

December 14, 2004

Commissioner David Stern
The National Basketball Association
645 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Commissioner:

In light of recent events in the sporting world in general and in the NBA in particular, our class in the History and Philosophy of Kinesiology at the California State University Northridge has discussed the role of fans at professional sporting events. Based on our discussions, we have come up with several suggestions that may be beneficial to the NBA's efforts to promote the game and to educate people about what it means to be a true NBA fan.

Our suggestions, while perhaps triggered by the events of the Indiana-Detroit game on November 19th, are not merely a reaction to those events. We are fans of the game who understand and appreciate the joy that attending a basketball game offers. We also recognize that fans have a responsibility to behave in a manner that at least does not diminish other's experience of the game and will hopefully promote the joy experienced by all present at the stadium, including the players. Given that it is a pleasure to play for a knowledgeable and appreciative crowd, fans are an integral component in making the NBA what it is. Therefore, we hope that our suggestions will be taken by you as an effort on the part of some fans to help educate and coach other fans about what it means to be an All-Star fan. We have four suggestions that will hopefully achieve this end.

Family Seating Section: In an effort to promote the NBA to young fans and ensure that they have an appropriate NBA experience, we suggest that you designate a portion of the arena for family seating. In this section, alcohol will not be served or allowed. Additionally, a strict policy for language and behavior will be enforced. While anyone can purchase tickets in this area, they must abide by the family values that this section promotes.

Fan Recognition: Generally fans are not recognized unless they act inappropriately. Additionally, many awards that recognize the fan have to do with being fanatical. We suggest an award that recognizes the fan that acts in accordance with the spirit of true competition and embodies the values of the game. One way to hold a competition and promote the spirit of the true fan is to have an essay contest for young fans. Also, the NBA could sponsor public service announcements that recognize true and honorable fans. Such exposure would provide an exemplar for other fans as well as displace the predominant image of the unruly fan.

Stadium Marshals: In addition to general security and arena management, we suggest the use of stadium marshals. The marshals would be “undercover” security agents who sit randomly throughout the stands, but who can respond immediately to fan misbehavior. While this may seem like an aggressive action, it will protect those who are unsure about standing up for themselves when confronted by a threatening or unruly fan.

Fan Code of Conduct: We have attached a copy of our NBA Fan’s Code of Conduct. We feel that it is important that fans have a philosophical statement that they can turn to as a guide about proper fan behavior. It should as much as possible focus on the good aspects of what a fan brings to and derives from the NBA experience, but should also clearly state that misconduct will not be accepted. Additionally, we strongly recommend that the Code of Conduct be printed on the back of every ticket, so fans recognize their responsibility to act appropriately when entering the arena. Such an action could help promote a culture of the good fan. The Code of Conduct could also be posted throughout the arena, in the program, and even on souvenir cups.

In no way are these suggestions meant as a condemnation of the NBA or NBA fans. Rather, we believe that the NBA is a great league and that attending an NBA game is an unsurpassed sporting experience. These suggestions are just our small way of saying thank you for all the great moments that the NBA has provided us and hopefully giving back in some measure to promoting the grandeur of the game.

We offer our sincerest thanks for your consideration of our suggestions. If you have any questions or would like further information, please feel free to contact our instructor, Douglas McLaughlin.

All the best,

Douglas McLaughlin and the students of KINES 305, Section 1

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