serving as a dramatic backdrop. You will have some time to stretch your legs, shop for something Swiss (chocolates anyone?), then enjoy a lakeside espresso or cappuccino in this distinctly beautiful location.
- ❖ In the later afternoon the group will return to Como a charming small city sits at the southern tip of famous **Lake Como**. There will be time to explore the lakefront – and possibly take the funicular up the adjacent hillside so that you can take in a bird's eye view of the city and lake. Another gelato is probably in order.
- ❖ Afterward, the group will then return to the hotel for dinner and a relaxing pre-game evening. Do not stay up too late as we have a rather early start – and tomorrow is Game Day!



#### **Day 8, Saturday April 2 – Game Day: USA-AFW ELITE American Football in Italy!**

- ❖ Enjoy breakfast then load up all your game and fan gear.

- ❖ The tour group will head to **Milan** for a concise tour of this remarkable city that for centuries served as the gateway for the Roman Empire to central Europe – and currently while doing the same for Italy is its financial and fashion capital as well.
- ❖ There will be a little free time for last minute souvenir-shopping or it is suggested you try to go into the magnificent cathedral of Milan.
- ❖ Around the noon hour the group will gather at a nearby restaurant for a pre-game meal.
- ❖ Following the meal, the team and tour party will head to the game field at the famous Velodrome in Milan.

Kick-off – Go Time!

**USA-AFW ELITE**  
**vs.**  
**Italy's National 19U Team**



- ❖ After the game enjoy social time and photo-taking opportunities with players from the Italian national team.
- ❖ AFW ELITE will then shower and load our motor coach for a final Italian pizza dinner at Capolinea Restaurant. Let's have **cause to celebrate** - the game as well as the incredible week experienced and friendships that were forged in Italy.
- ❖ After dinner return to the hotel for continued celebration, but importantly packing as well as some will have a very early morning departure for the airport.

**Day 9, Sunday April 3 – Return to USA!**

- ❖ It may be a short night's rest - if any at all for some - as the group will need to load luggage on to the motor coach for your respective flight home to the USA.

***Arrivederci Italia! Grazie!***

