

NBA Lockout Continues, Now Entering 115th Day of No One Caring

Written by Wilbur "Shooter" Flatch
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[large version](#) The long and relatively unnoticed saga of the NBA lockout stretched into its 115th day today, signaling the longest professional sports lockout completely ignored by Americans since the almost unremembered NHL lockout of 2004, which wiped out the season and devastated fans from Montreal to Vancouver while barely being noticed in the United States.

And with owners united in their stance that "no one would really care if we didn't play this year," it seems like an end to the almost-uncovered-by-the-press stalemate will continue into the foreseeable future, possibly repeating the situation that moved hockey into the recesses of the American sports psyche, right next to professional bowling, poker and rodeo.

"There's an NBA lockout?" questioned William H. Spacey, an accountant with Ernst & Young in Philadelphia, who remembers watching a couple of NBA playoff games last year. "Are you sure you're not talking about the NFL? Because that was terrible, but they ended that, and I've been watching every game on my satellite package. Go Eagles!"

In a poll released by NBA owners this week, it was found that 8 out of 10 Americans had no idea the NBA players were locked out, 1 in 10 were aware of the lockout but didn't care until their fantasy football season was over, and the remaining 1 in 10 asked "what's this NBA you speak of?"

Although NBA players are hoping to get a deal done to save the season, the few lockout-aware fans in several NBA cities are hoping the lockout remains throughout the season.

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"I hope they never play again," said Mark Reuben, a geophysicist in Dallas. "That way, our Dallas Mavericks are the champions forever, and we don't have to ever give the trophy back. And with the way the Cowboys are playing again, it'll probably be the only championship this city sees for a while. I suppose the Texas Rangers could win, but they're in Arlington, and even those living in Dallas aren't sure if that's our team or Fort Worth's or if it's for the whole state. It doesn't have Dallas in the name, so we're not sure if we could even count it."

Also working against the NBA players is their willingness to play overseas this year, a move that may provide them with their much-needed child-support money and allow them to experience all the hot clubs in Europe, but would certainly further lower the NBA's consciousness in the minds of Americans.

"Kobe might play in Italy?" Spacey also asked when told of the potential contract Kobe Bryant was considering to play overseas. "I didn't even know the Lakers moved there. When did that happen?"

NBA owners are further bracing for an extended lockout, following in the NHL's lead and negotiating a TV contract with the Vs. network, should the major networks, as expected, drop the NBA from its broadcasts following a lockout year.

"Fortunately, we wouldn't be competing with their broadcasts of the Tour de France, which are in the summer, as we know we'd no longer be able to compete with those ratings. Those Europeans in tight shorts bring in a 2.1 rating or so, and that's more than we'd be expecting. But you should be able to find our games on tape-delay, right after the fishing shows in the morning."