



Dear Refs,

To those that haven't heard the news yet, I'm sorry to announce that the Jr. NBA Regional tournaments have been **cancelled**; not just our own but likewise across the nation, as well as the 2022 Jr. NBA Global Championships. The official – and incredibly unsatisfying – explanation was the “continued unpredictability of the pandemic” per a league memo sent out to registered team coaches.

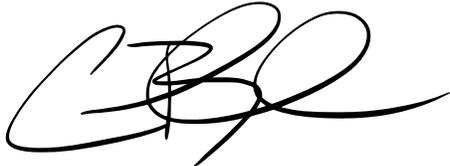
I found out about the cancellation from Gary Zielinski early Friday morning. We held off on making any announcement because throughout the weekend we were investigating alternative events to still host the clinics and scouting opportunities that were the point of the whole tournament for us. Open Gym Premier tried to reach out to the teams to see if they were still interested in playing the tournament under their umbrella. Unfortunately Mother's Day weekend and not having access to the Jr. NBA contact list made our efforts exceedingly difficult. As of last night, we had no choice but to wave the white flag and move forward to the next opportunity.

This morning, two members of the Jr. NBA New York office reached out to me to express further apologies and sympathize with our disappointment. I don't think they can quite appreciate how much some of you were looking forward to this. For many of our completely unknown prospects – Marcus, Jonathan, Zaid, Laura, and Mariel among others – this was going to be the opportunity for your potential to be unearthed. For others already on the radar, this could have been your chance to take the next step. And in the bigger picture, this was the event that would have set a precedent on how all training, development, and scouting on the grassroots circuit should be conducted: No more fees. No more exploitation. **Paid games.** An environment that fostered learning and camaraderie with nobody's hands in the referees' pockets. You deserved the opportunity to showcase your talent and passion for the game without some miserly administrator pocketing the proceeds from your hard work. This was going to be that opportunity!

It is extremely disheartening that a month's worth of anticipation was met with such an abrupt – and quite frankly asinine – dissolution, but I promise you that our mission continues forward. The Jr. NBA has invited me to stay in touch. I don't think they quite know how persistent (and annoying) I can be in order to make my vision a reality. We will continue working with their front office, Gary Zielinski, and other NBA personnel to get you guys the exposure you deserve and improve the overall landscape of grassroots basketball.

Please keep your heads up and stay ready. If you have any questions or just want to lament along with me, do not hesitate in giving me a call.

Cheers and well wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CB', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Chris Balasinski

Ref Union Head Representative

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