

MSB 390 | April 2022



The NBA with a special look at the CELTICS

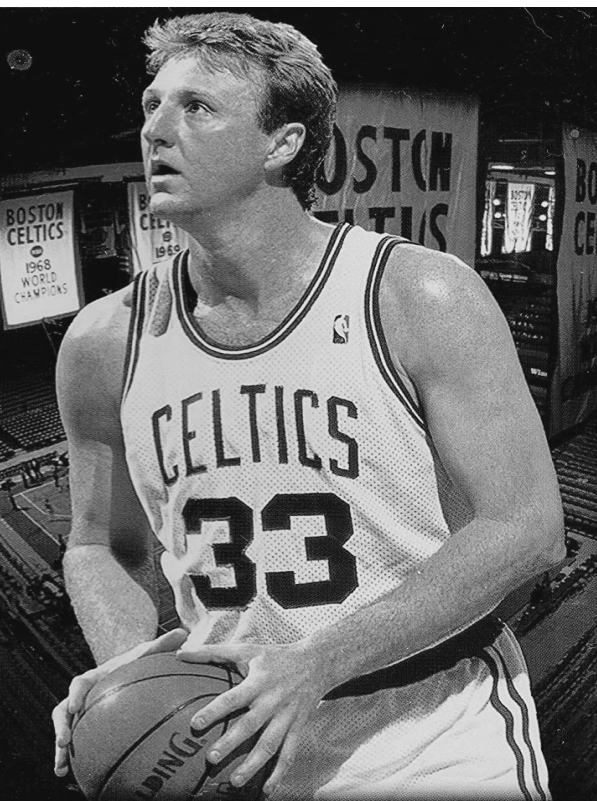
A focus on
ETHICS and CSR

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The National Basketball Association (NBA) is home to 30 teams in 21 states. As a company, each individual team must adhere to the ethical conduct of the league. Although some teams create their own extension of the NBA's Code of Conduct, the Boston Celtics do not. They do, however, do their very best to enforce the rules of the NBA. The Celtics are quite involved in the community and do a lot of work in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This report focuses on two main topics. First, it identifies, analyzes, and provides recommendations in regards to the Celtics' ethics. Secondly, it identifies and analyzes the Celtics' CSR initiatives, as well as provides additional recommendations.

Identify Ethics

Ethics play a significant role in both the organization and in the actual play of the game. Ethics in sports can be summed up in two perspectives,



gamesmanship vs. sportsmanship. [1] Gamesmanship is the concept of winning above all else, similar to the idea of a company focusing on maximizing profits. It regards all rules as optional and believes referees have the responsibility to identify and penalize misconduct. Cheating, in the gamesmanship mentality, is only cheating if you are caught. On the other hand, sportsmanship is the concept that winning is not the most important part of the game. It supports the idea that sports should nurture and develop one's own character. The difference between gamesman-

ship and sportsmanship is integral to the ethical standards of the NBA, including the Celtics.

The battle between gamesmanship and sportsmanship has led to changes in the rules of the game since the beginning of the League's creation. Both positive and negative reinforcements to encourage good, ethical behavior on the court have been applied. The NBA Sportsmanship Award was first presented following the 1995-96 season. It is given annually to one player who "exemplifies the ideals of sportsmanship on the court with ethical behavior, fair play, and integrity." [2] Additionally, technical and flagrant fouls constrain players and coaches to ensure the players stay within the prescribed code of conduct.

These rules, however, do not and cannot stop all unsportsmanlike behavior. Teams often participate in dirty plays, trash-talking, and other activities that go against basic etiquette. Larry Bird, a famous Celtics player, was known as the King of Trash Talk.[3] He used trash-talking as a way to gain a mental edge on an opponent. Trash talking involves foul language and bullying-like behavior. However, it can also show a level of respect to other players.

One of the main ethical codes that the NBA put into place was actually for the fans, and not necessarily for the players and coaches. The NBA Fan Code of Conduct was adopted in order to create a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable experience.[4] This code of conduct was adopted in May of 2021, following the return of the NBA to arenas after playing in the "bubble".



"The return of more NBA fans to our arenas has brought great excitement and energy to the start of the playoffs, but it is critical that we all show respect for players, officials and our fellow fans. An enhanced fan code of conduct will be vigorously enforced in order to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all involved."

Analyze Ethics

The best way to analyze the team's ethics is to look specifically at the players. Many unsportsmanlike behaviors are not prohibited by the NBA's code of conduct. However, in reality, the NBA has little actual control over the individual team's code of conduct because it is not specific enough. As a result, many teams create their own code of conduct to help maintain ethical standards. Players, however, ultimately decide if they will follow the code of conduct or not, and therefore determine what role ethics will play in the game.

