

There is a very specific NBA rule that says that team personnel can not talk to High School players unless it is at an approved event or function. No one associated with an NBA team can shill, sell, preach, promise, promote or praise to , with or around High School players.

This is a good thing. A very good thing. However, the lack of open communication between anyone at the NBA and High School players and coaches creates an obvious information gap. As with any business, when there are millions of dollars available each and every year, there will be those that insert themselves into the gap with promises that they can provide the link between the have and have nots. Politicians can find every loophole available when it comes to fund raising and agents can find every loophole when it comes to enticing kids with stories of sugarplum fairies, first round picks and unspeakable riches.

Why compare politicians and agents ? Well if you have met either, you have met both. One size does not fit all, but it certainly fits many, in both worlds. Both professions thrive on plausible deniability. Neither seem to have any more than a superficial understanding of how money they direct will finally be used. Which to them is a good thing. It allows them to deny that the money they gave one of their employees to give one of their associates to give to an affiliate of a local group that truly sounded like a very worthy charitable organization was used for anything other than what they thought it would be used for: to help those far less fortunate than themselves.

In this entire OJ Mayo story, the only thing I find highly implausible is that only 30k dollars was identified as changing hands. There are far too many agents competing in the market for projected 1st round draft picks for a high school senior who some consider a lottery pick to settle for 30k. Even High School kids learn quickly to play one agent off against the other. How do you think they picked the shoe company that put shoes on their family's feet ?

So what should be done ? I can tell you that an NBA study, as well as an NBA / NCAA joint effort would be meaningless. Why ? Because the root of the problem is that there will always be those that try to profit from other people's dreams. It may be a dream of playing in the Olympics. It may be a dream of playing in the NBA. It may be a dream of being rich. It may be a dream of going to college. Unless there is an efficient market of information going between those who can make the dreams come true and the dreamers, which I don't think is possible given the way the NCAA and High School organizations interact with student athletes, then there will always be room for the scammers to capitalize on those dreams.

Fortunately there is a simple solution.

Bring in the IRS. I think I can say with certainty that there were not any contracts signed between the parties giving and receiving money on the behalf of High School students. Agree ?

I think I can also say with certainty that those who gave more than 10k dollars in gifts did not pay any gift taxes on amounts given to individuals. If the amounts were given to charities, I'm guessing some, if not most of those charities were either not qualified or did not live up to their certification requirements.

Get the IRS involved, and I bet not only would the investigation pay for itself with untold millions coming back to the US Treasury in taxes and penalties, but the agents would clean up their acts very , very quickly. It would also clean up much of what ails "amateur" basketball. Its a world that has become dependent on a thriving underground economy. its a cash business. Just the kind the IRS should and could step in to clean up.

Hey, it worked on Al Capone, and the reality is, some of the agents in the game today, are not much more legit.