

NBA Media Conference

Thursday, March 27, 2025

New York, New York, USA

Adam Silver

Andreas Zagklis

Media Conference



ADAM SILVER: Andreas, thank you very much for being here in New York with us.

As you all know, we just concluded two days of our Board of Governors meetings, but one of the central topics was opportunities that we've been looking at to continue to develop basketball in Europe. I'm particularly pleased today, along with my colleague Andreas, to announce that we're ready to go to the next stage, and that is to explore a potential league in Europe with FIBA as our partners.

Just to talk a little bit more about it, my colleague Mark Tatum is here, the deputy commissioner and chief operating officer of the NBA. He's been taking the lead internally on this project and also as a board member of FIBA.

The NBA has been operating in Europe for decades, of course, in terms of selling our programming, playing both preseason games, friendlies and regular-season games. We were over in Paris just in January with the San Antonio Spurs and the Indiana Pacers where we played two games.

Many of us were over in France this summer for what was a very successful Olympics for the sport of basketball. It gave us the opportunity to have further discussions with many different stakeholders about the opportunity to bring the sport to what we would view as the next level using our NBA brand and our know-how in terms of operating a professional league.

The response we've gotten from the marketplace is very positive, whether it's from media partners, whether it's from fan research that we've done, discussions directly with FIBA, advertising agencies, and other clubs in Europe, several of them who have also been enthusiastic about the potential opportunity to better serve basketball fans in Europe.

Basketball is the No. 2 sport in Europe. It's widely popular. Hundreds of millions of fans. Roughly 15 percent of the

players in the NBA right now are from Europe. Five out of the last six of our MVPs have been European. But there's a huge gap, I think, between the amount of interest in the sport and the development in terms of how we operate a league here in North America.

It's something that is not a new discussion between the NBA and FIBA. Certainly my predecessor, David Stern, along with your predecessors, Bora Stankovic and Patrick Baumann, had discussions around potential opportunities in Europe literally for decades. But we feel now is the time to move to the next stage.

At our board meeting today, there was enthusiastic support from our club owners about continuing to explore this opportunity. With that, I'll turn it over to you, and of course we'll answer questions.

ANDREAS ZAGKLIS: Thank you for having me here and for these words. Good afternoon also from my side.

For FIBA, the growth of the game internationally is based on two pillars: very strong national team competitions and very strong club competitions. Coming out of the most successful World Cup and Olympics ever, we believe it is the right timing that we also take the next step for club basketball.

It is certainly, looking around the world, of course here in North America, the NBA is most popular and more commercially successful than ever. This is credit to you, Adam, to your team and the 30 owners and their teams, of course, thanks to our players.

At the same time, we see national leagues, national championships around the world growing very well at a very good pace, both in terms of commercial expansion as well as talent development. Before I get to Europe, you see Japan, you see Australia, you see our joint project in Africa having a significant positive impact on the continent, and several national championships in Europe are doing very, very well.

On the international level, meaning -- we call international the leagues that involve more than one country, clubs from



more than one country, FIBA has been running competitions for almost seven decades, since the 1957-58 season, and certainly we have seen great product. We have seen great players.

But at the same time, we have come to the conclusion that the popularity of the sport and the success that we've had with the national team competitions is not matched by fan interest and a commercial impact commensurate to that success.

It's natural for us as FIBA, having international club competitions as one of the three strategic priorities, to discuss with all our stakeholders, and one of our two most important ones is the NBA, together with the IOC, the two key institutional partners of FIBA.

As Adam said, these are not new discussions. They have been going on between him and Patrick in the past and between David and Bora. There is definitely another element that has helped over the last years, and that is that the NBA is represented on the FIBA board. I would like to thank Deputy Commissioner and COO Mark Tatum, who's been 11 years now on the FIBA board and on the reduced board a FIBA executive, and who understands very well our perspective, our primarily developmental perspective for the growth of the game.

I'm also pleased, therefore, to announce that further to the recent FIBA executive committee meeting, we have unanimous support to take the next step together with the NBA in the discussions for the creation of such a league. It is important for FIBA and its members to emphasize that the plan currently being reviewed, which we're still exploring, would be compatible with what FIBA and its membership, members, federations and leagues have been doing on the continent, both in terms of connection to the Basketball Champions League and to the national leagues, harmonization with the FIBA calendar, and of course an extremely important component of this is the support to the development activities of our members as well as the ones that we do jointly with the NBA, such as BWB, Basketball Without Borders, for the development of players, coaches and referees in the continent.

