

THE IMPACT OF SUPERTEAMS
AND PARITY ON THE NBA

by

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The National Basketball Association has seen record attendance levels and increasing TV ratings over the past few seasons, but the narrative for the league is that it has been overtaken by superteams which has created a boring level of competition during a majority of the season. Writers and fans of all teams have not been shy about announcing their mixed feelings towards superteams. Even the commissioner of the NBA commented on the matter saying that two superteams were not a good thing for the NBA. With all of these opinions swirling amidst the evolution of the NBA into a “superteam era,” this thesis will take an analytical approach to the impact of the superteams on the NBA.

To try and understand the impact, this thesis analyzed the value, attendance levels, team quality, team construction and star caliber of every franchise from 1987-2016. These factors help evaluate if there is an effect of a concentration of stars on a few teams, or if fans still treat the league the same. Attendance and team value data is a good baseline of how fans appreciate the NBA and how owners see their investment. Further research was conducted via a survey to connect directly with fans of all teams. They were asked questions about their favorite NBA team, their current thoughts on the

NBA and what their expectations are moving forward. Within the survey, an experiment was conducted to see if asking fans to read about superteams would affect their thoughts on parity in the NBA. This research helps bring the analysis of superteams full circle as both the hard number data and a survey of fans feelings, including qualitative data, come together. In the end, this research aims to determine what kind of impact superteams have on the NBA from the perspective of everyone connected.

We are confident that superteams do not have a negative impact currently on the NBA, however our research showed that there is no correlation between the growth of the NBA and the rise of superteams. The NBA is in a period of growth and fans of most teams are beginning to gain a stronger interest in the league which should excite league executives who can look to embrace the superteam era.

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Introduction

"I don't like parity, I don't like the word parity. Parity is average, and I like to see excellence. But I also like competition. I read the newspaper cover to cover every morning, and even though I don't bet, I look at the lines in Las Vegas. We were underdogs in one game this year. We were favored in Game 2 of the conference finals by 15 points. That is insane. It's not what anybody wants to see. At the end of the third quarter [when the Warriors led 106–75], I almost felt bad for San Antonio, but I also felt bad for our fans. Because if you're a real fan at a playoff game, you want to see a hard-fought battle, back and forth, and at the end somebody wins by a point and you go home worn out. You're charged. You're edgy. But we're up by 30-something, and I'm thinking, 'Hmm, I'd like to leave here if I could.' It's the weirdest thing. I've never felt that way before" (Jenkins, 2017).

Those are the words of Jerry West, spoken to Sports Illustrated's Lee Jenkins, during the Western Conference Finals in 2017. West is currently an advisor for the Los Angeles Clippers, but at the time was an advisor for the general manager and owners of the Golden State Warriors. As a Hall of Fame guard who has been a part of or overseen 10 championships in the NBA, he knows a little bit about excellence. He was a part of a Los Angeles Lakers superteam that went to the Finals numerous times and only came out on top once because Bill Russell's superteam Boston Celtics won 11 titles in 13 seasons (Sports Reference LLC, Bill Russell). He created two superteams in Los Angeles for the Lakers and another one in Oakland for the Warriors. So, while the NBA

and its fans want to see greatness and the best players playing together and putting on a show, does there need to be a middle ground?

There is no consensus on when superteams first became a part of the NBA. Some people say it was recently and started on July 4th, 2016 when Kevin Durant decided to leave the Oklahoma City Thunder and join the Golden State Warriors, the team that knocked the Thunder out of the playoffs just a couple of months prior. Others will say it started in the summer of 2010 when LeBron James and Chris Bosh joined forces with Dwyane Wade in Miami. Other fans will pick the 2007 offseason when the Boston Celtics made two separate trades to acquire both Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen. A different group of NBA followers may say this trend started way before this, back to the Michael Jordan days with the Chicago Bulls in the 1990s. Or, maybe all the way back in the 1950s and 60s when the Lakers and Celtics dominated everyone by consistently having a majority of the league's best players. In each of these instances, a "superteam" was created.

