



Tackett, Julian <jtackett@khsaa.org>

KHSAA International Game Sanction

1 message

David Greenberg <david@allaussie.com.au>

Fri, Sep 6, 2013 at 8:52 PM

To: jtackett@khsaa.org

Cc: Kelvin Taylor <kelvin@allaussie.com.au>, "Garris, Jerry" <jgarris@bbtel.com>, mmitchell@khsaa.org

Mr Julian Tackett

Commissioner KHSAA

Hi Julian.

I expected to write a shorter note to convey my thoughts but found it kind of hard when my heart took over. Please read through and I'd be happy to ring and chat next week.

Further to my telephone conversation with Marilyn yesterday.

It has recently come to our attention that for the first time the KHSAA might not sanction some of the basketball games we have organised for this year.

I / Aussie Basketball Travellers have been organising Student Basketball tours the USA/Canada for 15 years. Early in my experience I found Kentucky to be the heartland of basketball and have sent teams every year including returning 6 times with my own teams. Each tour is reported to be a rich cultural, educational and athletic experience from both our travellers and host KY schools. Many of our teams (coaches) select to return to KY and many KY High Schools contact us to host Aussie teams for those reasons. Anthems played at each International game and usually a small gift exchange and often a meal & fellowship shared after the athletic contest.

Aussie students also get to experience American family life with their host and somewhere along the tour attend school for at least part of a day (where they often becoming the teacher).

Personally I am American born and moved to Australia as a 13 year old in 1973. In 1975 I toured, with The Kings School from Sydney, on the 2nd School Boy tour from Australia to Vancouver CA, Washington State, Oregon and California. It really is one of the most memorable experiences I have had in my life & I still stay in touch with friends made all those years ago.

Over the years Aussie Basketball Travellers has worked hard to comply with the correct sanctioning procedures at every level. Presently this includes our local Associations, State & National Body (Basketball Australia), USA Basketball/Basketball Canada, the NFHS & State Associations. ABT have made the effort to personally visit the NFHS as well as some other state/school associations and certainly have not purposely tried to pass our club teams off as schools in the past. We have also helped educate AD's/schools around the USA in the sanctioning process.

Australian Basketball is setup similar to that in Europe. Apart from the elite private or sport specific schools, most schools do not have organised leagues like the USA schools enjoy. The majority of sport is played by school students in clubs (Cricket, Rugby, Swimming, AFL, Soccer, Track, Netball, Field Hockey, Surf Lifesaving, Baseball, Water Polo, Gymnastics, Volleyball, etc..). This is no different with basketball as most is played outside of school supported by volunteer coaches. I personally donate 10+ hours each week into junior basketball without pay. I referee on the side to help as well. There would be thousands of others like me around the country. It is a user pays system where the team members meet all associated costs.. Many would train (practice) as little as 90 minutes per week. Some who can afford it and find an available court will get 2

sessions. For example, my teams have had a session alone and then another with another team on the same 2 basket court. There were weeks when our sessions are cancelled as the school courts we use are filled with desks at testing time. Alternatively, we move up to 200 desks off and back on the court so we can have a run. I think my 'back' wanted to tell you that as there have been nights I've looked up and everyone else departed 'quickly'.

Few of my girls have an organised school basketball team.

All ABT groups are made up of High School Students who are enrolled and academically eligible.

They each comply with all of the rules we've had presented to us and do not receive payments from teams, agents or sponsors. All are amateur student athletes who pay to play and pay for their own tour.

From my brief discussion with Marilyn, I'd like to say a rule has suddenly changed on us but I understand there is some technicality about playing 'members' of the NHSF which KY has unknowingly been thinking club tours were specifically 'High School' tours.

Technicality aside, I think we have both viewed them in the same way as they are HS students playing basketball.

We understand it is the welfare of your students that comes first but after 15 years of being sanctioned this will be a significant change for all. Particularly this year as we have a few tours organised which might not meet the newly enforced criteria. I'm sure you can imagine all the travel and ground arrangements it takes to organise a tour. Also the games are confirmed and set as far back as last January. It is late notice to change all the arrangements without penalty and to fill the games component elsewhere will be virtually impossible. 1 group in particular have been planning (saving) for 2 years for what is their groups 5th visit to KY. The legend of their Kentucky tour experience has literally been handed down through the families. I believe a coach from one of their previous tours has actually married a lady he met in KY. And I have another group who's Coaches have been made Honorary Colonels after many visits to Meade County. They will be hugely disappointed not to be able to visit KY next year.

I'm not sure exactly what the 'rule' with students playing in a club team is as this seems to be viewed differently from State to State.

I understand that through USA Basketball, Basketball Australia has tried to advise some US states that our student athletes compete in a club system akin to the US High Schools. I've also heard some refer to our club system as 'ALL STAR' teams but our clubs are far from this quality and are made up of students from the local areas. The reality here is the elite private schools use the clubs as a farm system and have kids travelling from many different areas to attend - which is pretty much the opposite of your situation where AAU coaches bring the best kids from the High Schools together to form strong teams. Keeping in mind very few ABT teams leave KY with a winning record so it's not as if we are sending unfair competition. I think we've won 3 tournament trophies in all that time. - 1 win and 2 second place.

Julian, It would be great if we could better understand the technicality that has forced this change. It's really hard to understand when seemingly no-one has been hurt and thousands have been enriched over the years.

We have been through similar situations with other Associations who have been open in dialogue. With better understanding of the situation and the positive impact of the experience in mind at least 1 State has given ABT special approval to play since we have done the right thing for so long.

Another State recognises the value of the exchange so much that they allow their schools to play 1 International game every 4 years - which is in addition to their regular schedule. Having said that, there are other states who will not play our club or school teams, do not play any schools/teams outside of a ?? x hundreds of mile radius (think that's Michigan) and at least 1 private school association who will not play our teams because our students are not 'in' school at the time.. which is very difficult when it's summer holidays here!

Lastly, it would be a great shame for all involved but, if things must change, is there any possibility of working through a possible exception for at least the games that have already been organised?

9/17/13

KY High School Athletic Association Mail - KHSAA International Game Sanction

Even the NCAA (I know not your organisation) allow existing foreign tour contracts to be honoured when they modify a rule.

Thanks for your time and we hope to hear from you soon.

Regards.

dg

David Greenberg

Aussie Basketball Travellers

All Aussie Travellers (2TA 4912)

T: [+61 414 955 500](tel:+61414955500)