

# James Coronado



Basketball has been life for James ever since he was a young child. Coming from a big family, he spent many of his early years competing versus his dad's 10 brothers and sisters in nearly every sport. As a result, a young James grew to be very competitive in everything he did. Born and raised in Fresno, California, he played any and every sport as time would allow.

He was a multiple sport standout athlete in high school which afforded him the opportunity to try his hand as a two-sport athlete at UCSB. While his college career fizzled out quicker than he expected, James maintained his love of sports in a different avenue, working with young children as a baseball umpire, camp leader, youth sports coach, and instructional aide at City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Division and Franklin Elementary. A great opportunity to still be involved in sports, this is only the beginning of what was to come for him.

Among his first duties working for the City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Division was umpiring baseball games. James seemed to be a natural offering words of advice and encouragement to young players. His love for sports fostered a gift for working with young athletes he never knew he had. He was given opportunities to work at summer sports camp and coaching in the parks and rec youth leagues beginning at Cleveland Elementary. Unfortunately or fortunately, Cleveland had a school coach so James jumped at the chance to coach multiple sports when the spot opened up at nearby Franklin Elementary.

In addition to coaching at Franklin Elementary, a young and eager James was called upon to work with young children in various capacities, not just in sports. "I always loved working at Franklin because I got to do a little bit of everything...teaching, coaching, assisting and learning from some of the best teachers in the area." While all those job duties were great, James always knew his passion for sports would steer him in the right direction.

That direction led him to start a grassroots club basketball team made up of over 95% Franklin students. James, along with his now wife of 15 years, Patty, began the "Tgop Franklin Eagles Club Bas-

ketball and Handball Teams". They wanted to start a program that would be affordable to any young athlete that wanted to compete at the highest level without the limitations of finances. He and his wife started a non-profit organization to help offset all the costs associated with playing club/travel sports.

The Franklin program became a huge success. Among many other tournament titles, their basketball teams won 4 national age group championships and their handball players won over 15 individual national titles, the most recent in 2008 and 2019, respectively.

While becoming a certified teacher and continuing his coaching at Franklin, a few former players pushed for James to join the high school coaching ranks. A bit reluctant because of time constraints, a spot coaching the freshmen team at Santa Barbara High School opened up, and

he took the job only to reunite with some of his former players. The new level of competition yielded the same results with Santa Barbara winning a share or outright league title in the competitive Channel League in all 4 years of his coaching tenure at SBHS. He is most proud of the fact that many of these young freshmen would eventually become CIF champs a couple of years later.

After coaching at SBHS for 4 years and assisting at Bishop Diego for 2 more seasons, James was given the reins to Bishop Diego as varsity head coach and leader of the Boys' Basketball Program. His first two seasons as head coach, Bishop quickly became contenders, finishing in 2nd twice in the Tri-Valley league. In addition, Bishop snapped a 57 league game winning streak of St. Bonaventure, defeating the powerhouse in 2017-18.

After 2 playoff exits, Bishop was headed for a rebuild in Coronado's 3rd season as the team graduated 13 players that school year. After a tough 2018-19 campaign, which saw 2 freshman and 2 sophomore starters all season, the rebuild had a quick turnaround when Coronado led a young Cardinal team to the CIF finals of the 2019-20 season. Although that team lost 62-60 on a buzzer beater, it led the core of the team to work harder the next 2 seasons which resulted in a historical championship season in 2021-22. The first ever CIF Boys' Basketball Championship in the school's history. Coronado has also led the Cardinals to California State Playoff tournament first round victories in 2020 and 2022. He is currently gearing up for his 7th season as Head Coach of Bishop Diego High School in 2022-23.

Throughout the years, James has received multiple awards. He was the Santa Barbara Independent Local Hero award recipient in 2004. He was selected as the World Pro Handball coach of the year in 2009, and United States Handball Association coach of the year in 2011. He received the Santa Barbara Roundtable Russ Hargreaves award winner in 2013. He is a 4-time Tri-Valley coach of the year, most recently in 2022 as well as CIF coach of the year in 2021-22.

James Coronado continues his passion for coaching and teaching in a myriad of roles including teaching 5th grade at Franklin, director of the basketball and handball programs for Tgop Franklin Eagles, head coach of the Bishop Diego Cardinals, as well as father of 6 children who, you guessed it, all play or played competitive basketball.