Marcus Smart is the starting point guard for the Celtics. He started off with a bad reputation because of the actions he made in his college career. However, since playing for the Celtics he has changed and improved. [5] Marcus Smart has been accused many times by fans and players of playing dirty and dangerously. The most recent occurrence of this was when he dove for a loose ball and rolled over Steph Curry's foot. Marcus Smart said, "My teammates and players and my colleagues, they know

Player (Team)	1 st Place Votes	2 nd Place Votes	3 rd Place Votes	4 th Place Votes	5 th Place Votes	6 th Place Votes	Total Points
	(11 Points)	(9 Points)	(7 points)	(5 Points)	(3 Points)	(1 Point)	
Jrue Holiday (Milwaukee)	130	71	56	38	26	23	2,752
Kemba Walker (Boston)	74	89	67	46	47	19	2,474
Bam Adebayo (Miami)	48	73	76	63	42	41	2,199
Harrison Barnes (Sacramento)	49	49	62	62	81	41	2,008
Derrick White (San Antonio)	31	21	54	79	88	68	1,635
Josh Okogie (Minnesota)	11	40	28	55	59	151	1,280

I'm not a dirty player. They know I'ma go out there and leave everything I have on the floor for my team.” [6] Even Steph Curry addressed the issue and said that Smart was not purposely trying to hurt him and was simply playing the game. [5] Although Smart has accidentally injured opposing players before, he always shows sportsman-like behavior towards them. In a game against the Atlanta Hawks, he accidentally injured Trae Young's ankle but was seen hugging him after the play.

Jrue Holiday and Vince Carter were recipients of the NBA Sportsmanship award for the past two years. Receiving this award is difficult. A player's team, a separate panel of executives, and a majority of other NBA players have to think you exhibited great sportsmanship. [7] When Jrue Holiday won the award

his coach said “He's just thoughtful, considerate, deep thinking, but still plays the game the right way and has a toughness and has a realness about him...the players around the league just respect the way he handles himself. Great poise, great character, he's all about winning...I think the players around the league recognize that and appreciate that and have honored him” [8]. Jrue Holiday played the game to win while remaining sportsmanlike. Vince Carter was the recipient of the award for the 2019-2020 season. He shared his thoughts explaining that he wanted to “be a good guy, enjoy the game, and just play the game that I love.” That mindset puts sportsmanship above gamesmanship, and that is ultimately why he received the Sportsmanship Award. [9]



After reviewing these different players it is easy to see in general NBA players have good ethics and show good sportsmanship. However, there are always things and areas that they can improve in. Most notably for the Celtics, not one of their players over the last 25 years have won the NBA Sportsmanship Award. Therefore, the Celtics could improve their ethics taught to their players and their enforcement of these ethics. with their ethics taught to their players and their enforcement of these ethics.

Recommend Ethics

While the NBA's ethics are best found by observing the sportsmanship of its players, other major league sports have overarching statements of what is expected of those participating in the sport. Two other comparable leagues are the National Football League (NFL) and Major League Baseball



(MLB). The three leagues encourage sportsmanship and showing respect to the referees, coaches, and other players. Outside of showing respect for the sport, there are plenty of differences between them.

The MLB and NFL both have specific Codes of Conduct for the players and coaches. One ethical principle which could be helpful for the NBA to add to their own code is to always act in a way that favorably represents the players, team, and the community they represent. [10] This is more commonly known as the disclosure rule. The NFL and MLB encourage their players to act in ways that if the news media were to follow them they would positively represent the team and League.

Another principle that both the NFL and MLB have in their codes of conduct is that players will be disciplined for being deposed in a variety of

legal cases. The rule states that even if a player is found not guilty or not charged with a criminal charge, they may still be disciplined if the league feels that the player was involved in a variety of actions. These include things such as physical/violent behavior, possession or use of illegal drugs/substances, theft-related crimes, stalking, and other similar actions. [11] These stricter rules go past making legal choices and instead encourage players to stay away from any situation which could lead to being involved in something illegal. By implementing these two rules the Celtics and the NBA could help their players avoid creating a bad public image for themselves, their team, and the League as a whole.



Identify CSR

In the last few years, social responsibility issues facing the Celtics and the NBA have become a critical discussion between athletes and fans. Over the last few years, much more awareness of the need for social justice has come to light and been a focus for the entire country. NBA teams and athletes quickly became advocates for social justice and equality for all people. During the pandemic, the NBA played games inside a “bubble” where no fans were allowed in order to keep everyone safe from the virus. During this time, the Celtics replaced the players' last names with expressions. Some of these expressions included “Black Lives Matter”, “Equality”, “Freedom” and many others.

