



Thoughts on Summer League.....

I spent four days last week at the Las Vegas summer league. It's almost unrecognizable from the first one I attended some 14 years ago. At that time, you could easily go from one venue to the next without waiting in line and be pretty much assured a great seat close to the benches. Now.....good luck even getting into a game at the Cox Arena. The lines in between games waiting to get in were at least 200 feet long. The Thomas and Mack was much more accommodating, but still probably at least $\frac{3}{4}$ full for every game. However, when the Lakers or Warriors played, close to capacity. Organizers Warren LeGarie and Albert Hall have done an incredible job promoting and organizing the event. (Rumor has it that they have a little man with a Quora under the T/M Arena printing money....).

Along with NBA, (from what I understand has made it mandatory for all 30 teams to participate), this has become the biggest league event outside the regular season and playoffs, surpassing the Draft, All-Star Weekend, and the questionable Draft Lottery Show.

The entire league is there, and not just the summer league teams.... NBA personnel, front office personnel, coaches, and even some owners attend games.

Consider this....2022 NBA Summer League: 633 MILLION video views,.....average daily attendance of 11,700,.... 34% increase in viewership from last year on ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU and NBA TV.

Warren and Albert could be seen scrambling to secure courtside seats for the star players, coaches, and owners when their teams are playing. And naturally, the NBA media types are quick to speculate what players/teams are doing what based on the interactions, (or non-interactions) of the star players. The NBA.....best soap opera ever.

The games do get a somewhat repetitive, (one media person commented that the day was an 8-hour continuous pick-up game). There is no real accountability for mistakes or poor decision making.....the players, especially first round picks, have a LONG leash, (to say nothing of the 10 foul rule). For the most part, the players do COMPETE and play hard, but with such little practice time before games start, the execution suffers. In saying all of that, I like the up/down nature of these games.....more possessions=more opportunities to evaluate!

Here are some thoughts, positive and negative of what I have observed.....

THE POSITIVE...

*Getting to see the young players, especially those drafted, play for the first time with their new teams, under NBA rules, playing NBA style, and going up against better competition than they did in college.

*The young coaches getting a chance to be the Head Coach. In most instances, these are video guys, player development coaches or bench assistants getting their first chance to call the shots. It's a great experience and an opportunity to show what they can do in front of the entire league.....and believe me, they are being evaluated as well.

*10-minute quarters.....10 minutes in-between games.

*The opportunity to catch up with friend and colleagues.

*Although I have not witnessed them personally, I hear the parties are legendary.

*The opportunity for the veteran players to gather and workout together.

*Interesting halftime entertainment....I especially enjoyed the girl on a skateboard playing the violin.

*Relatively low prices for fans who could not normally afford regular season tickets.

*Players were accessible to fans for autographs.

THE NEGATIVE....

*Officials trying too hard to call it “by the book”. I realize they are being evaluated for call up opportunities, but they were over the top at times.

*Although it’s 110 outside, if you didn’t bring a covering, you would freeze.

*The line to get into Cox between games.....I observed several near physical altercations between fans/security.

*It seems as if every team had to have a minimum of 15 coaches.

*PA announcers who could not pronounce names correctly.

*Teams “shutting down” players who were top draft picks on NATIONAL TV games, (Chet/Paolo matchup).

Overall, a great experience, especially for die hard NBA fans, like me.

Big kudos to the league, Warren, and Albert.....you kept that little man in the basement very busy. Well done.