Thank you, Adam. Thank you also to the Board of Governors. A personal thank you to you because we are broadening and strengthening what is -- and I can tell you coming back from Greece and the IOC session -- what is a unique relationship between a North American professional league and an international federation.

Thank you.

Q. I know specifics are not perhaps necessarily

finalized yet, but could each of you address just what you are envisioning, what this league would look like? What are you hoping for? What, if anything, has been agreed to as far as just what the fundamentals -- this is what the NBA, this is what FIBA says has to be part of whatever this thing is going to look like going forward?

ADAM SILVER: Sure, I'll start and then hand it to Andreas. To your point, it's literally early days, so nothing has been agreed upon yet. We're still in the modeling and, I would say, exploratory stage.

One thing, though, we know is important is we want to honor the traditions of European basketball. There's some different rules, for example. It's a 40-minute game as opposed to a 48-minute game in the U.S. I think likely we would play in the current FIBA, what I would say current European format. There's strong tradition around the game there. I think stylistically the game looks a bit different than the NBA game. I think those are all very important aspects to us.

I think there's a tradition of open leagues in Europe. For Americans who sort of aren't familiar with the concept, we play under what we would call a closed league. We have our 30 NBA teams. There's no potential relegation of teams. I'm sure I'm going to get a question about tanking later, and maybe I wish there was.

But in Europe, on the other hand, there's an open system. Despite there being an open system, there's certain clubs that are perennially playing in those tournaments or in that club competition. I think, given the opportunity to design a league from scratch, one of the things we're looking at is what are the best elements we can take of both systems.

While I think we want a sense of permanence for some clubs because from an American standpoint we would say that incentivizes incentives, whether incentives to build new arenas, incentives to build brands, incentives to build new clubs, that's very important. On the other hand, I love that sense of hope that you see in Europe, and as I said, relegation would solve a lot of our problems. I'm just kidding.

So those are the kinds of things we're exploring. I'd just further add, so many changes are happening in media right now. Obviously in our new media deals, which we're entering into next year, streaming plays a huge part of that. As I said before, streaming isn't just a question of taking games that were on traditional media called broadcast or cable and putting them on a streaming service. It affords all kinds of new opportunities to produce games in new and different ways. Maybe it becomes particularly relevant in

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Europe: multiple languages, dialects, different opportunities.

We did talk with our board, incidentally, about this today, and we can talk about that more later. But again, whether that's gaming, yes, betting, consumer sales, user-generated content.

One of the things I'm fascinated in exploring is to the extent we have the ability to create a league from scratch, how would we do things different based on 79 years of learning in the NBA and based on decades of learning for FIBA in terms of how they see as the best way to operate a league.

ANDREAS ZAGKLIS: Thank you. I think that was a perfect summary. The only other element perhaps that I need to say from a European or international perspective is there is no NCAA in Europe. The production of players happens in the clubs. There is a pyramidal system of sports, and that means the road of hope, as Adam said, or this dream of developing and playing against the best is part of our mission, as well. A small parentheses, which is what we did, these two organizations, almost 35 years ago, saying that the best have to play against each other.

I do see an analogy in that because while we understand the benefits of permanent structures and developing certain markets in a certain way, at the same time, the wider the pyramid is, the better developed the pyramid is. That means the more clubs we have that are ready to invest in developing players, in winning their national league, in winning the BCL, in getting to a new league, the better it is for global basketball.

Why? This morning we had the EuroBasket draw. Twenty-four countries are playing, and that is only the final phase. World Cup, 32 countries play. We cannot limit ourselves in just a few countries. We have here more than 60 Europeans playing in the NBA and they are coming from more than 25 countries.

Our NCAA is the national championships and the second tier. So the interconnection between the two, this permeability that Adam described, is a big part of how the model could look.

Now, in terms of the FIBA rules, I think Adam has covered that, and of course on the commercial aspect, as well. This is, I believe, part of the discussions we're having right now.

Q. Is there still any room to negotiate with the EuroLeague as a whole, or are you just focusing on negotiating with clubs? And when it comes to the location for the new franchise, obviously for the NBA,

the facility and modern NBA-ready facility, it's a major thing. Would you favor that or more you're going to try to go into a market where there's basketball culture, or would you rather have the NBA-ready facility, which in Europe there are not many right now?