Semi Ojeleye of the Boston Celtics said, “With everything I’ve seen going on in the world, the root of it is hate.” Ojeleye continued, “At the end of the day we have to treat people right, and the only way to do that is to love people, regardless of skin color, ethnicity, where they are from, what they

believe in, we have to treat people the right way, and to do that, you have to love them. So that's what I believe God wants us to do.” [12] Hundreds of NBA players, coaches, and fans led in the cause for equality by using their platform to inform the public. They also pushed for new reforms to take place in local communities.



Another social issue that faces the Celtics and other NBA teams is the priority to better the community. The Celtics do this by giving back to the community. They assist the poor, hungry, at-risk youth and kids, and many others. For example, Marcus Smart gave away hundreds of books to a local elementary school to promote reading and the importance of education.[13] The Celtics have led hundreds of other similar events where they were able to benefit the community and serve.





Analyze CSR

The Celtics’ current strategy is heavily focused on helping teach youth and children about basketball through their Jr. Celtics program. The Jr. Celtics page describes their purpose and strategy, “The official youth basketball platform of the 17-Time World Champion Boston Celtics, Jr. Celtics provides overwhelmingly positive youth basketball experiences by treating each child like an MVP, rewarding players for self-improvement and teamwork, building a future generation of champions and lifelong basketball fans.” [14] This platform is a strategy to help youth in the community by providing them a safe place for recreation and giving kids a purpose in life.

In return, the Celtics increase their fan base and are able to teach young children how to play basketball.

Two competitors of the Celtics are the Los Angeles Lakers and Miami Heat. The Lakers created a foundation to help underserved youth develop their potential by providing positive experiences and resources for education, health services, and sports. [15] The Heat created a program called the “Heat Academy” which provides youth in South Florida with an after-school program focusing on education and learning. [16] Overall, NBA teams are most involved in various youth academies where importance is placed on education while also allowing for the teaching of basketball. This is a way to give back to the community while also developing a new generation of basketball athletes. Another area of involvement for NBA teams is through helping the poor and needy by donating money and supplies. The Celtics, Heat, and Lakers run multiple food drives and provide fundraising opportunities where proceeds benefit their local communities.



	PROGRAM STATISTICS
	8TH SUMMER • 15 TOTAL WEEKS • SIX MASS. LOCATIONS
	32 CLINICS • 3,000+ YOUTH • DYNAMIC BASKETBALL EXPERIENCES
	49 LEAGUES • 2,200+ YOUTH • 40% OF PARTICIPANTS WERE GIRLS
	TOP 100 14U GIRLS & JNGC QUALIFIER • 600+ PARTICIPANTS

NBA teams and specifically the Celtics dedicate a large amount of time and resources to their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). For NBA teams this is a vital way to give back for everything they have been blessed with. These NBA teams are aware of the impact they have due to their wide popularity. The players and organizations who make a priority for their youth programs to help the underserved or misrepresented by helping them with their education and not just basketball skills are providing more efficient CSR. Another way of telling how well a team is doing is by the size of their fan base. The communities that feel the most loved and supported by these NBA teams usually have more involvement and excitement for the team.

Recommend CSR

Potential stakeholders for the Celtics include players, managers, employees, fans, surrounding communities, and youth who see the players as role models. The Celtics organization could encourage their fans to be better citizens by encouraging them to do more service by providing a platform where fans could donate time or means to improve their communities. This could be similar to the Just Serve app. The team could increase fan loyalty and goodwill among local communities by having the players do volunteer service in that community. This kind of service would show a great deal of generosity and outward focus, which would increase their fan base and goodwill, as well as raise the standard for the entire NBA.

Finally, the Celtics could use the high salaries as leverage to require a higher standard of ethical behavior. In addition, they could sign more ethical players than they currently have. To follow up, they could publish detailed pages about each player's lifestyle in an effort to help youth find qualities they might want to imitate. Each of these improvements encourages the Celtics to better fulfill their social responsibility to help players, managers, employees, fans, communities, and youth. Improving the current CSR programs will increase the team's profits by increasing their goodwill. Although it will cost money to implement, it will be worth it in the end because it will bring great future returns.



A new NBA Fan Code of Conduct was adopted after the 2020 season in order to create a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable experience. The research concluded that improvements could be made in the enforcement of the Code of Conduct by the Celtics to help their players and the League avoid bad press. In regards to CSR, the Celtics have been a real leader in serving their communities and pushing for beneficial reforms. As a result, the Celtics have provided these communities with love and support. However, improvements are always possible. They should continually push to improve their current CSR programs which could result in increased profit margins.

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