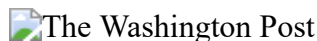


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# Jeremy Lin sparks another run of Linsanity, this time tempered by the coronavirus in China

In February 2012, Linsanity was a fun thing at Madison Square Garden. (Frank Franklin II/AP)

By [Cindy Boren](#)



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It isn't quite Michael Jordan and "The Last Dance," but Linsanity, a brief yet special time for the New York Knicks, got another look at a time when live sports are shut down and [the novel coronavirus](#) is ravaging New York City.

[MSG Network relived the winter](#) of 2012, when Jeremy Lin, a second-year player who was undrafted out of Harvard, was recalled from the NBA Development League. He was just the spark the team needed, and it went on a 10-3 run, with Lin averaging 22.3 points and nine assists. Along the way, [he became a celebrity](#) in a city that [loves unlikely stars](#). Every story was better than the last. He was dubbed "The Taiwanese Tebow." After his call-up, he slept on a couch in his brother's apartment for six weeks.

Knicks highlights are rare, which makes [Linsanity](#) an even more treasured story. But Lin, who now plays for the Beijing Ducks of the Chinese Basketball Association, said he was humbled when MSG reached out to his agent. After all, he played in only 35 games with the team.

"I was just like: 'Are you serious? Wow, that is amazing,'" Lin [said in an interview](#) last week with ESPN's "The Jump." "Even for me, I was like, I'm still recognizing and realizing maybe the impact that stretch had on people. And so I have so much gratitude to the organization, to the Knicks, to MSG, to [owner James] Dolan, to everybody for allowing this to happen. Because honestly, I never expected that. ... Yeah, I was floored."

For a while, Madison Square Garden was the place to be again.

"I think the different elements of the story, being undrafted, being cut twice, going to Harvard, being Asian American, doing it in MSG, which is like *the* best arena, with *the* biggest fan base in the NBA ... I mean, there were so many elements of it — the perfect storm," Lin told the New York Post in an attempt to explain Linsanity. "It came right after the lockout, too. ... Just so many elements that were so captivating. I don't say that like, 'Look at me.' I say that more like, 'I can't believe all this happened,' like I couldn't control most everything that happened and how the storm was built up."

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Lin leveraged Linsanity into a free agent deal with the Houston Rockets and went on to play for the Los Angeles Lakers, Charlotte Hornets, Brooklyn Nets, Atlanta Hawks and Toronto Raptors. Along the way, there were knee and hamstring injuries that cost him 127 games. Even though [he played for the Raptors' championship team](#) last year, nothing measured up to Linsanity. Now 31, he signed in August to play in China and found Linsanity II.

"There's times when I literally can't get to the hotel elevator on the road," he told "The Jump." "There's times where I have my assigned room and I always do a secret switch that my teammates don't even know about so no one knows what room I'm in. But somehow still there will be fans waiting outside my door sometimes or things like that, where we need to have security just standing outside my door and shooing away people."

That, of course, was before the [coronavirus](#) took hold. When it intensified, Lin was in California on a Lunar New Year break. He remained there for two months, then returned to China on March 18 when the virus flared in the United States. Play in the CBA has been suspended since Jan. 24 and is unlikely to be resumed before July, but teams are preparing.

"There's no sporting events or concerts, but life is definitely very much closer to normal," Lin said. "And so we're working out every day. We get to play and train with the team every single day. It's like a very, very, very long training camp. It's like 'Groundhog Day.' But we're figuring it out, and we're just waiting to see what happens next and if we're going to have a season or not."

He described malls and restaurants being open but added: "I don't think people are as ready to just be all the way out. ... You go to restaurants, and you may only see people in groups of two to four. You don't see big parties of

six, eight, 10. Big-group gatherings like concerts or sporting events or nightlife, those things aren't really happening. And then everyone is wearing a mask. One hundred percent of people are wearing masks."

Lin described ever-present testing and tracing for the virus.

"I got tested before quarantine and after quarantine, and honestly, anywhere you go anytime, every restaurant, every mall, everything everywhere, every time I enter my apartment, I get my temperature checked, too. They're constantly monitoring," he said. "You can't go and eat at a restaurant without leaving all of your information, and there's this app that shows your body temperature and whether you had symptoms and where you've been the last two to four weeks. I mean, it tracks basically everything that you're doing and where you're going, and you have to show that and update that every time you go anywhere new."

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