

If the NBA and NCAA want to keep young players out of the NBA, the answer is so simple. Stop guaranteeing rookie contracts.

As it is right now, if a player is drafted in the first round, their salary is set by their draft position, we are REQUIRED to guarantee that salary for at least 4 years. Given that the last pick in the draft makes more than 600k per year, for 4 years, the money to tempt the high school or underclassmen is there.

Then there is the agent pitch. I can hear it in my sleep. Come on now....Leon, you know how good you are. You know what your coaches have told you. How could you not be one of the top 29 players in this draft? Just get picked in the top 30, and the money is yours...Guaranteed. Best of all, you have at least 4 years to get ready for your next contract.

That is tough to turn down.

Add the fact that the agents collect their 4 pct on those guaranteed contracts whether the guy can play or not, and you have more than a little incentive from agents to get the guy to declare for the draft.

Get rid of guaranteed rookie contracts and all that changes. Then all of a sudden the odds come into play. So few players drafted in the 20s actually play in the NBA past their rookie contracts. They go from prospects to trade fodder to out of the league. Instead of hearing about busts on the bench collecting millions of dollars, with just anecdotal Lenny Cooke and Kenny Satterfield, expect to be 1st round picks and weren't stories, the stories would be about how the majority of players drafted in the first round don't make it through their rookie contracts.

That is exactly what would happen. If rookie contracts were not guaranteed, more than half of first round picks would be cut before the end of their contracts. Those are the odds that every high school and underclass college player would hear about. The question wouldn't be about draft position, it would be can they play.

I also don't understand why the players union allowed the rookie contracts to be guaranteed. That was one big mistake on their part. Four year contracts means teams that draft in the 20-29 multiple years, perennial playoff teams, probably have 3 of their last 4 draft picks taking up roster space. Or they traded those picks as throw-ins and they are taking up space on other rosters.

Those are roster spots that I'm sure those teams and a whole lot of veterans without jobs wish were available.

Rookies who can't play, getting paid to not play, taking jobs from vets who can.

So why are rookie contracts guaranteed? No idea, it happened before I got to the NBA. Hopefully it will change. There are a lot of Ced Ceballos' and other guys who have paid their dues in this league who could help a team, while the young guys learn the game in college.