



Count It: Australia, A Three-Week Summer Camp Program for the Global Growth of the WNBA

Natalia Gibbons

Department of Sports and Exercise Sciences



Introduction

The wage gap between men and women in professional sports is a social justice issue because it directly correlates to gender discrimination and inequality. One of the largest wage gaps that we see in professional sports is between the National Basketball Association (NBA) and Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). The fundamental cause of the wage gap between these leagues is the revenue-share model. Revenue sharing is the practice of a firm sharing revenue with their stakeholders (Business Model Navigator, n.d.). In this case, the stakeholders are the WNBA and NBA players. Prior to January 2020, there was an 80-20 revenue split in the WNBA. Essentially, this means that out of the total revenue, WNBA players only receive 20%. On the contrary, NBA players see a 50-50 revenue split, where they receive 50% of the league's revenue (Baker, 2020). In an effort to give their players a 50-50 revenue split, the WNBA signed a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in January of 2020. With all the benefits included in the CBA, WNBA players are seeing a 53% increase in cash compensation (McCann, 2020). Another thing that the CBA calls for is a 50-50 revenue sharing model. This model would not go into effect immediately but would be based on the league achieving revenue growth from broadcast agreements, marketing partnerships, and licensing deals (Carp, 2020). This collective bargaining agreement has a huge impact on the revenue-share model and will eventually result in the WNBA being able to achieve a 50-50 split and continue to close the wage gap.



Issues

The reason why the WNBA has yet to reach the 50-50 revenue split is because the WNBA is not profitable. While the WNBA makes close to \$60 million dollars in revenue each season, they are unable to make a profit because their expenses amount to \$70 million. The National Basketball Association (NBA) is one of the reasons why the WNBA has lasted twenty-five years. The NBA subsidizes the WNBA, because they can handle a debt of \$10 million every year. In order to achieve their goal of a 50-50 revenue split set by their collective bargaining agreement, the WNBA needs to entertain techniques that will help them become profitable (Brown, 2020). A way the WNBA could do this is by globalizing.

The remainder of this poster will detail a program that the WNBA could implement for their global growth, and to increase the percentage of revenue that they can give their athletes.

Solution

Count It: Australia is going to be a three-week summer basketball camp program for Australian boys and girls ages 6-16. The name "Count It: Australia" was chosen so the camp can be consistent with the current Count It campaign that the WNBA implemented for their 25th season. Each week of the camp will take place in a different Australian city, and the WNBA players will join forces with the WNBL (Women's National Basketball League) team of that city. The WNBL is the professional women's basketball league in Australia. The camp program will run from October 31st- November 19th, 2022, and will be held in Perth, Melbourne, and Sydney, respectively. These three cities were chosen because they each have a WNBL team, and they are three of the most populated cities in Australia. The camp itself will run from Monday to Friday, and each week there will be an exhibition game held on Saturday between the WNBA and WNBL teams.

Liz Cambage will be the headliner for Count It: Australia, as she is one of the best players in the WNBA and happens to be Australian. Liz will be a valuable attribute because of her popularity in Australia, and her potential to attract many fans and campers to this program. Joining Liz will be several other notable stars like Sue Bird, Diana Taurasi, and Breanna Stewart.



The overall goal of Count It: Australia is to grow the WNBA's global presence in an effort to make the league profitable. This is broken up into two smaller goals that the camp itself hopes to achieve. Starting off, this program will look to develop an international fanbase in Australia. Specifically, this program will look to increase Australian viewership of the WNBA by 50%. This is feasible as camp will be held in three of the biggest cities in the country and be run by the biggest women's basketball stars in the world. Second, Count It: Australia will look to increase the amount of WNBA games that are shown weekly in the country. Currently, there is one WNBA game shown a week in Australia. One year after camp finishes, the goal is to bring this number up to three. Again, this is feasible because of the anticipated increase in viewership following the duration of the program. Globalization could prove to be very successful for the growth of the WNBA and Count It: Australia is a step in the right direction.



Conclusion

To bring all of this together, Count It: Australia would be the first step in a global approach for the WNBA. To reiterate, The WNBA signed a new collective bargaining agreement in January 2020 that has a goal of giving their athletes a 50-50 revenue split; but the league needs to be able to produce more revenue before this can happen. Count It: Australia is the first step in this process. If the program can reach its goals, revenue from new fans and broadcast agreements could generate money for the WNBA. Globalizing was the desired approach for this because it has already worked for the NBA. The NBA began globalizing in the 80s and 90s, specifically in 1992 with the dream team, and they have seen a tremendous number of benefits from this. Currently, there are 35 countries that broadcast and cover the NBA finals (Krasnoff, 2017), there is a licensed NBA store in Beijing, China (MBA Skool, 2021); and in 10 years the revenue in the NBA has grown from 650 million in 1992 to 2.72 billion in 2002 (Goldaper, 1990), (Gough, 2021). Globalization was a major success in the NBA, and it can have the same effects for the WNBA. As was mentioned, If the goals are reached, the league will come closer to the 50-50 revenue split, and the WNBA can start paying its athletes what they deserve and what they have been promised. Additionally, if this program proves to be successful it is one that can be replicated in other countries for similar effects. If the number of viewers in Australia increases significantly, and if more games are broadcasted, this can be replicated in countries like China and Russia to develop additional international fanbases and continue to introduce new revenue for the WNBA. Count It: Australia is just the beginning of a global future for the WNBA; and will simultaneously assist the league in achieving a 50-50 revenue split for their athletes.



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