



What a September!

BCI Edge is home at last after a month packed with stateside and international basketball events. First, BCI Edge held a three-day training camp in South LA, hosted by World Impact. Then, our team traveled to China for another multi-city exhibition basketball tour. It was a September full of new experiences and new opportunities for BCI Edge to reach out to communities around the world!

The Training Camp

Over three days in September, BCI Edge held their training camp in South Los Angeles. Professional level basketball players are frequently accustomed to abundance and opportunity in their lives. For this camp, BCI Edge players lived in basic dorms in the inner city, integrating themselves into the everyday world of some of basketball's most enthusiastic fans. It was a humbling experience for everyone involved. Hosted by World Impact, an organization that focuses on urban ministry opportunities, and organized by World Impact's Bob Engel, our camp schedule included two practices each day, mini-clinics at middle school girls' and boys' PE classes, and an energetic assembly for their elementary school. At each clinic and assembly, a player shared information about BCI Edge, our mission, and discussed how faith influences his life and his game. A pick-up game against high school and post-high school kids, plus a pizza party, rounded out this enlightening and inspiring training camp adventure.

China 2006

Last year, BCI Edge traveled to China for a successful 17-day exhibition basketball tour. Before we left, a contract was signed with the Jiangsu Basketball Association (Yuguang Basketball Club) for a 16-day tour in 2006. In September, we went, we played, and now we're home from our third exciting tour in china!

Go, Go, Go!

Our first day of travel to China was a difficult, 24-hour experience. And after a 12.5 hour flight, a 2.5 hour layover, another 2.5 hour flight, and 5 hours on a bus, we had to get right to practice! We were surprised to learn that our first game, on September 17 in Shaanxi, was to be played on an outdoor court for 3000 people! One of the major sponsors of Chinese basketball wanted to create this huge private event! The rest of our tour was just as hectic - 10 games in 16 days, with only a few hours to catch our breath between travel and appearances. We were not able to make as many school visits as we did in 2005, but our basketball clinic for local basketball teams in Zhangzhu, on September 27, was a big success. Right after practice with the local team, the gym was flooded with students. We were happy to honor their excitement with an open scrimmage game and player appearances, followed by autographs and picture-taking opportunities.



Keeping Score

BCI Edge performed well in China, considering our emotionally and physically brutal travel schedule. Three wins, one tie, six losses, and many occasions to reach out to basketball fans with our message of integrity and faith. Check back for scores.

New Friends, Small Spaces

Our trip to Yangquan to play the Serbian team took us on an 18-hour, old-fashioned train ride. Imagine four BCI Edge players to each 6x8 train car. Now, imagine fitting our players into those little bunks! After the train ride, we traveled five more hours by bus, arriving at 5:30 pm for an 8 pm game. We played the Serbian team four times in four cities during the tour, splitting the wins between us. BCI Edge got along so well with their team that we began discussing a possible tournament in Belgrade next year.

A Chance Meeting

One evening off in downtown Suzhou, a few members of our group - including Sharm Scheuerman - happened to enter a church. It was the first Christian church they had seen in China on this tour. They were delighted to speak with a Youth Director there, who invited them to join a youth worship meeting that evening! They were thus able to worship with about 50 kids, ages 12-21, and talk about our faith and the BCI Edge mission. Sharm spoke for more than five minutes through our interpreter, drawing genuine, joyful smiles from the kids! As our group left the church, they noticed a closed-circuit television monitor near the entrance, keeping a watchful eye over the worshippers upstairs. A government official was also positioned at the door. This experience reminded us that while open Christian fellowship is allowed in China, it is closely supervised.

Beijing Send Off

On October 1, we arrived in Beijing at the beginning of a national, weeklong celebration of the communist government taking over in 1949. The week commemorates the founding of the People's Republic of China, or "New China." Going to Tiananmen Square that night and seeing hundreds of thousands of people gathered there was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for our team.

Before we boarded our long flight home, we saw the Great Wall of China - another incredible sight. There, our team reflected on our basketball tour and our BCI Edge mission. As we looked down from the wall, we saw a group wedding ceremony with perhaps 18 couples.

Reflections

Every day, depending on our travel schedule, we had "team time," a time for fellowship for the BCI Edge team. Our theme for this trip was "It's not all about me." Sharm says, "This means that on and off the court, even in our personal lives, there's no place for self-centeredness. It's about exemplifying character and integrity in our society, coupled with our faith in God." We are



so grateful to the Chinese Government, their Basketball Federation, Sports Ambassadors, and our dedicated supporters and fans at home and abroad! We've been invited back next year.

Next Stop

BCI Edge has accepted an invitation to participate in the Haarlem Basketball Tournament in Amsterdam December 22-30. We're honored to be invited to play against provisional teams from the Netherlands, Egypt, Argentina, Israel, and Mexico. We will share additional information about this trip as details are finalized.