



## It's Summer on the Edge!

In Denver, where record-breaking heat has given indoor courts new appeal, the staff of BCI has been busy planning our summer camps and tours. Two BCI Edge players just returned from working with kids and coaches at an FCA basketball camp - the first of its kind in Bogota, Colombia. As this newsletter goes to press, we are building an exciting summer schedule, with confirmed participation in the 2nd Annual RPJ Ministries Basketball Camp, and tentative plans Mexico in August. We're working to finalize staffing a camp early August in Camden NJ with Tony Campolo's Urban Promise and a local church. - We're also looking forward to our fourth tour to China, confirmed for September 12-28. A July trip to Iran didn't work out for 2007, but we hope to reschedule it in the future. Stay up-to-date on camps, trips, and tournaments at [www.bciedge.org](http://www.bciedge.org)!

### FCA Basketball Camp in Bogota

BCI Edge players **Rob White** and **T.J. Doyle** just returned from a three-day basketball camp and clinic in Bogota, Colombia. Put on by FCA, the camp was the first of its kind in Bogota! Rob and T.J. served FCA as camp coaches, mentoring 154 boys and girls, ages 11-17, from 20 different schools and a wide spectrum of socio-economic conditions. They also held a special coaches' clinic for 40 local educators and club leaders.

BCI is committed to partnering with local organizations to help them open doors for a long-term presence and long-term success locally. **James Oilar**, founder of CDC (the first international branch of FCA, started in 2005) started planning this camp, he felt that, "the obstacles were tremendous." But against teacher strikes, school closings, uncertain attendance numbers, and payment and communication challenges in Colombia, James was able to execute a successful and meaningful event that truly made a difference in Bogota. James said, "Without a doubt, there was some 'life-changing' going on." BCI is glad to have had this opportunity to enhance FCA's objectives in Bogota.

### Going Local

Both Rob and T.J. have served youth camps in the U.S. and overseas, but this camp experience was especially gratifying to T.J., whose family comes from Bogota. In fact, when T.J.'s mother heard about the camp, she bought a ticket for herself to come along. It was a stroke of luck, since she was able to serve an important role - as a translator! T.J.'s extended family in Colombia even attended some of the camp events, including T.J.'s heartfelt presentation on the first day. Rob, too, was deeply moved by his experience in Bogota, where he promised his new friends that he would begin learning Spanish upon his return to the U.S. in preparation for the next camp.



## Fun and Fundamentals

The children and coaches of Bogota were thrilled by our players' technical abilities and their personal approach to teaching skills and sharing values. For all, it was the first time they have had access to a world-class organization like FCA and professional basketball like BCI Edge. The kids came wearing their favorite basketball jerseys and big smiles, ready to learn and grow as athletes and as followers of Jesus. Every day, Rob, T.J., and other FCA camp volunteers (including one female professional basketball player from Mexico) led the children in age-appropriate exercises and drills. Closing ceremonies each day inspired the children to embrace their spiritual lives with integrity and enthusiasm.

## The Coaches' Clinic

Approximately 40 coaches attended a special coaches' clinic, held by Rob and T.J. to inspire coaching and mentoring excellence on and off the court. The coaches, educators from public and private schools, and leaders from local basketball clubs, were impressed by our BCI Edge players' understanding of the game and their abilities to mentor and influence young athletes. They were united by their experiences at the camp, which was an FCA objective. James Oilar notes that there is a saying in Colombia: "Cada uno por su lado." It translates as, "Everyone for themselves." James feels it was an enormous blessing that the coaches understood that FCA was here to serve them and not take from them.

## Heartfelt Words

On the last day of camp, one young girl wrote a letter to T.J. saying that she's really thankful for the impact the camp made in her life and that this experience was a highlight of her life. Rob and T.J. collected a lot of great feedback from the young campers and volunteer coaches at the camp. T.J. translated a few to share with BCI Edge fans.

## Back to Bogota?

We're all buzzing with excitement about returning to Bogota next year to serve the next FCA camp there, which will certainly be even bigger than this inaugural event. Also, after 6'7" Rob was spotted shooting hoops at a members' club where T.J.'s family belongs, he was approached about putting on a camp there as well!

