

Why We Play Sports !

Children and Adults Nationwide are Embracing the Three "Cs"

While millions of people worldwide were focused on the NBA Finals and superstars like LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Dirk Nowitzki playing the game of basketball with grace and fury for a championship at the highest level, area gyms around the nation were filled with kids and weekend warriors hooping it up with the same intensity but for completely different reasons.

"We play basketball for the three 'C's,'" explains Jamar Johnson, Chief Commissioner of the Community Basketball Leagues (CBL). They are: Competition, Comradery and Community.

The CBL offers 12 different types of leagues for youths and adults including the semi-pro Exposure League (E-League), which will offer a preparatory opportunity for basketball players wanting to play at the collegiate or professional levels. "We've taken the recreation league concept to the next level so that neighborhood basketball isn't just about the competition on the court, but it's equally about the community and local businesses."

Of course it all starts with competition. "It's such a quality experience for our players," Johnson boasts. Players from all skill levels actually get drafted to a team in the CBL. After 18-20 season games and playoffs with enforced equal playing time rules, a ceremony is held and championship rings are handed out to the winners. Player registrations are free at www.CBLHoopsUSA.com.

"LeBron left Cleveland to play with his friend (Wade) on the Heat in Miami and now they've played for an NBA title," Johnson points out reinforcing that even the 'pros' value the comradery that comes with playing sports. Lifelong friendships are formed with childhood teammates and Johnson says adults play in the CBL with that in mind. "I've had men and women join the league because they loved basketball, were new to town and wanted to make some friends quickly."

But it's the focus on the community that Johnson says sets the CBL apart from any other recreation league, regardless of the sport. "In these tough economic times, we've created a professional game atmosphere," he continues, "so that when players bring their friends and families to the gym, they're treated to the on-the-court action and a live DJ playing music. It's a full entertainment production." Johnson believes this festive approach and attendance numbers are why local businesses are flocking to CBL games to set up booths and sell products or advertise their services.

{ continued }



Why We Play Sports !

Additionally, school districts all over the country are facing budget cuts, so Johnson is happy to reveal the rental fees for the use of the gym facilities have become another source of revenue for local schools.

However, Johnson wants the Playbook Classes sponsored by the CBL to leave a longer impression on the communities than an entertaining game or gym rental fees. The subjects covered in the weekly workshops range from career development to time management and networking. "They're not just for the players," he clarifies, encouraging community members to attend the free life skills seminars.

NBA Commissioner David Stern is running an entertainment business so he was likely pulling for huge ratings for the NBA Finals which would bring in more revenue for his league. The various successes of the current CBLs are why investors are talking to Johnson about his plans for a \$2 million nationwide expansion, but he actually longs for a different type of goal.

"I want there to be a 'CBL Effect' for the communities we're in," he states, referring to the so-called "Oprah Effect," which some experts say boomed sales for little-known companies or brought national attention to a topic when mentioned on Oprah Winfrey's former TV talk show. "When the CBL comes to your town, I want the impact to be so overwhelmingly positive for players, local businesses and the community that there's a noticeable change on the streets," Johnson explains.

About Jamar Johnson

Jamar Johnson, creator and Chief CBL Commissioner, is responsible for all day-to-day business operations. Jamar is a native of Elkhart, IN and former standout on Concord High School's 1988 and 1990 state runner-up basketball teams. Jamar was also an Indiana High School All-State basketball player in 1990. Johnson went on to lead the University of Nebraska men's basketball program to its first ever Big 12 conference tournament championship in 1994 and completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Human Resources and Family Science. From May 1995 to May 1997, Johnson served as an Administrative Graduate Assistant Coach for the University of Nebraska men's basketball program. In 1996, Johnson also had a brief stint in the professional Continental Basketball Association (CBA) with the Omaha Racers.

Community Basketball Leagues contact Ginny Grimsley at Ginny@newsandexperts.com.

"The End" . . .

