

# Using Sports Medicine for Spiritual Healing

DENVER BRONCOS ATHLETIC TRAINER COREY OSHIKOYA TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE NFL LOCKOUT TO SHARE CHRIST WITH PEOPLE IN GUATEMALA

BY TRAVIS REISH



**MISSION-MINDED:** Corey Oshikoya and six other team members traveled to Guatemala City with Athletes in Action to teach locals about sports injury care and share their faith in Christ.

**W**ho would have thought that anything positive could occur during the NFL lockout? While no football fan wanted the lockout to continue, Corey Oshikoya, an assistant athletic trainer for the Denver Broncos, actually experienced something positive as a result of being freed up from the 90-hour work weeks athletic trainers often experience in the NFL — He had time to travel with an Athletes in Action Sports Performance team to Guatemala early this summer.

Prior to the trip, Oshikoya, who is entering his 13th season with the Broncos, had some misconceptions about who should go on a mission trip. Many people think you have to be a well-known pastor or Christian speaker or seminary-trained to be used by God and make a difference on a mission trip; or be a college or pro athlete to travel with AIA. "I took away from the trip that we all have something to offer the world on Christ's behalf," Oshikoya says.

Oshikoya was in a unique situation with the future of the NFL in doubt — he was able to have time where he could use his platform as an NFL athletic trainer to share his love for God, but also share his love for sports medicine.

Oshikoya, along with six team members, headed to Guatemala City to teach about sports injury care and talk about a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The team was led by AIA staff member Jim Rumelhart. "We have been able to be a catalyst for the AIA staff in Guatemala and other countries to open doors for more tours to come," says Rumelhart.

Even though the sports performance tour was only in Guatemala for a short period of time, that does not mean that they did not have an impact for Christ. "I believe our daily highlight was to see the response we got every time we shared Christ," Oshikoya says.

The NFL lockout proved to be beneficial in Oshikoya's case, and Director of AIA Sports Performance Paul Newman believes that Oshikoya's involvement with the tour was a blessing. "It was God's leading that allowed for Corey to go on the tour," Newman says.

The tour also opened Oshikoya's eyes to



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what Athletes in Action is doing world-wide. "He wants to stay in touch with what AIA has to offer," Newman says.

It is easy for a short-term missionary to forget about what they learned while abroad, but Oshikoya refuses to let that happen, he wants to apply what he learned in Guatemala, and figures

the best place to do so is in his workplace.

"It is important that we, as sports medicine professionals, are able to be a light in a dark world to the athletes that we work with," Oshikoya says. "Whatever the level, we have the ability to be an example and share the strength and love of Jesus

Christ."

The sports performance team was in Guatemala from May 26 to June 1. While there, the team co-hosted the VII National Congress on Medicine in Sport in partnership with a pro-soccer physicians' association and the national sports federation. The team also taught at a prestigious physi-

**PASSING ON KNOWLEDGE:** The Athletes in Action Sports Performance team taught at a physical therapy school, a physical education school and the sports department at San Carlos University.

**EXTRA TIME:** The NFL lockout gave Corey Oshikoya and his team members some extra time this season. Instead of viewing it as a vacation, they took the opportunity to give back.

cal therapy school, the country's largest Physical Education School, and the sports department at San Carlos University. They even visited a Guatemalan sports radio show where they gave presentations about recognizing and treating sports medicine-related injuries. The Gospel was shared with hundreds of people and four Bible studies were started as a result of this trip, including ones with the national badminton team and an indoor professional soccer team.

"The trip reminded me, that we as people, athletes and those who work with athletes need to be strong physically, emotionally, and spiritually," Oshikoya says. "Without our health, we have nothing. Without emotional stability, we are no good to anyone. And without Christ, we are lost and longing to fulfill an empty void."