## Gratitude

We are grateful to James Oilar and FCA for asking BCI Edge to be a part of this special, groundbreaking camp and for graciously hosting Rob and T.J. during the events. We are also grateful to Rob and T.J. for serving FCA and the kids of Bogota as representatives of BCI. T.J.'s mother and family have our thanks for their support as well! **Goodwill from Iran** Unfortunately, BCI's competition in Iran didn't work out for the upcoming month. However, conversations with Iranian coach **Ali Towfigh and his father, Majid**, strengthen our enthusiasm for planning a new trip in the future. Ali played basketball for the Iranian National Team for twelve years (four years as team captain), before becoming a coach in the Iranian Basketball League. Ali feels that basketball brings different people together in a respectful and



meaningful way. We recently spoke with Ali about his relationship with BCI and about his views on basketball as an instrument of goodwill. Ali's father, Majid, also played for the Iranian National Team, holding the team scoring record for many years before becoming a National Team coach. Sharm was first introduced to Majid by Legendary LSU Coach Dale Brown. Majid and Sharm have spent many hours talking about the importance of positive role models in basketball.

### **A Chance Meeting**

Ali met Sharm in 2000 at a tournament in Dubai where he found himself translating a live interview between a local reporter and Sharm. After the interview, Ali and Sharm shared common ground on the importance of spirituality, morality, and values in professional basketball. They kept in touch, and Ali was invited to serve as an assistant coach for BCI Edge in an international tournament in Las Vegas in August, 2005. Ali says, "Coach Sharm is a great teacher and I've learned a lot from him. He has great experience as a leader - not only in basketball but in spiritual ways. The BCI players I worked with have excellent faith and wisdom, focusing on the subject of humanity in their daily meetings. I was able to continue that theme in my own way as I lead my own team."

### **Benefits of Play**

Ali believes that playing BCI Edge will help the Iranian National Team, which is controlled by the Islamic Republic of Iran Basketball Federation, to physically and mentally prepare for important tournaments like the Asian Games in Japan. He also says that having a professional team like BCI Edge play in Iran will, "support professional thinking about basketball in this country." He adds, "Tournaments against Americans is a great experience for the players and the fans because basketball encourages friendships between us."

### **Role Models**

Ali balances his basketball coaching career with full-time work as a civil engineer in Tehran. He says that, in Iran, coaching at a national level is not a primary profession the way it is in the U.S. Both he and his father see a great need for international focus on basketball as a way to promote tolerance, fellowship, and sportsmanship between different countries and faiths. Majid, who has lived in California for the last 15 years, told us, "It's important to be a role model. Players sometimes see actions on TV that are not proper for a [professional athlete]. I've always acted responsibly, and I value the way that BCI Edge brings competitive basketball and shows friendship, morality, spirituality, and ethics to the sport. This is the real thing; Iran and other countries need to show this to their professional and "playground" teams."

### **Family Values**

Ali and his wife recently welcomed a baby daughter to their family. Ali sent us a photo with the caption, "The Newest Member of BCI Edge." As Ali continues to positively impact his community and team, he will look for ways to partner with BCI again in the future. To him,



basketball is the absolute best way to promote goodwill because it's rooted in, "morality and spirit."

### **New Web Communities**

We are preparing to launch two unique web communities in July: "Fellowship on the Edge" and "BCI's Center Court." **Fellowship on the Edge** is a private web site which provides a meeting place for professional basketball athletes from around the world to focus on personal faith, spiritual values, character and integrity. **BCI's Center Court** is a blog which features topics of interest to our audience - especially to young basketball fans around the world. With input from BCI Edge players, BCI's Center Court is designed to be a dynamic and exciting avenue for fans to support and celebrate BCI Edge, the world of basketball, sportsmanship, personal character, and the rise of integrity-driven professional sports heroes.

### **Leadership News**

Basketball Club International, Inc. is pleased to welcome **Mike Maxson** as BCI's Director of Partner Relations. Mike joins our team with many years of experience working with international organizations and mission diplomacy matters. Look for more on Mike in upcoming newsletters as he tackles his new role with BCI!

**Dr. Gene Selander**, Director of Funding and Development, reports that our private "Team Up" fundraising events have been successful for BCI and fun for supporters. High-profile keynote speakers and attendees continue to meet across the country. A new event series will be announced this summer. For more information about these events, or about supporting BCI with your private or corporate contribution, please email Dr. Gene's office at [contribute@bciedge.org](mailto:contribute@bciedge.org) The Funding and Development Department publishes a quarterly report that may be of interest to you as well. [Click here](#) if you would like to receive the latest report.