Over a 13-year stretch, from 1956-1969, the Boston Celtics won 11 NBA championships. That is not a sign of parity for the NBA. In the 1980s the Los Angeles Lakers went to the Finals eight separate times in ten years (Sports Reference LLC, Los Angeles Lakers). Also, not much parity for the league's Western Conference. In the 1990s the Chicago Bulls went to the Finals six times in eight years and won each time they got there (Sports Reference LLC, Chicago Bulls). The Houston Rockets won the other two of those eight years (Sports Reference LLC, Houston Rockets), which means only two teams won every championship over an eight-year span. And now, in today's NBA, the idea of parity is being tested again. LeBron James has been to the Finals in

seven straight seasons (4 with the Miami Heat and three with the Cleveland Cavaliers) and the Golden State Warriors have been to three straight Finals of their own from the other conference and are expected to keep getting there for the foreseeable future in the “era of superteams” (Haberstroh, 2017).

In 2016 at the NBA’s Summer League event in Las Vegas the commissioner Adam Silver said of having two superteams, “I don’t think it’s good for the league” (Gomez, 2016). Silver talked about how some people thought having the two superteams of the Cavaliers and Warriors would be good from an entertainment standpoint, but to him that was not greater than the inequality it created for the rest of the league. Many sports writers and analysts have commented on whether they think superteams are good or bad for the league and this is what prompted me to take a deep dive into how superteams actually affect the league and whether the perceived negative effect of them is real or not.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of superteams--the concentration of talent on a single team rather than a more even distribution of talent across many teams--on basketball fans’ interest and enjoyment of the NBA. Over various points in the history of the NBA, certain teams have accumulated so much talent that sports pundits have decried the lack of competitive balance, while others have celebrated the extraordinary excellence of the great team. Given the considerable interest, but lack of consensus, this thesis aims to provide a more systematic investigation into how fans perceive inequality, with the potential for considerable implications for teams, leagues, and fans.

Superteams have become a prevalent part of the NBA since the turn of the century and even a larger topic of discussion since the Kevin Durant signing in 2016. There is not an exact definition for what a superteam is, but Tom Haberstroh, formerly of ESPN and now with Bleacher Report, gave a good baseline for one in an article from July 2017 in which he ranked the superteams currently in the NBA. He said that a superteam is any team “with at least two established current stars.” His qualification for a star is “a player who has been on an All-Star team or an All-NBA team in any of the previous three seasons.” He then created a point system depending on how many All-Star teams the player was on or which All-NBA team the player was a part of. Based off of this point system, I think that six teams that qualify as a superteam (two being superteams and the other four being superduos) with four more teams on the cusp of becoming a superteam at the beginning of the 2017-2018 NBA season. This all brought Haberstroh, and me eventually, to the conclusion that fans are living in the superteam era (Haberstroh, 2017).

Background on the NBA and Superteams

NBA Playoff Structure

The current NBA has 30 teams divided equally into two conferences, East and West. Each conference then has three five-team divisions. The winner of each division and the next five best teams in each conference make the playoffs. This means that 16 out of 30 teams qualify for the playoffs each year. With more than half of the teams making the playoffs, NBA teams have the best chance of reaching the postseason compared to the National Football League (12 out of 32 teams make the playoffs) and Major League Baseball (10 out of 30 make the playoffs).

Playoff teams are seeded 1-8 in each conference and they play in a bracket style format (1 vs. 8, 2 vs. 7, 3 vs. 6, 4 vs. 5) with the winner of each bracket playing in the NBA Finals. Each round of the playoffs is a best-of-7 series with the higher seed as the home team for four of the seven games. This means that to win the championship, a team must win 16 games against the best competition in the league.

Since the NBA adopted its 16-team playoff format in 1984, a third seed or worse made it to the Finals in either conference only 11 times (Only four of the 11 were worse than a number three seed, but five of the 11 won the championship.) (Sports Reference LLC, Playoff Series History). This means that seemingly every year it is a maximum of only four or five teams competing for the championship. So, do superteams really change that equation? The NBA is currently experiencing a time period where there are multiple superteams; how does this affect the number of teams fighting for the title?

