

# GOLDEN AMBITIONS FOR CHINESE BASKETBALL

China is a strong basketball nation and its national teams have a glittering tally of gold medals to prove it. Infront is helping to build Chinese basketball to the next level, creating potential for new superstars and increasing the popularity of the game among fans at home and abroad.

## **Infront's unique task**

Infront Sports & Media is the exclusive global marketing partner of the China Basketball Association (CBA) for the country's national basketball teams - men's and women's. This role covers all key aspects of marketing, including sponsorship, television, new media and image rights and technical development of the Chinese national teams.

Infront's unique task is more than commercial. It has promised to help raise China's position in the FIBA world rankings and – based on Team China's performance at the Beijing Olympics and major basketball events – it is succeeding.

This is a new kind of partnership between a Chinese sports body and an international sports marketing company, creating a powerful synergy in the promotion of Chinese basketball to the world.

## **A nation on the rise**

Basketball is one of the most popular sports in China; the country is an emerging power in the world game. Its men's team took gold in the last Asian Games and reached the quarter-finals at the 2008 Beijing Games, having fought its way through the most difficult group in the Olympic basketball tournament.

The women's team also took gold at the last Asian Games and is ranked as one of the best teams in the world. In the recent Olympics, it triumphed over Australia, Czech Republic, Russia and Spain, reaching the semi finals.

The sport appeals to both male and female fans - attracted to the fast, dynamic, powerful and competitive spirit of the game.

As a result of Infront's existing and parallel role with the Chinese Basketball League, there is a unique opportunity for broadcasters and sponsors to focus on Chinese basketball as a dynamic product and take advantage of the synergy between the CBA League and Team China. This will further help to put Chinese basketball on the world map and exploit its potential to the full as the best way to reach Chinese consumers through their favourite sport.

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## Most popular in China

Basketball is already one of the most popular television sports in China. It has overtaken football as the number one domestic sport with viewers. The number of players in the country is huge - 40% of China's children regard basketball as their favourite sport.

The superstars of the Chinese men's team include Yao Ming (a seven-time NBA All-Star) and the two young stars: Yi Jianlian (New Jersey Nets, entered the NBA in 2007) and Sun Yue (played in the NBA in 2008-2009).

## Strategic partnership with CCTV

Infront China and CCTV Sports Promotion Corporation (CCTVSP) have formed a strategic partnership to support the television coverage of Team China matches.

In 2009, Team China took part in a series of warm-up matches from May to August in preparation for the FIBA Asian Championship - it has been Asian champion 14 times, winning more gold medals than any other team in the history of this event and wants to maintain its stellar record. To achieve this, it invited strong opposition, from Australia, Canada and Lithuania.

There were nine matches for the women's national team during May and June and eight matches for the men's national team. All were covered on CCTV-5.

The women's games were broadcast across four TV stations and the men's across six. The total cumulative audience reached 90 million, the men's games accounting for 60 million and a cumulative broadcast time of 86 hours, whilst the women's team reached 30 million and a cumulative broadcast time of 63 hours. The live broadcast figures are also particularly impressive; the women's team reached a cumulative live audience of 24 million and a total live broadcast time of 37 hours. The men's team also stretched to a whopping 38 million live viewers, securing a total of 45 hours actual live broadcast time.

These figures demonstrate a major step forward, helping to put a domestic - as opposed to imported - sport in a strong position in the Chinese ratings and adding significantly to the return for the sponsors who support Team China.

**“Team China Basketball completed its magnificent re-birth at only 11 days during the Beijing Olympic Games, it prolongs Chinese basketball eternal hopeful spirit with inspirations and blood hood.”**  
Xinhua News, August 20, 2008