

THE TRANSFORMATION OF GRASSROOTS BASKETBALL

REBECCA ADELMAN OF THE MPOWER SPORTS GROUP
DISCUSSES HOW TO NAVIGATE THE RICE COMMISSION'S REPORT



< REBECCA ADELMAN
FOUNDER & CEO | MPOWER SPORTS GROUP

12

As a lawyer and certified agent, I eagerly awaited the “transformative recommendations” from the Rice Commission in April, 2018. While MPower serves as a full-service sports management group, we understand our collective responsibility to a holistic approach intended to strengthen the culture of youth basketball, teach life lessons, and empower youth to live a full and healthy life. Also, educating parents and students along the competitive cycle promotes greater opportunities for student-athletes.

PERMITTING STUDENTS TO RECEIVE MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS EARLIER WITH ASSISTANCE FROM CERTIFIED AGENTS

Recognizing the need for student-athletes to be fully informed about their future pathway, the Commission recommends strict standards for NCAA certification of agents. The report states a certified agent should be authorized to engage with student-athletes at school at specific times during the calendar year. This recommendation is consistent with the NCAA rules that allow student-athletes to retain lawyers and advisors to provide professional advice at market value, provided the lawyer or advisor does not engage in the representational activities of agents. It is uncontested that students and their families need timely, reliable and trusted sources of information about their likelihood of professional success.

Such contact is prohibited right now. Allowing NCAA certified agents to talk with players during their high school years will allow players a realistic sense of their professional prospects before they make the decision to enroll in college. Student athletes must have the information they need to understand their real choices and be better positioned to take advantage of either the collegiate or professional path they choose.

SUMMER RECRUITING CONTROLS

The Commission proposed that the NCAA run its own summer recruiting events for prospects and take a more stringent approach to certifying what it called “non-scholastic” basketball events. The Commission recommended the construction of a series of camps that would be operated jointly by the NBA, its players association, USA Basketball and the NCAA. According to Rice, these regional camps “would be the only ones that NCAA coaches attend in that crucial recruiting month.”

The Commission also proposed requiring non-scholastic events to have an educational component and that the NCAA ban coaches from attending unsanctioned events – a move that may take away a key draw for recruits who play specifically to be seen. The certification process would allow the NCAA to keep a closer eye on the operations of AAU teams and coaches, who often hold more sway with players than high school coaches.

The NCAA is ready to make drastic changes to the way high school basketball players are recruited by Division I colleges. The summer evaluation period will reportedly be overhauled, with the goal of lessening the influence shoe company-sponsored grassroots teams and coaches have on recruiting.

So far, here is what has been reported: The NCAA will fund and host four regional camps — potentially one in June and one in July — that will feature around 2,000 or 3,000 athletes. These camps will be held on rotating college campuses. The top 700 or so players at these camps will then compete at another camp that the committee hopes will be run by G League coaches, and possibly even college and NBA players.

The Commission said from the onset that the NCAA must “take control” of AAU basketball, recommending the NCAA run its own events that steer elite recruits away from the shoe company leagues.

The risk of being decertified could curb some backroom deals involving recruits. The Commission also recommended the NCAA partner with USA Basketball and the NBA to create new resources and programs for youth basketball development, which could help prevent corruption.

I also believe that AAU teams may not want to disclose their finances to the NCAA or be forced to add an educational element to their programs. They’ve operated autonomously for years and likely won’t want to change, which could present problems for the NCAA in gaining widespread compliance.

As the compliance deadlines approach, we’ll see how the NCAA responds to the recommendations.

MPower's RECOMMENDATION ON CHOOSING A SUMMER TEAM

With Summer Sneaker Circuit, AAU basketball and local summer league basketball threatened with losing certification privileges, the Rice Commission’s initiative to “clean up” amateur basketball is clear. The Jr. NBA program sponsored by the National Basketball Association will have added importance along with showcases that emphasize training, wellness programming and strong competition.

Nevertheless, it is still important for parents and their student-athletes to recognize basketball programming that emphasizes development. Select programs that emphasize skill training along with strength and conditioning. Play with teams that allow ALL the players to participate on a consistent basis, especially in the early years of development. Look for coaches that are responsible communicators and work hard to solve problems in a game instead of yelling and getting upset at every mistake a player makes. The key to building athletes that are responsible teammates and have the ability to overcome adversity starts with coaches that understand the basic fundamentals of communication to go along with basketball skill work and training.

REBECCA ADELMAN IS THE FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF **MPower Sports Group**, A NEW VISIONARY SPORTS TALENT GROUP CREATED TO EMPOWER CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES. WITH DECADES OF EXPERIENCE IN BUSINESS LITIGATION AND CONTRACT FORMATION AND NEGOTIATIONS, REBECCA HAS DEVELOPED A MODEL OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE FOR HER PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES. SHE ADVISES ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND GROWTH STRATEGIES TO CREATE PRESENT AND FUTURE FINANCIAL SECURITY AND LASTING LEGACIES.

- REBECCA IS A CERTIFIED NBPA, WNBPA AND FIBA PLAYER AGENT
- 30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A LAWYER AND A CERTIFIED MEDIATOR
- MEMBER OF THE SPORTS LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (SLA) AND THE INTERNATIONAL SPORT LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (ISLA)
- “SUPER WOMEN IN BUSINESS” AND “POWER PLAYER” IN LITIGATION BY THE MEMPHIS BUSINESS INDUSTRY
- “WOMEN TO WATCH” AND “EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR” BY THE MEMPHIS BUSINESS JOURNAL