ANDREAS ZAGKLIS: With respect to your first question, I think all clubs that play in Europe are FIBA clubs. They play in their national championships. They play in their national cups. Some of them play in that competition. Some of them own a piece of that competition.

Our role as international federation is to unite as much as possible the basketball ecosystem. We have tried that in the past. We are trying it now and we will continue trying it, conducting meetings, conducting bilaterals with our stakeholders, including our top clubs.

I have tried and I think have managed to some extent to convince, especially during the difficult COVID times, that FIBA is here for everyone. We want our top-tier clubs to make more money, to become sustainable, because the majority of them are not, and also to motivate the rest of the ecosystem to play against them and produce players.

During that process of FIBA basically doing its job, whenever we've called the NBA, the NBA was there ready to help, ready to participate in meetings, ready to put its, no doubt, business acumen, but also its very high-level know-how of how you run a league and you deal with a different ecosystem. We will continue on that same path.

ADAM SILVER: I just want to add to the part about the cities and facilities. The answer is, number one, yes, we are looking at existing arena infrastructure in Europe, although at the same time I'd say part of the opportunity here is to potentially build more state-of-the-art basketball style arenas in Europe. That's where we see an opportunity in terms of incentivizing partners, potential team owners, maybe existing clubs to come in, modernize facilities or build new facilities.

In addition, we of course are looking at size of cities. Certain European cities obviously are well-known in the United States, are media capitals, capitals of industry. Those are things we're looking at. But also there are some hotbeds of basketball in Europe. I think my Greek friend can speak to the enormous enthusiasm about the sport in that country, in particular cities, Southern Europe. Tremendous interest in our sport. I think the factors you mentioned all become very relevant here.

Q. Adam, you mapped out domestic expansion here. You started with the CBA, then you said media deals, then you look toward expansion. For this venture,



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what are the steps to get to a launch? Is it media deals? Is it exploring interest? What are the steps for domestic versus this?

ADAM SILVER: So here, in order for us to in essence green light moving forward on this league, it would not require deals in place, because there's always risk with any new venture. But it will require us, and Mark Tatum leading those efforts on behalf of the NBA, creating a fully developed business plan where we have dealt with all potential stakeholders, understand the potential value for these franchises, have a better sense in the media market of what the value of these games would be, as I mentioned earlier, other commercial partners, what their level of interest may be. We have a blueprint in terms of what we do in the NBA.

At the same time, also recognizing in part why a partner like FIBA is so important, that there are fundamental differences in European basketball and European sport generally and how fans approach it. As I said, we're hoping for a merger of those two worlds.

But I think once we're able to concretize a plan in that way, I can't speak for Andreas' board, but in terms of the NBA, we have a committee process. We'd be working with some committees here. But ultimately it would require a vote of our board to move forward.

Q. You've talked about in the past how you want both existing and potentially new franchises, so just the composition of what this league could look like. How many teams are you imagining for this league, and how many would you think are new franchises that you build from scratch and how many are existing, and would that include current EuroLeague teams, either A, or B, license holders?

ADAM SILVER: The initial thought is that we would have a 16-team league potentially, and this is still very preliminary, maybe 12 permanent clubs and four clubs that would be in a position to play in on a yearly basis. But that's very much subject to change, and that's something we're just digging into now.

As to the composition of existing clubs, that's an ongoing discussion. One, I think we want to better test the level of interest of existing clubs. In some cases what comes with those existing clubs are huge global brands, in some cases those brands built through global soccer, not basketball, but we recognize there's a tremendous depth of interest in people rooting for those clubs, so that becomes very relevant, as well.

Then we also want to test the marketplace because I think

there we're in virtually every major European city you have basketball ecosystems, but then the question is there may be others who, given the opportunity to participate, may raise their hands and say I would be interested in potentially owning a club in that market. So we want to look at that, as well.

You sort of answered the EuroLeague question, but if you have anything to add --

ANDREAS ZAGKLIS: No, no, we will see.

Q. There are several EuroLeague teams that have been pretty open about their willingness maybe to leave EuroLeague. Have you had any contacts with them? Also, second question, what's the time frame, if there's any? Do you have a date for possible launch?

ANDREAS ZAGKLIS: It is our job to have contact with our clubs. These are clubs that participate in our ecosystem week in, week out. We had conversations and we will continue having conversations with the clubs that play in the national league only and they are interested, that play in the BCL and they are interested, or they are playing in EuroLeague and they're also interested. We're going to have a full range of discussions. I want to be clear about the openness of our position, at least speaking for FIBA right now, on these discussions. This is very important, that we are having these conversations for our fans and for the development and growth of our sport. This does not mean that this happens to the detriment of other stakeholders. It's actually trying to raise the tide for everyone in European basketball.

