

U of A Basketball Team Accepts Europe's Invitation

The University of Alaska's basketball team has accepted an invitation to play a number of teams in Europe on a 15-day goodwill tour.

The trip will be sponsored by the People-to-People Sports Committee, a national organization backed by the U. S. State Department.

Plans call for the Nanooks

to leave Alaska December 19 and return January 4. On the tour, the team is tentatively scheduled to visit the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Denmark.

A three-game series with the national basketball team of Belgium is planned in Brussels.

The schedule for other games will be announced later, according to Frank Walsh of San Francisco, chairman of the basketball unit of the People-to-People Sports Committee.

Walsh got a green light to expedite arrangements for the tour after University of Alaska students and members of the Fairbanks civic and business community pledged financial support to underwrite the trip.

All air fare expenses to and from Europe will be financed this way, according to U of A officials. The team's expenses while in Europe will be handled by the People-to-People organization in cooperation with European

groups.

In some instances, players may be housed in private homes—emphasizing the people-to-people nature of the trip.

The tour is the first of its kind to be made by an Alaskan team. It coincides with the 50th anniversary year of the University of Alaska, which opens January 1, and with the 100th birthday of Alaska's centennial purchase from Russia.

Team members now scheduled to make the trip include Steffen Andersen of Nome; Mel Griffin of Barbourville, Ky.; Lee Harr of Anacortes, Wash.; Craig Johnson of Spokane, Wash.; Scott Loll of Bronxville, N.Y.; Glenn Main of Anacortes; Ben Ramos of Fairbanks; Mike Taurainen of Kenai and John Tielborg of Burlingame, Calif.

Accompanying the club will be Coach Fred Crowell, his assistant John Eckerson and a graduate assistant, Lee Cassel, who coaches the Nanook freshman team.

The idea for the trip originated almost a year ago when Dr. William R. Wood, president of the University of Alaska, was in the Scandinavian countries.

A group of Scandinavian students at that time extended an invitation to the university's basketball team.

The sponsoring People-to-People Sports Committee took it from there. The committee carries on a continuing program of sending American teams on goodwill tours. In return, foreign teams regularly visit American cities on the same basis.