The Shift Towards Superteams

Today's players seem to be drawn to superteams to achieve the ultimate goal of an athlete, winning a championship (Knox, 2012). When one superteam is created it makes it more difficult for every other team to reach that goal. This compels players and team executives to use their relationships to form superteams of their own to compete and have a shot at the title. This is very evident in the league today as the superteam Warriors forced the hands of many other teams. This past offseason saw the Minnesota Timberwolves add a star player via trade, the Oklahoma City Thunder added two stars to team up with the 2017 NBA MVP, the Boston Celtics who were a semifinalist in 2017 traded for a star and signed another in free agency, and the Houston Rockets who finished with the league's third best record in the 2016-2017 traded for a star to play with the 2017 MVP runner-up.

These moves reflect teams trying to match the strength of the Warriors, but they also indicate that the teams trading the stars away do not think they can compete for the ultimate goal (Jarvis, 2017). The addition of stars to already good and great teams make for great competition at the top of the league, however it makes the bottom tier teams weaker. This creates the question of whether superteams are good for the NBA or not. Does having a concentration of the top players on five or six teams to create top competition make the league better? Or, by having those players all on only a few teams and weakening the rest of the league, does it ruin the NBA with a less balanced and competitive league?

Parity, or the lack of it, is a part of every sports league in the world. Some leagues, like the NFL, pride themselves on the equality of the teams (O'Donnell, 2010);

some, like many European soccer leagues, have the tradition of natural selection and letting money be spent freely (Bing, 2012); and some leagues, like the NBA, fall in the middle. Given certain parameters set by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the NBA chooses to let its teams go through their natural ebbs and flows. The league's CBA and draft rules sets up teams so that over time the league will all even out and teams will have their shot at winning and their times at the bottom of the standings. With fewer players on the court at a time for each team compared to other major sports, it gives star players more time to shine and dominate the game. Combine that with a soft salary cap

NBA's Collective Bargaining Agreement

Professional American sports leagues all run on a CBA. A major component of each CBA is the salary cap. The NFL has a strict salary cap, the MLB's is loose, and, just like the parity statement above, the NBA falls in the middle with a soft salary cap (Coon, 2017). The salary cap dictates how much a team can spend on its players in a given year. That the NBA has a soft salary cap means that teams can spend more than the salary cap under certain circumstances, with thresholds like a luxury tax and hard cap for spending over the salary cap figure. For the 2017-2018 season the NBA salary cap is \$99.093 million, up from \$94.143 million the year before (Coon, 2017). This is the second season after a large cap spike. In the 2015-2016 season the salary cap was just \$70 million. In October 2014, the NBA signed a massive \$24 billion TV deal with ESPN and Turner that would start with the 2016-2017 season, which lead to lots more revenue for the league which it shares with the players in the form of the salary cap

(Jenkins, 2017). Sports Illustrated's Lee Jenkins spoke with an NBA agent in 2017 and asked if this spike was good for the NBA; the agent's response: "Of course not. It's the last thing they wanted. But of course the agents and the players wanted it. We're thinking about the guy who has two years left in his career, or the guy who is hitting free agency for the last time, or the guy who is hitting it for the first time. The money came into the system and we wanted everything those guys deserved, whether or not it was helpful for the teams and the league" (Jenkins, 2017).

However, the cap does not represent a firm number that teams must stay under as the CBA allows teams to go over the salary cap in certain scenarios. One threshold that is over the salary cap that can be reached is called the luxury tax. For the 2017-2018 season this number is \$119.266 million. The CBA has rules around how teams can pay players to get into the luxury tax, but it also penalizes them once they do pass that threshold. The penalty for being in the luxury tax varies on how many consecutive years teams have had to pay it and how fiscally deep they are into it, but it costs the team somewhere from an extra \$1.50 to \$4.25 for every dollar the team is in the tax (Coon, 2017). This is where teams in a larger market and owners with deeper pockets have an advantage; and this can be important in creating a superteam as well as in keeping one together.