ADAM SILVER: One thing I want to add, for those who are sitting here or watching this and thinking, why all the fanfare around exploration of a league and not the announcement of a league. In part it's the response to your question, which is we want to have very open and direct conversations with existing stakeholders and not have back-room conversations. It was our feeling that if we announced our intentions then we could openly discuss with existing stakeholders, existing clubs what their level of interest is, and the community would know that, in terms of the FIBA community, as well. We felt that was a healthier way to go about it.

Q. Is it your preference that NBA owners have an opportunity to buy into this league if it were to happen, or would you rather have an entirely new set of owners? Secondly, as you talk about the cultural differences between American and European sports, salary cap is certainly one of them. As you know, labor laws are a little different in Europe. How do you guys think about the economics of being involved with



a league that looks more like Premier League soccer and less like the NBA?

ADAM SILVER: To deal with your second question first, honestly, we are not interested in operating a league that has no system of control in terms of competition, in terms of ultimate compensation paid to the players. We have a salary system in the NBA, but because it's a revenue-sharing system with the league, even though it's a capped system, as a function of its revenue sharing, there are enormous rewards for the players, I think likely the highest-paid players in the world in any sport.

It's something we're exploring. FIBA is obviously very helpful there. Lots of lawyers around the NBA learning the European systems and understanding there's real complexity there. But it may require a different approach than the way we can collectively bargain a salary system in the United States.

But still, we would want -- I think that's one of the expertise that we bring to the potential new league, a system where every team, regardless of the market size even in Europe, is in a position to compete and compete on as close to a level playing field as possible.

In terms of existing NBA owners, there's currently a rule in the NBA that you can only own one basketball club. At least it's our contemplation now that NBA owners would participate as a collective, as owners in the league, but not owners of individual clubs.

ANDREAS ZAGKLIS: Can I add something on the first question, because it has a regulatory component, and you know that we do three things as the world governing body. We organize competitions to generate revenues to the whole of the sport, but at the same time we regulate a lot of the international activity in the sport.

Some of the elements we regulate, especially the cross-country transfers, because if you transfer from one team in the NBA to another team in the NBA, that is under Adam's purview. But if you transfer from the NBA into a FIBA club, that comes under a different purview, and the same if you transfer from one country in Europe to another. We do see there our role. That's why we're really excited about how the international federation, with its different roles, can support this potential project, because there is no way in an international setup to put rules in place of that sort that Adam described without the regulatory backing of the international body in order to really have the control that Adam described.

We do have also in that respect not only a role but a contribution to make, which will help us have better

competition and better grow the sport in Europe.

MODERATOR: OK, Andreas, you can step down if you'd like, and Adam will take some questions on the NBA business side. Thank you very much.

Q. I wanted to ask about ratings, and I know it's been ticking, trending in the right direction. I don't know how to compile all of it, but are you happy with the way things seem to be trending at this point going into the postseason?

ADAM SILVER: Yeah, thank you. I am happy with where we are trending now. No question, we started slow. We were up against a Dodgers-Yankees World Series, a presidential election that commanded enormous interest, and our ratings were down significantly early on in the season.

We've gained so much over the last two months. In fact, the ratings for the last two months were the highest in six years, which has enabled us to get to roughly even with last year, regular season, which were our highest ratings in four years. In fact, we're up 10 percent on ABC right now. We're up a bit on ESPN. We're down a bit on Turner. When you blend that all together, I think we're at the moment down 2 percent.

But as I said, in this environment, where particularly when you're largely featured in legacy media and particularly cable, and no question cable subscriptions are going down, that seems like a victory. I think given the momentum right now, we're well-poised going into the playoffs.

Q. You said in September that at some point during the year the plan was to address expansion here in the NBA. With the Celtics' sale agreed to last week, with the TV deal done, with the CBA done, I was curious if there was any realistic timeline on when the vetting process for expansion would be getting underway?

ADAM SILVER: So the short answer is no new developments. But I would only say in terms of looking at this year, I think we're still in the process of digesting the Celtics' transaction. There's no doubt that a major transaction like that becomes relevant to expansion.

