

**INDYSTAR.COM**

THE ONLINE EDITION OF THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

MARKETPLACE: Classifieds • Cars • Apartments • Jobs • Homes • Shopping

Home

News

Opinion

Expresso

IN Touch

Fresh Thoughts

Letters to the Editor

Varvel's View

Columnists

- Andrea Neal
- Dan Carpenter

• Dennis Ryerson

• Jane Lichtenberg

• Russ Pulliam

• Tim Swarens

Business

Sports

Entertainment

Indiana Living

Obituaries

Weather | Traffic

Customer  
ServicesSubscriber  
Services

Intake

Communities

Fact Files

Message  
Boards

Multimedia/Photos

Newsletters

Star Links

Links mentioned  
in The Star

Star Source

Send us your  
news tips, ideas

STORY SEARCH

7 days

Archive

SEARCH  
SPONSORED BYCarpenter  
Realtors16,000+  
HOMES

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

July 3, 2005

**MY VIEW: MYLES BRAND**

### NBA plan closes door to college for some

If you are considering the age ban for the NBA draft a noble move by the league and its players to send a pro-education message to high school hoop "wanna-bes," take a closer look.

It is really just half the story, and it's a cautionary tale.

It is a step in the right direction, to be sure. By having to wait a year after high school graduation before entering the NBA draft, young basketball athletes will have the opportunity to think about their options and consider the best course for their future. And if they decide to spend the year playing college basketball, they may even discover the value of a degree.

How can that be a bad thing?

If that were the whole story, it would not be such a bad idea. Not as good as having to wait three years, as is the policy with the NFL. One year is better than none, is it not?

But there is another important change made in the most recent negotiations between the NBA and its players association that will continue to lure talented high school stars into the professional ranks.

The two groups also agreed to roll back the age requirement for entry into the NBA's developmental league from 20 to 18. This means that while the media-anointed high school phenom is waiting out the requisite year after graduation to enter the "real" NBA draft, he can immediately go into the developmental league and hone his skills with others hoping for the call that takes them up to the biggies.

To be honest, this may be the best of all outcomes for the few who either have no interest in or lack preparation for college. They will get to pocket a salary while they wait and hope, even if it is a meager one.

The statistics work against them, of course. The percentage of "d-leaguers" who move up to the NBA in a year is likely to be small. And after one or two years at minimum wages, a much higher percentage may see the writing on the backboard.

And here is the rub. By that point, they will have professionalized themselves and will have no opportunity to continue playing basketball and pursue a degree at the Division I or Division III levels. (Interestingly,

H

**Top 5**

- Lake reach
- Hoos dead i
- Inma after 2 exone
- Man, dogs : home

**Star Headlines**  
 Get RSS feed  
 of latest news



**Cyber  
survey**

**Should the sale of  
'out of state' fire  
works be banned  
in Indiana?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**VOTE**

they could return to play basketball in Division II, although on a limited basis.)

So, while the NBA and NBAPA appear to have made a good faith effort to slow the rush of high school stars with a one-year pause button on entering the draft, they opened the window wide to maximize the pool of players available to the developmental league. Not a bad strategy if the goal is to invest in a talent bank from which the NBA can withdraw the best as the need arises.





My concern is for those many young men who will forfeit the opportunity to leverage their athletics skill in basketball into pursuit of a college degree. Many will conclude their teen years with neither a professional career nor the opportunity for a college education.

As Paul Hewitt, the Georgia Tech coach, has said, "College is the best option." If a young man plays in college and he is highly successful, an NBA opportunity likely awaits him. But if like the vast majority of ballplayers, he is not draft material, he can still receive an education. And a college education is the best insurance for a productive, happy and full life.

It is said in life that for every door that closes, a window opens. In this case, my advice to high school players is to make sure you know what is on the other side.

Brand is president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

---

☒ Email this    Print this    Post message    Letter to editor    Reprint info

---

Classified Partners: Jobs: CareerBuilder.com • Cars: Cars.com • Apartments: Apartments.co  
 Customer Service • Terms of Service • Send feedback about IndyStar.com • Subscribe Now  
 Copyright 2005 IndyStar.com. All rights reserved

Gannett Indiana network: Indianapolis • Fishers • Lafayette • Marion • Muncie • Noblesville  
 USA Today • USA Weekend • Gannett Co. Inc. • Gannett Foundation