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November 11, 1997

International Sports Tours
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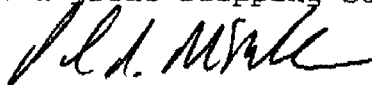
The International Sports Tour named Glasnost '90 was my first step into international competition. It was the first time I represented the United States in international competition and it was exhilarating.

My experience of traveling to Leningrad, Russia and racing other top high school athletes from the other side of the world was a big deal and those victories and losses shaped my career as an elite miler. I learned to handle time-zone changes, extensive traveling, language barriers, and not ideal food before races and then rising to the challenge of bringing out my best race.

The teammates that I met from around the country were the best. The comradery among our group made for lasting friendships. We shared new ways of training and racing. We also made bonds with our competitors trading t-shirts, pins, and lots of interesting conversations about their country and how things worked over there. The trip to Russia gave me a new sense of how fortunate I am to be from America. It was a great introduction into becoming independent before I went off to college. I learned Mom and Dad can't jump on a plane and give you a hug if things get challenging.

What I learned from the field trips was also very precious. It's first rate with IST, there isn't a dull moment, things are very well organized and the chaperons in charge are great at problem solving and improvising. On my trip I walked next to an embalmed Lenin "Father of Communism in Russia" in his tomb, the Hermitage Museum, and the Freedom Statue, in Riga, Latvia just before they gained independence from the Soviet Union. I learned more in 16 days about our planet and the people that live on it than I had in my prior 17 yrs in books.

I recommend the IST European Tour to anyone who is interested in adventure, gaining knowledge of foreign countries, and representing your country spirited track and field competitions. It's a great stepping stone for life.



Paul McMullen
IST Alum and 1996 Olympian at 1500m