That deal has just been presented to us, so we're still analyzing it. My sense is once we've been through that process that we'll turn to it in a more serious way.

The league office has continued to model what potential expansion could look like over the last year or so. And again, that included both understanding dilution from an economic standpoint -- we now have a better

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understanding of that now that we have our national deals in place -- and also from a player standpoint.

I'd just add the last component, which also is giving me just a bit of pause, is that we'd like to have a better sense of where we're going with local media. Bill Koenig is here, our head of media. He made a fairly lengthy presentation to the board on that. It's well known that we've seen some significant declines there. Virtually two-thirds of our teams are now dealing with RSNs that recently experienced bankruptcies or have shut down.

I think while we understand the national media landscape now, to the extent we're looking at expansion domestically, I think we'd really like to understand what that opportunity for local media is, because it's a pretty critical component of our teams' economics.

Q. On the Celtics' sale, obviously Sixth Street is involved, a bit of an interesting structure. Have there been any discussions or were there this week about potentially altering the rules governing ownership in terms of how things are broken up as part of that?

ADAM SILVER: No, not at all. And while the deal in a preliminary fashion has just been presented to the league, at this time there's no contemplation of changing our ownership rules.

Q. Along those lines with Boston, Wyc Grousbeck came out and made a statement that he's going to be the controlling governor for the next three years. To your knowledge, do you know if that's a written agreement? Especially I'm curious with that in conjunction with what happened in Dallas recently. Mark Cuban was supposedly supposed to be holding on to that agency. Did not happen. Now the Mavericks are kind of in the throes of obviously a very big maelstrom, or whatever word you want to call it. Do you see a through line in those scenarios, and what would be the league's role in making sure that is an effective partnership moving forward?

ADAM SILVER: So first in Boston, I think the Grousbeck family and the buyer are still working through those arrangements on exactly how that would work in terms of CEO roles and governor roles during some transition.

I think the situation was very different in Dallas. There was a clear change in control of the franchise to Patrick Dumont and his family. Any decision as to what Mark's role would be in basketball operations was a function of an arrangement to be made between Mark Cuban and Patrick. The ultimate governance was absolutely clear, as presented to our board, that the last word on any

basketball activities or any significant decision for the franchise would be made by Patrick. I think Mark has acknowledged that, as I've obviously seen some of his commentary on the trade.

Whatever anyone's feeling is on the trade, Mark, at least as I understand it, has made clear that he did not participate in that. Whether or not his expectation was that he would have played more of a role in basketball operations, I don't think Mark has ever suggested that there was a contractual issue at play here. That was just what his understanding of what the arrangement would be between him and Patrick Dumont.

Q. You've spoken in the past year about the Timberwolves' sale and whether the structure of that deal may change the way NBA teams are sold in the future. My understanding of the Celtics' deal is it is not yet fully financed and there is a pre-priced option to buy a significant minority stake three years from now. How do you think about that structure relative to what's happened in Minnesota, and more specifically, what do you and other owners need to see from this bid to be comfortable saying yes to it and approving it?

ADAM SILVER: So again, it's very early days in that transaction. We're just learning about it. We haven't had a chance to not just vet potential owners but to really dig into the specifics of the deal.

I would say that transaction was underway as we were also looking at the Minnesota situation, so if there are any changes, ultimately they are unlikely to impact what the arrangements will be in Boston.

I will say, at the same time, every situation is unique in this league. I think it was clear, in the case of the Grousbeck family, the desire was both for estate planning purposes to sell the team. But I think there's no question that it's a terrifically managed franchise. There was also a view that to the extent that Wyc could remain as CEO and potentially governor over a period of time, that might be in the best interest of the organization, including for a new buyer coming in.

But as I said, it's just being presented to us now. We really haven't had a chance to discuss it, even your specific question about the way the deal is structured. We really got to get into that with them and better understand it.

Q. Last year you went on JJ Redick's podcast and one of the things you were talking about in the long conversation was how the game of basketball is covered. Currently there's a war of words going on



between Stephen A. Smith, who's with one of your biggest media partners in ESPN, and LeBron James, who's one of your most popular players, and the conversation is no longer about the sport of basketball. I wonder what your thoughts on that and just the overall state of the basketball discourse is.

ADAM SILVER: I'll begin by saying, I just ended board meetings that began at 8 a.m. this morning. I will say my phone was in front of me and I received several texts that said, "are you watching this?" And I said, "What's this?" And they said, "Stephen A." So, I understand. I saw some of the headlines that came out of it.

