



The inevitable has happened and the NBA has cancelled the first two weeks of the 2011-2012 season. Despite much misguided optimism by fans and media members, this scenario was fate that was definitely going to occur. There was never going to be a full season. Hell, there might not be a season.

Where do we begin? Most people like to blame the players for the position that the NBA is currently in. The narrative that I repeatedly hear about the players being greedy is probably misguided. Although I believe this, I am not going to sit here and argue in favor of workforce whose average salary is 5.15 million dollar. Typically people resent the athletes in these situations because they are often seen as wealthy men who would not be in their position if it were not for their athletic talents. The owners are trying to paint the players (their “product”) into a corner and forcing them into taking an unfair deal. Enough missed paychecks and the NBA Players Association is going to be forced to cave.

When we are talking about men who make millions of dollars a year, it is difficult to understand how this could even be a possible scenario for the lockout. To most people, one year of NBA salary is enough to live and retire with. The thought of a missed season and a few months without getting paid coercing the players to take a deal that they find unfair is astonishing.

In an ironic manner, the owners are the ones to blame for this mess but the players are going to be the group to ultimately end this lockout. It is important to remember that the players are not on strike and that the owners locked out the players. Eventually, the players are going to be forced to accept a worse deal than they are being offered now and this lockout will have happened for nothing. Competitive balance was never on the table. This was always strictly about guaranteeing profits for the owners. And yet, the players are the ones that are seen as greedy and overpaid. Sadly, I wouldn't expect a discount on merchandise and tickets once the owners eventually get their way.

When the players stage a plea on Twitter to “let us play,” it mostly falls on deaf ears because many fans are of the opinion that they can indeed play if they would simply take the deal offered by the owners. The public relations of the NBA and David Stern is working. After Sunday night’s meeting concluded, Stern commented that the owners have made concessions. Considering that the original offer from the owners was a pipe-dream, Stern should not be patting himself on the back for the owners’ ability to bargain. This “concession” is akin to a man walking into a car dealership, making an offer of \$8,000 for a \$30,000 car and complaining that he doesn’t understand why the dealer didn’t take his “fair” offer of \$20,000 during the final hour.

The owners are winning this PR war partly because of the aforementioned reasons and also because the players are going about this in a questionable manner. Because he is an easy target around these part, I will refer to a [tweet](#) by LeBron James.

“I wanna sincerely say sorry to all the fans! It's a sad day for all of us, especially u guys! There's no US w/o You. #loveugays”

Much of the criticism towards the owners and players is that they are outraged at the other party and the fans do not have any say in the matter. To most of us, this is simply a hobby. To others, NBA basketball is a passion. I do not feel that anybody should have to justify resenting either side of this fiasco beyond that which is understood: We are fans, they are arguing over our money and we are essentially left without a single course of action besides complaining about it on Twitter.

Sending out the aforementioned tweet is a nice gesture on the surface, but I see it as an insulting form of pandering. The players waited until the last possible minute to throw the fans a bone and pretend that they are concerned with our feelings. The ball is in their court to accept a deal no matter how unfair it is. Doing so is literally the only way to end this because the owners have shown that they are not going to negotiate.

Love it or hate it, LeBron James is the face of the NBA. When he says that “There’s no US w/o You,” it would mean a lot more if the timing was not so suspect and if he didn’t intentionally go far out of his way to break the hearts of the fans that supported him for so many years. For the owners and players, I have one message: There is no you without us and depending on how ugly this ends up, we may not be back.

Sadly, our only power as fans is to not spend money on the NBA once it does return. If history is any indication, the fans will be back to supporting the league once this mess ends and all will be forgotten. I wish I could say that I have it in me to turn my back on the league because of this insulting display of arrogance and greed, but I know I will be eager to watch the NBA once it returns. All will not be forgotten and there most certainly will be feelings of resentment. In the end, games will have been missed, the product will be devalued and that will be done in the name of guaranteeing profits and pretending there is leverage.

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