


REF UNION

PANDEMIC UPDATE

Dear Refs,

I'm sorry to start your weekend off on such a solemn note but I thought I might as well make the bad news official: **Ref Union will not be staffing any games through May 2020.** This includes the West Regional of the Jr. NBA Global Championship, which has been cancelled. In fact, all eight tournaments of the entire series have been cancelled. The Jr. NBA might still hold a single East Coast and West Coast tournament at a time still to be determined, followed by a championship event, if possible, and no longer in Florida.

Obviously, this one hurts. This is one event I was really looking forward to; it would've underscored our budding relationship with the NBA, and given Ref Union plus a lot of your individual careers so much awesome exposure.

The only silver lining I have is this: It will all eventually come back. I will try to obtain updates for you guys whenever it feels practical. I'm trying to keep contact with most of our clientele directors on a periodic basis. They're even included on this e-mail to let them know that we miss them and that we're here for them.

Looking ahead to June, I've turned somewhat pessimistic. Even after the stay-at-home orders are lifted, we have to rationalize that grassroots basketball will take time to rev up again. Teams will have been off for over two months. They're unlikely to be instantly ready to play. As proud as I am that our tournament clients are the best in terms of organization, the first events after the pandemic will need meticulous planning and some time to market. Fortunately, given our programs' leadership, we'll have a leg up on the competition. We are poised to emerge out of this work stoppage much stronger than other groups.

However, if you have not already done so, I would explore other gigs in the meantime. It doesn't make much sense to try to count down the days to when basketball returns. Immerse yourself in a study, hobby, art, or anything else that can grant you fulfillment outside of sports. Starting next week we will be viable for unemployment benefits which will apply retroactively to when the work stoppage began in March. That should hopefully alleviate a little bit of financial stress so that, per union principles, none of you should have to settle for work offers unbecoming your talents and perseverance.

Be selective. [Don't take just any offer. Always take the right offer!](#)

I'll still be checking in on you guys from time to time and e-mailing updates as they come in. Please stay in touch.

Cheers and well wishes,

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

Chris Balasinski

Ref Union

April 24, 2020