It's fascinating; Joe Dumars actually was talking about the state of the game at our board meeting. Actually Mike Krzyzewski, also, who's become an advisor to the league, spoke about the state of the game, as well.

But Joe was saying to the team representatives in the room, many of whom have not been involved in the game as long as he has, that we're a particular sport in which that kind of debate seems to be part of the DNA of this league. I'm jealous sometimes; it seems that in other sports that I'm a fan of, and when I watch the coverage, particularly around the games, it seems to be more celebratory often than it is in the NBA.

I accept it. We're often the beneficiary, too. There's seemingly as much social media interest in this league at times than all the other leagues combined, so it's a two-edged sword. Sometimes it's measured in column inches, and it's wonderful to see so much interest in our sport. At other times I cringe at a lot of the coverage.

I would just say in terms of that back and forth, again, I haven't had an opportunity to watch or read precisely what went on today but of course would like the focus to be on the play on the floor.

I particularly feel protective of our players, of course, but I recognize that there's a cottage industry out there of media that we are often the beneficiary of that talk about our sport around the clock. But I sure wish it would never become personal.

Q. For fans who have kind of ridden the peaks and valleys of this expansion conversation, at this point what is kind of what you see as a viable timeline for how this is going to play out, being that you originally had thought that it was going to be addressed before the end of the season? And with that, what's your message to fans in these cities that have been talked about for expansion who are kind of getting maybe tired of going with the ups and downs?

ADAM SILVER: Yeah, so I'm tremendously empathetic to those fans. I will speak directly to Seattle and very much appreciate your being here.

I wish I could be more conclusive today and say, here it is, here's the timeline. There are events that are clearly outside of my control. Part of it, as I said, is trying to assess value in a way that's both fair, even to a potential owner, and fair to the existing owners in terms of what it means to add additional partners, different cities, divide up our current media pie with the 31st or 32nd share, and also, we want to make sure we put teams in a position, particularly as we're setting the price, to be in a position to be competitive, economically successful and just as important for the other teams, successful on the floor.

The issue I would not have anticipated at the time I sort of began talking about the timeline is how much unknown there is about local media right now.

Having said that, though, I would just say again to our many fans in Seattle, and I hear from them often, and the legacy of the Sonics is still very strong and it's a fantastic basketball market, is that we are very focused on it.

The fact, I think, that I'm not being more sort of forthcoming publicly doesn't mean we're not studying it very intensively. We don't take those fans for granted. We're thankful that the interest has remained over all these years.

So I would just say the fact that we're not ready to make any public announcements with a specific timeline doesn't mean we don't care a lot about those fans and we aren't focused on the potential for the NBA to return to Seattle.

Q. You made a couple of jokes about relegation earlier, and it seems like this time of year we like to talk about what's to be done about tanking. Do you have any new thoughts on it?

ADAM SILVER: Other than relegation [laughter]? A few things. One is, we have made progress, I would say, just to put it in context, with the changes we've made to the Draft Lottery, the 65-game marker for player participation, the player participation policy generally, and the Play-In Tournament. I think for the Play-In Tournament in particular, you've seen some teams who might have otherwise thrown in the towel sort of a month or so ago are now competing.

On the other hand, again, I understand why there is a relegation system in other leagues, because it comes down to incentives. I think individual players seemingly always have an incentive to win and to play hard, to a point. I



think players understand what the consequences are of games and also don't want to get hurt for no reason, so I don't want to completely dismiss that.

But there's no doubt that incentives change at the end of a season, especially when you have a draft that's perceived, not just with the top pick but the top maybe few picks of an incredibly strong draft. That's a legitimate way of rebuilding in this league.

I'm not sitting here saying here's the new calibration to the Draft Lottery and that'll solve it. We don't have a new plan at the moment. We have a competition committee meeting tomorrow. We're going to talk about it again, and I'm also very aware that at the end of the day, all the trappings around this league, what we're ultimately selling is competition. So I don't like to see it.

I understand it. I understand what the motivations are for a team. Worst part of my job is fining and chasing teams and seemingly getting into coaches' decisions about minutes and everything else. But we also want to make sure we're upholding the integrity of the competition, as well.

I don't have an answer sitting here today as to what we're going to do other than to say that we recognize it's an issue, and it's an issue for our fans, so we're paying attention to it.

