



Basketball Federation of India and IMG Reliance game up to “slam dunk”

Tie-up to develop sporting talent nationally, introduce national league at school and college levels, and create a new professional basketball league

New Delhi, June 21 2010: In a first of its kind initiative for the sport of basketball in India, the Basketball Federation of India (BFI) has joined hands with IMG Reliance, a joint venture between IMG Worldwide and Reliance Industries, to develop the sport in the country, from the grassroots up to the professional level. The initiative is poised to significantly impact the competitive level of the sport and enhance the pool of talent in the country.

As part of the agreement, the BFI has granted IMG Reliance commercial rights relating to basketball in India, including sponsorship, advertising, broadcasting, merchandising, film, video and data, intellectual property, franchising and new league rights.

The pinnacle of the agreement is expected to be the development of a professional basketball league in India in which players from around the globe will compete alongside Indian players, similar to the CBL in China. A critical element of the new initiative will be the development of world class infrastructure in India to support the effort, including the construction of new arenas and training facilities.

In line with its focus on developing the game at the grassroots level, IMG Reliance will advise the BFI regarding the organization and management of school and college leagues throughout the country. This will create a platform to develop and augment the talent pool of young men and women, enhance their opportunities to compete internationally, and successfully represent India on the world stage.

Earlier this year, IMG Worldwide and Reliance Industries created a joint venture in India, IMG Reliance Pvt. Ltd., to focus on unlocking the sporting potential, and create and operate major sporting and entertainment assets in the country. The association with BFI is IMG Reliance's first significant initiative in this direction.

IMG Reliance also plans to establish sporting academies in India, modeled on the world renowned IMG Academies at Bradenton, Florida, to provide athlete and coach training in the country.

The Basketball Federation of India or BFI is the governing and controlling body of basketball in India, and is responsible for the development and promotion of the sport at all levels. The BFI has been involved in conducting camps, clinics, events, and training sessions at its academies for the development of basketball. The BFI is striving to establish basketball among the top sports in the sub-continent. In line with the objective, the BFI's initiative with IMG Reliance promises to give a major thrust to the development of the sport in the country.



“It is an important development in the history of basketball in the country. This is a giant step towards our stated vision of making basketball a much-watched and popular sport in the country. We are confident that IMG Reliance will play a significant part in realizing this vision with a comprehensive program, involving development of a loyal fan base, as well as development of talent at an early stage. We are working towards kicking off the leagues at the onset of the sporting calendar in the country,” said **Mr. Harish Sharma, General Secretary, BFI.**

Commenting on the development, **Andrew Wildblood, IMG Reliance** said, “The game of basketball is one of the most popular spectator sports across the world. With the active support and participation from the Basketball Federation of India, we will work to take the sport to the next level. IMG Reliance will leverage IMG’s unparalleled experience of developing sporting leagues and talent development to make basketball in India a commercially exciting sporting proposition with a large fan base. The convergence of sport and entertainment has been successfully demonstrated over the past several years in India. We strongly believe there is room for multiple commercially successful professional sports in India. We further believe that basketball has all the necessary ingredients to take a significant share of the growing professional sports market in the country and to have great appeal for the Indian consumer.”

About Basketball Federation of India:

The Basketball Federation of India (BFI) came into being 1935 and took complete control over Indian Basketball in 1950. Until then the conduct of the championships was handled by the Indian Olympic Association. Since 1950, the BFI has been conducting various championships, from grass root level to sending the teams abroad for participation in international tournaments. The BFI has to its credit produced several international players of repute, among them 16 have been bestowed with the honour of Arjuna Award. BFI also has a very strong sub-junior and junior level programmes.

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