Forming Superteams

Superteams cause nightmares and headaches for the rest of the teams in the league both on and off the court. Every player wants to see their season extend into

June, when the NBA Finals take place. And every coach's and general manager's job depends on his team making it deep into the playoffs. But superteams are throwing a wrench in that whole equation. Players start wanting to join a superteam and executives are deciding that it may be better to trade any good player on their team so that they will have a really bad team and receive a good draft pick to help rebuild the team.

Tom Haberstroh said that there are now six superteams in the NBA with more on the brink. But the idea of players wanting to join a superteam to get away from a bad team is not new. In 2012, after his second consecutive season as an All-Star and while a member of Team USA basketball at the Olympics in London, Kevin Love told Yahoo! that he was growing impatient with his Minnesota Timberwolves' front office for not giving his team the best chance to compete. He was the only member of the 12-man team USA basketball roster that had never played in an NBA playoff game and he said his patience was dwindling (Spears, 2012). It took some time, but in 2015 Kevin Love got his wish when he was traded to the Cleveland Cavaliers to help them form a superteam with LeBron James and Kyrie Irving.

The current CBA gives teams control of their own first round pick for their first two contracts, up to the first nine years of a player's career (Coon, 2017). A big reason for this is to give small market teams a chance to retain some of the league's top players. At the time of the Olympics, Kevin Love had been in the NBA for four years. He was an All-Star in two of them and led the league in rebounding in one of them (Sports Reference LLC, Kevin Love). He was clearly a star in the league, and would qualify as one given the parameters laid out by Haberstroh. Love was surrounded by stars on the USA basketball roster and he wanted to feel the team success that they had

all experienced in the NBA. LeBron James and the Miami Heat had been together for two years and made back-to-back NBA Finals appearances 2011 and 2012. The Oklahoma City Thunder lost to the Heat in the Finals in 2012 but with three young stars on the roster, they were poised to contend for a long time. Two teams, three stars each, and Kevin Love was stuck on an inexperienced roster for at least three more years because of the power of the CBA.

During this same offseason, the Golden State Warriors were coming off of a 23-43 season. They had been to the playoffs once in the previous 18 seasons (Sports Reference LLC, Golden State Warriors). There was no superteam in sight in the Bay Area. However, the same CBA rules that allowed small market Minnesota to keep Kevin Love also allowed the Warriors to sign Stephen Curry to an extension. Curry had ankle injuries in each of his three seasons in the NBA so while he showed a lot of promise when he was on the court he signed just a four-year \$44 million extension. The first year of this contract extension was the 2013-2014 season. In that year Curry was the 55th highest paid player (ESPN, NBA Player Salaries 2013-2014). As the rest of the contract played out, Stephen Curry won two MVP awards, the Warriors made three consecutive NBA Finals appearances, won two of those appearances, added former MVP Kevin Durant and became the talk of the NBA as a potential dynasty.

There are three components to how superteams can affect the league: the fans, the owners, and the players. Each of these groups could have their own views on superteams. Fans want to enjoy watching their own team, both on television and in person at the arena. Owners are happy when their team is making money. This could be because their team is successful on the court or maybe because the national television

deal is large which means that fans are watching the games. Players like making money but also like having a chance at winning. The amount of money they make is determined by their play on the court which could have something to do with how much their team is winning. It is also determined by the salary cap which is set by the amount of basketball related revenue that is created, which is connected to the national television contract. So, all three of these components do come full circle and connect in some way.

Data Collection

To analyze superteams and the impact that they have on the NBA, our research goes back 30 years. This encompasses some great teams from the 1980s and Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls in the 1990s as well the teams that have repeated as champions and conference champions in the past 15 years. The talk of superteams really picked up with the rise of social media and started with LeBron James and the Miami Heat in 2010, but in reality superteams have existed in every era of the NBA. By looking at the make-up of teams, their win-loss records, the attendance of games, and the growth and use of the salary cap we can begin to analyze how superteams impact the rest of the league.