Q. You addressed the cottage industry that we're dealing with, but it seems like there's a generational war that's happening at the same time. The NBA likes to celebrate its history, its culture, its past, but it doesn't seem like that's being celebrated by its players currently in the same way. How do you feel about that personally?

ADAM SILVER: I'd only say now as I get older, it seems like we say the same thing about every generation, and now the older -- my generation of former players who are on TV are saying the same thing about the younger players that when we were all younger everyone was saying about them.

I'm not sure it's so new. I do think because of the amount of different services that can provide these programs now, the podcasts, the social media, there's so much of it that it gets maybe amplified in a way it didn't historically. But I don't think people have dramatically changed, certainly in the 30 plus years that I've been involved in the league.

Still, to go directly to your question, I don't feel great about it, and it's something we talk a lot about. In fact, as I mentioned earlier, Mike Krzyzewski addressed our board,

and one of the questions to him was as essentially an outside observer, a basketball aficionado who has no stake in any particular style of play or team, is there anything you would change right now. For example, three-point shooting came up; do you think there's too much three-point shooting in the league. I'd say -- I'll let him speak for himself, but he said, I would be cautious about overreacting in terms of rule changes, but he went much more to the culture of the NBA, and he said, as a fan, I'd love to see more celebration around the game.

Now, by no means is that to suggest that everyone who -- hard-hitting members of the media should be cheerleaders for the game. I get that. Your role is your role. I mean, maybe it's as much for the NBA community, not the media covering us, but sometimes I think we're the hardest on ourselves.

It does feel to me sometimes as a fan of many different sports that, as I said, repeating what Joe Dumars was saying at the meeting, that sort of this debate notion in the NBA has always been part of it, and I don't mind -- I got a question before about Dallas. I accept that. That's part of sport. People are going to go on and on. Terrible trade, time will tell, et cetera. That's what sport fandom is all about and we appreciate the engagement very much, take note of the fact that people care so much about what happens with their teams.

When it moves as -- again, I haven't seen it yet today, what Stephen A. said, but when it comes very personal between a media member and a player, of course that's not something I want to see as the commissioner of this league. And to the extent that we can help direct coverage and do a better job talking about what makes this game special, I think that's a way to serve fans.

But it may be -- we are a source of media ourselves. We have a website. We have an app. We have a network. Again, consumers, fans have lots of different choices, but I took Coach K's comments also as a suggestion to the NBA that maybe there's more that you all can be doing to not just celebrate the game but teach the game.

As he was saying, there's so much discussion about three-point shooting, but maybe there should be more discussion about how that player was put in the position to get open for that three-point shot. We don't seem to talk about defensive schemes that much in this league. The statistics lend themselves -- they're more easily absorbed in terms of offense.

I think there are things, as I was saying earlier, as you move to a streaming world where you have fewer constraints in terms of the window for the game, you can



have more pregame and postgame activity, you can have more options for fans, I think there's a better opportunity to celebrate and educate fans and more opportunity for the media to do its job, as well, and be critical where you and they feel it's appropriate.

Q. I want to ask you a few updates. First, the Timberwolves sale situation. Last time we talked in this setting, you mentioned that Glen Taylor had the option to appeal. Has he, and where does that stand? Secondly, you mentioned the streaming national RSN has been a topic. You mentioned that media local is a big deal, and I wondered what the update is with that. I know that's been a six-month study you had talked about earlier. Finally, I wanted to get your reaction to the All-Star format, coming out of that this February. What did you think of it, how it went, and what do you think is going to happen going forward?

ADAM SILVER: On the Timberwolves, so where that stands is Glen Taylor does have the right to appeal, and I know he is considering his various options right now, and I believe he's also talking directly to Marc Lore and Alex Rodriguez, so we're on hold there and waiting for decisions among the parties.

In terms of the six-month study on RSNs, in fact Bill Koenig, sitting right in front of you, made that very presentation to both our media committee yesterday and our board today about what that study, what we've concluded from those studies. I would say that, in short, we think there's enormous opportunity there. We established value for these games in the national marketplace, I'd say, as a benchmark in the three deals we announced last summer.

I'd say from a local standpoint there's enormous confusion out there. I think because, as I said earlier, you have bankruptcies of RSNs, other RSNs that have shut down, and I think that's created, for lack of a better term, a lot of transactional friction of people would otherwise be interested. At the same time, well-known streaming services that only a year ago were saying they had no interest in live sports are now aggressively bidding on live sports.

