



**COVID-19 PANDEMIC WORK STOPPAGE UPDATE
MARCH 18, 2020**

Dear Refs,

We are midway through Week 2 of the work stoppage and I'm just checking in to see how you're all doing!

And while it should kind of go without saying, I also wanted to declare officially that this weekend's tournaments at the Ladera Sports Center and Alliant University have been cancelled. Our last standing domino — the Crossroads Basketball League — likewise announced they will suspend their season for the time being. From my conversations with multiple assignors around Southern California, everything seems to be on hiatus. If you know of anything that is still active, please let us know. I believe the best route through this pandemic is complete transparency and communication. Assignors especially should be working together to give the officiating community the most complete and accurate prognosis of when we might get back to work.

In terms of payouts: a majority of game fees from our various youth leagues have been disseminated (adult league forfeits as well). Over the weekend I rapidly put together over \$15,000 worth of invoices to submit to our clients before they completely shut down for the rest of the month. Once those checks start arriving, it will be enough replenish our treasury and we'll be back in great position to help out any veteran union members that may need it to get through this furlough. Also keep in mind that Congress will likely pass a relief bill with up to \$2,000 earmarked for every American worker — a huge help towards making up all of our lost game fees.

And one more bit of good news: our YMCAs and several city leagues have sounded fairly confident that they will resume play by mid-April. Open Gym Premier will try to make up the tournaments we've missed on any and all available weekends — and even some weekday stretches — throughout the summer. A few of the bigger volleyball events backed out of using the American Sports Center, leaving an opportunity for our clients to fill it with basketball. It's an incredible source of relief to know that our clientele is spearheaded by some of the sharpest minds in grassroots basketball and we're constantly brainstorming ways to arise out of this hiatus with even more opportunities for their programs and our staff.

Finally, I want to say that it's been really great catching up with several of you over the phone, getting to talk about stuff beyond just each weekend's schedule. Most members seem in very good spirits, spending extra time with family, burning through that Netflix queue, or just recovering from the winter season. Once the weather clears up next week, if any of you are interested in a low-key beach trip, you're more than welcome to visit me in Newport/Laguna. Don't worry — we'd still be abiding by all social distancing prerogatives. As you can see by the attached photos (taken yesterday), there is substantially more than 6 feet of space between everybody there. While we cannot congregate in the numbers we're used to, it might be fun to pass the time getting to know each other better in smaller groups. It's important that we stick together even though it may still be a while before we get to work together.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Balasinski". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Chris Balasinski
Ref Union