We began with the 1986-1987 NBA season and gathered the win totals, attendance figures, playoff finishes, number of All-Stars, number of All-NBA team members and usage of the salary cap for every team up through the 2015-2016 season. Each of these numbers can tell a different story about how superteams affect the rest of the league. Does it become a top-heavy league based off win percentages when there are superteams? Do teams who are not as successful suffer with attendance more when superteams exist, or less? And, even the big, over-arching question, is the lack of parity good or bad for the NBA?

Winning Percentage

Preliminary analysis can show us what the average win percentage of a team who makes it to the Conference Finals is. Over the course of this data set, the average winning percentage of a team to make it to the conference championship (semi-finals) is

.699. The team with the lowest winning percentage to reach a conference championship was the Seattle Supersonics in the 1986-1987 season; they had a .476 winning percentage and lost in the conference championship. Only seven other times has a team reached the conference championship with a winning percentage under .600 and one of those were the New York Knicks in the lockout shortened 1998-1999 NBA season that only had 60 games played. This means that of the 120 teams to have reached the Conference Finals in the 30 years studied, 112 of the teams had a winning percentage greater than .600, which equates to a 50-win season in a full 82-game schedule.

Over the last 10 seasons in the study (2006-2016), there were 82 teams that finished with a 50-win season or better out of the 300 teams that performed on the court; take out the lockout shortened 66-game season in 2011-2012 and that total goes down to 80. This means that there was an average of about nine teams each season who finished with 50 or more wins. By looking at it this way, you could argue that nine teams have a shot at making a conference championship and being one of the final four teams every year.

The average winning percentage of a team to make it to the Finals is .717. Aside from the Knicks in the lockout shortened 1998-1999 season, the lowest winning percentage of a team to reach the NBA Finals is the Houston Rockets in 1995 with a .573 winning percentage. The .717 average equates to a 59-win season. Only 20 teams have reached that win total over the last 10 seasons (through 2016) and none did it during the lockout season so it means that 20 reached it over the course of nine seasons.

To look at it from a championship standpoint, the average winning percentage of the NBA champion over the 30 years is .740. The lowest winning percentage for an

NBA champion since 1987 is the Miami Heat team in 2006 who had a winning percentage of .634. That team did not have a player finish in the top 5 of MVP voting that season (Sports Reference LLC, 2005-2006 NBA Awards Voting), but had Dwyane Wade who would go on to have a Hall of Fame career and Shaquille (Shaq) O'Neal who was already well into a Hall of Fame caliber career. So, were they a superteam?

The Heat acquired Shaq the summer before the 2004 season started (Sports Reference LLC, Shaquille O'Neal), so it was in his second year with the team that they won the championship. But, as an experienced All-Star and three-time NBA champion, he brought experience to go with the youth and skill from guard Dwyane Wade who was in just his third season when they won. Joining Shaq and Wade on the team were Gary Payton and Alonzo Mourning, two Hall of Famers in their own right, who each played more than 20 minutes per game (Sports Reference LLC, 2005-2006 Miami Heat Roster and Stats). They would have met Tom Haberstroh's qualifications as a superteam.

Attendance

To dive further into the impact of superteams on this data, we used the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) to help analyze the effect of parity and superteams on attendance across the league. The HHI is a calculation that measures market concentration. We controlled for arena capacity, team, season, win percentage, change in win percentage from previous season and the opening or changing of arenas.

Our baseline results indicated a few things, some as expected and some that can create further questions. One, a new arena will help improve attendance based on the

previous season. This seems very obvious and is confirmed by our analysis. Regardless of the strength of the team, fans seem to be enticed by a new arena and place to watch their team play. An argument that one could have made against arenas creating an improvement in attendance is the jump in ticket prices. This data was not available for the entirety of the study, but the analysis shows that fans' fascination with a new stadium outweighs the increase in ticket prices. Analysis also found that a greater winning percentage is better for attendance (Exhibit 1).