So we see no reason why to the extent there's that interest on a national basis or even a global basis there wouldn't also be on a local basis.

Just one last thing that Bill presented on the meetings, is just it goes to the level of engagement. It's a nice shorthand. If in a national game, two-and-a-half hour window, the average fan watches on a national game for 44 minutes, it's double that for a local game. So that just

goes to the level of engagement.

I also think that as you see a further decline in legacy television, and I think you're going to see another drop as ESPN goes direct-to-consumer in the fall, the competition will heat up among streaming services as to what your default network will be.

I think still, for people who have traditional television, I think the research demonstrates you're still most likely if you have cable to turn on cable, see what's on and then maybe go to a streaming service.

I think as some more sports migrate away from cable and move to streaming services, it'll become increasingly important where that starting point is, and to the extent you have local live sports, I think in addition to the ratings and interest those games generate, it's going to become even more valuable for the platform.

I was very encouraged by what Bill presented in his study and what we're learning from the teams, and the next step is now to have additional conversations with potential partners, and I'll just add, as I said, even since we began that study, there have been more entrants into the marketplace.

I think you're going to -- I won't say any specific brands, but I think you're going to see some more non-traditional media brands -- if we were all sitting here a few years ago and talking about Amazon as a carrier of sports rights, I think a lot of people would have scratched their head and said that doesn't necessarily make sense. And now I think you're going to see a whole new generation of companies that transact through an app or on the internet with their customers saying there's no reason we also shouldn't be a portal to be delivering sports particularly in a hyper local way to sports fans.

I'm glad I wrote your list down because last was All-Star.

I thought we made almost an immeasurable amount of progress. Sitting there, I thought this was a little better, but it was a miss. We're not there in terms of creating an All-Star experience that we can be proud of and that our players can be proud of. We are changing partners next year. NBC as part of their new package is going to carry the All-Star Game. I will say they are very enthusiastic about All-Star as a marquee property.

It happens to be that next year when our All-Star Game will be on NBC, we're going to fall right in the middle of the winter Olympics, that they will be both the lead-in into the All-Star Game and the lead-out will be out on the West Coast in Los Angeles, the Clippers will be the host, which

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given the Olympic competition, sort of is creating new thoughts around how we can bring national competition to bear.

Of course we took note of the great success the NHL had with their national team competition as their All-Star festivities. Looking back at my friend Andreas, I wish you were still sitting here for this, but people have floated USA-World. I'm not sure that makes sense with the level of development, if that's fair to lump all the other countries together these days. Maybe that we can single out, there are some different national teams that can compete.

But I think at the height of this, it goes back to one of the earlier questions. We sell competition, and I think that our players recognize they're not putting their best foot forward when there's a sense that not all in on playing an All-Star Game. And I take responsibility, too, because we're both a sport and an entertainment brand, and we recalibrated for this year's All-Star Game in San Francisco around more of an entertainment product and don't think it worked.

The breaks were too long. I get it; it was an opportunity to celebrate TNT as they were going to have their last All-Star Game. It was well intentioned, but I think the long stoppage in play, for example, in that final game didn't work for anyone.

So, we're a bit back to the drawing board.

Q. About a year ago now, you banned Jontay Porter. That has since metastasized into what seems to be a federal investigation, including college sports and multiple NBA players. How much faith do you have that no other NBA players will or are currently manipulating their performances and games in a similar way, and what can the NBA do to be proactive instead of reactive in the future in situations like this?

ADAM SILVER: Well, I don't know why you're suggesting we aren't proactive. I think we're very proactive. I think we now have the ability, as opposed to the old days before there was widespread legalized sports betting, to be heavily into the analytics of every game, looking at any blip, anything that's unusual. I've compared it in the past to insider trading. They catch insider trading largely because the analytics are such that in many cases that they see unusual activity and they investigate it.

I think here, the systems we have in place I think are state-of-the-art in terms of ferreting out unusual activity.

In terms of my faith in the future, human beings are fallible; I don't want to suggest that we have a perfect system and there aren't going to be any players that violate the rules. I

certainly have absolutely no basis sitting here today to say there are multiple NBA players involved in anything inappropriate.

We have no -- if we had any independent knowledge, we would be acting on it. Law enforcement, they have the right to bring criminal prosecutions, but we have the right to regulate our own league. And so if we thought there was anything inappropriate that we were aware of, of players on the floor, we would not be waiting for the conclusion of an investigation. We would be acting on it.

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