

Play Smarter Basketball



Play Smarter Basketball helps young man get to UC Berkeley.

Xu (Max) Zhang, right, with coach Richard Marquis, has realized part of his parent's dream, to one day have the possibility of playing at a university, where he can develop the skills to play pro-basketball somewhere in China's CBA or perhaps the NBA. Max is now headed to UC Berkeley on a basketball scholarship.

In October 2006, Temple City Life printed a story about a young Chinese man coming to America looking for a better life with a brighter future and the successful career of his coach, Chamber member Richard Marquis, who wanted to help his student realize that dream.

Xu (Max) Zhang has just recently signed a full scholarship to play for the University of California in Berkeley in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Under the direction of Coach Marquis, owner of Play Smarter Basketball, Max's training began approximately 18 months ago. At that time Max was 17 years old and 7'0" tall. He was thin and had very little basketball experience, starting to play only after he was 15.

Now, a year later, Max has adjusted to American lifestyle, polishing his English and working very hard to develop his around basketball skills at Coach Marquis's basketball classes where he was a student and then became a coach working with the younger kids in Coach Marquis's basketball classes. During this short time, Max has grown to 7'3".

His new college coach at Berkeley, Coach Ben Braun said, "Max is going to fit in very nicely with our returning players and with his size and new basketball skills; we are looking forward to his future here at Cal. We believe Xu (Max) Zhang is going to be an outstanding college player here in America."

This is a dream come true for Max's parents and the opportunity of a lifetime for Max. Because of his height, Max had skill you can't teach: being closer to the basket. But his parents wanted Max to improve his basketball skills in

the basket. But his parents wanted Max to improve his basketball skills, in hopes of one day playing at a university and possibly returning home to play pro-basketball somewhere in China's CBA, China's version of the NBA.

His mom and dad became aware of the coach's background because he has been coaching in Asia for many years. For the past ten years, Coach Marquis has been very actively coaching throughout China while training their men's and women's Junior Olympic teams and also training at two different universities: Sias International University in the Henan Province in Zhengzhou City in central China and Xiamen University on the Island of Xiamen in Southern China in the Fujian Province.

Now, with the University of California, Coach Marquis's protege is on his way. And that is much smarter basketball — and education.

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