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Globetrotter - Eric Dunn has taken his game all over the world

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Around the world.

Every basketball player knows the drill different spots on the court, move along with a make, go until a shot has been converted from each location.

Eric Dunn's version of the game is literal.

The 36-year-old forward for the Vancouver Volcanoes has actually been around the world thanks to his basketball prowess, hitting many shots at every stop.

Counting the United States, Dunn has played in professional leagues in 13 countries.

The Los Angeles native said he didn't plan on becoming a basketball globetrotter after wrapping up his two-year career (1988-90) at the University of Oregon. It just worked out that way.

"Coming out of Oregon, I just knew I wanted to play," Dunn said.

He has played in Luxembourg, Taiwan, Switzerland, Spain, Croatia, Poland, Tunisia, Lebanon, Korea, Jordan, Qatar and Mexico, in that order.

"I've seen a lot, learned a lot," said Dunn, who is 6-foot-9, 255 pounds. "One of the unique things about it probably is that a lot of the places I've been have been close to conflict of some sort. ... I've also developed a lot relationships all over the world, with people I continue to network with."

Through it all, Dunn has kept Portland as his home base, returning to the city during the offseason. His children, Bryannah, 9, and Antony, 14, live in Portland.

Dunn has had two stints in NBA camps (first with the Seattle SuperSonics in 1991, then with the Denver Nuggets in 1996); played for Tri-City in the since-defunct CBA; and twice toured with Athletes in Action, playing exhibitions against NCAA squads and once traveling to Australia to play against teams there.

The crux of his career, however, has been spent as a pro in foreign lands.

"I see guys that go overseas all the time and end up coming back, because maybe they don't know the language, or don't feel comfortable or whatever," Volcanoes coach Dave Waldow said. "Eric has the confidence that he can go by himself to some foreign country and be a foreigner in a foreign land that says a lot about him, that he's able to do that." In addition to being the Volcanoes' starting power forward, Dunn owns the title of team advisor.

"It's a natural position for Eric," Waldow said. "I think a lot of the guys look up to him, being a little older and being a big, strong guy."

Dunn said the International Basketball League, brainchild of commissioner and co-Volcanoes owner Mikal Duilio, has impressed him so far.

"I like the concept of it," said Dunn, who is averaging 12.5 points per game for Vancouver (2-11), which hosts Central Oregon (7-4) at 7:30 tonight at Clark College. "In most the cities that the IBL has franchises in, we're not really competing with anybody at this particular time of the year. It's probably gonna grow. The style and pace of the game is faster, which a lot of people like."

The IBL's pedal-to-the-metal mantra is "unique," Dunn said, comparable only to his 1994 stint in Taiwan, and to there just because his team, Hun Quo, employed a run-and-gun mentality.

Taiwan may have been fun, but Dunn's 1997 experiences with Poland's Broc Superfish Kotwica Kolobrzeg hold the dearest place in his heart. In a matter of months, Dunn went from a minor role and worse situation in Croatia to great times in Poland.

"My coach was prejudiced," Dunn said of his three months with Croatia's Line. "He wasn't playing me, and I found out a year or two later that the name he would always call me basically meant "black" ... I was the lowest-scoring foreigner there. I got out of my contract, and ended up being the top scorer in Poland."

The Superfish fans grew so fond of Dunn that a Polish writer recently interviewed Dunn to give readers an update on his whereabouts.

"There is still a lot of love for me there," Dunn said. "We knocked off like nine straight games when I first got there, and the town just really embraced us."

There are plenty of other stories.

Like the time in Tunisia, where he played from 1997-98, when Dunn's team had to be escorted out of the arena after upsetting the home team "because they thought the fans would go nuts."

Or the instance, during one of Dunn's three stops in Lebanon, when "one of the owners of the other team came out of the stands and hit the referee. And then the owner's son ran over and threw some punches, too."

Dunn has played in gyms so packed that "if I were dribbling near the sideline I might step on somebody's toe," and at courts lined by guards "with AK-47s sometimes loaded, sometimes not."

Basketball has been the means by which Dunn has seen more of the world than most can imagine to. He has enjoyed quite a career, which he said will end soon.

"I'm kind of at the tail end of it," Dunn said. "It's not that my body isn't up to it anymore or anything, but I think I really am just looking forward to closing out this chapter of my life, and moving on to other opportunities."

Vancouver could very well be that last layup, the final stop in Dunn's 15-year trip around the world.