

UNSTOPPABLE FORCE

BY ACE SIX
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELLER

Chris Bosh talks Jordans, Flightposites and the AFI.



Since CB4 came into the league, he hasn't backed down once. Not from a big shot, not from an opposing center, not from critics who said he was too thin to play in the paint. Not from anything or anyone. So when sneaker heads and ball fans saw the lacklustre support he was getting from his former shoe contract, we all shook our heads in disbelief. Then this year, in preseason, we all noticed a change in Chris Bosh. It wasn't the extra bulk on his frame, nor was it the 3-point shots taken with more confidence and frequency. It was the big swoosh on the side of his kicks.

Given that Bosh's game has been so frequently compared to a Mr. Garnett in Minnesota, it would be ill to see them re-issue his Flightposite line and let Bosh rock them until they launch a signature shoe for him next year, right? But, as he himself says, "Dog, it don't happen like that!"

Diehard fans can dream though, can't we? Until then we have the memories, like his ice-cold 56 footer at the end of the 3rd quarter against Washington. And when the camera panned down, real heads noticed the Air Force 25s. Catching up with the Raptors Centre at the 1st Annual Bosh's Kids Basketball Tournament, we rapped about the current state of the sneaker game from a player's point of view.

When did you get your first pair of Jordans?

I got them when I was in college. My first pair was the Jordan XVIIIIs, the black/blue ones. I couldn't afford them when I was growing up so I just wore whatever was cool. Some guys will only wear one brand, but I really wore whatever.

What was your favourite performance ball shoe before college?

The Nike Flightposites, the first ones that KG wore. I had a pair of them that I played in and I thought I was cold, man.

The line between performance and lifestyle footwear has become very defined whereas in the last twenty years they were one in the same, like the Jordan Vs you're wearing right now. Do you have any insight on that?

I think with Jordans, that's really just a unique thing. We all wanted to wear what people wore on the court then, but nowadays there's just thousands of different Air Forces out and that's what everyone is going with. I think that shoes today are really just made for basketball and if they tried to make them look casual then it might take away from that performance.

Who's got the best sneaker game on the team?

PJ Tucker. He comes with different sneakers, like, every day. Every day, a different pair.

Could you imagine playing in 1s like Sheed?

Yeah I could imagine it, but they'd need to be made well and be in some good colours. The ones he wears look good. He gets them done up properly.

What size do you wear? I wear size 14.

There's a saying that a Big Man shoe will never sell since Barkley. Who in the L could change that?

If they design the shoe right and it looks good, I think so. You also need the right person to promote the sneaker who appeals to a lot of people. Someone like Amare Stoudemire, as much as he dunks?! I know a whole bunch of kids want to be just like him.

Now that you've switched to Nike does it feel good to have some apparel to wear off the court?

It does, yeah. Now I can rock a bunch of different shoes, I got sweatsuits, t-shirts. You know, just little things that a lot of people take for granted. Converse didn't have that stuff.

What's your take on Damon Jones and Shaq going with Li Ning?

It's a business decision. They treat Damon like a king over there. I know they have a lot of input into colourways and what the shoe looks like, so I think it was a good move.

How big was the Slam cover for you?

It was real big, man. Me believing in myself, I felt like I deserved a cover, even though I'm being biased. It was crazy, though. The whole time I was thinking to myself, "This is SLAM!" You know, "This is SLAM!" I just hope that after me, guys like TJ and Kirk and Luke, who are doing well from that same class, get a chance too.

If you had a chance to design your own colourway for a shoe what would you do?

It would definitely have to have black and red with a little bit of white and a little bit of grey.

Where'd your number choice come from?

There was a deal with a bunch of my friends who played for the same AAU team as me. It was as simple as us all saying we would wear our same numbers as long as we played. I think I might be the only one still holding up my end of the bargain. I guess a lot of people think that I was trying to do the whole CB4 thing, but I wasn't even thinking about that.