Another part of our baseline results told us that an arena with a larger capacity hurts attendance numbers, relative to a percentage of how full the arena is. This brings up the question of whether it is just that a larger arena is harder to fill? Or, is a fan's experience not as good in a bigger arena? The Warriors are in the process of building a new arena now in San Francisco and will have less capacity than the current Oracle Arena. Team president Rick Welts said that the reason for the reduction in size is that they want "it to be an extremely intimate facility" (NBC Sports, 2012). The Brooklyn Nets also decided to make a smaller arena when moving from New Jersey to Brooklyn; the Detroit Pistons' new arena has more than 3,000 fewer seats than the outdated Palace of Auburn Hills that was outside the city of Detroit. On the other hand, the Sacramento Kings' new Golden 1 Center (opened in 2016) is a little larger than its predecessor, Sleep Train Arena, but is still one of the smallest arenas in the NBA (Exhibit 1).

Beyond baseline results also tell important parts of the story. We looked at if having any number of "stars" on a team helps attendance figures beyond baseline results. Having All-Stars on the team is marginally helpful, and approximately creates the same value as having an honorable mention All-NBA player. A first or second team

All-NBA player on the team helps a little bit more, which is something you would expect. The greater the star, the more likely it is that fans will want to come watch the team play (Exhibit 1).

Looking at the caliber of players from a different perspective, the data told us that teams that spend more, both relative to the total money the league spent and the salary cap, have higher attendance numbers. Teams with higher payrolls typically are better teams paying top players lots of money. However, there is also something to be said about just spending money as an owner to show your fans that you are invested in the team and doing what you can to help the team win. Sometimes teams get stuck between a rock and a hard place financially, but fans do not like frugal owners, so the owners and general managers need to find the right balance between saving money and keeping the fans happy (Exhibit 1).

Frugal owners may have a hard time putting together a superteam, but our analysis tells us that in seasons where there is a superteam, league wide attendance does not decrease. There is also no negative effect on attendance when there is unequal spending among teams throughout the league or when there are a few dominant teams with a much greater number of wins. All of this lends to the idea that owners and fans are not unhappy with superteams in the NBA over the past 30 years. However, there is one figure that does show a decrease in attendance for the league during a given season, and that is when there is a team that is a heavy favorite based on betting odds from Las Vegas (Exhibit 1).

We also decided to look at attendance based on three tiers: elite, mid-tier and bottom feeders. Having superteams in the league helped the attendance of bottom

feeders (teams ranked 18th and worse by winning percentage per season), but hurt the attendance of the mid-tier teams. There does not seem to be a straightforward reasoning for this. Superteams will travel to every arena, so fans of mid-tier teams will have just as much of a chance to show up and watch them as fans of bottom feeders (Exhibit 1).

Something that would be valuable to understand about superteams and attendance data is how well superteams draw crowds on the road. We were not able to find this data for as far back as we wanted, but knowing if people will always come to see a superteam is something that would be important. Home teams, especially in the past decade as dynamic pricing (varying ticket prices based on the opponent, time of game, giveaway item and other factors) has come in play, generally significantly increase ticket prices when one of the best teams or players comes into town. So, knowing if people will pay this premium price to see a premium opponent could help dictate the positive or negative impact of superteams on fans and attendance. We established earlier that a better winning percentage helps draw more fans; which means that the teams at the bottom of the standings typically have worse attendance. So, it would be a good thing for the NBA if those teams had opportunities to sell more tickets at an increased price with more superteams coming to town to help fill the seats. On the contrary, fans know their team would lose and they do not care about seeing players on other teams so even fewer people may come watch them play.

Survey

Another part of the research is getting the perspective of fans directly. I created and shared a survey with more than 500 respondents. The respondents were asked questions related to their favorite NBA team, their interest level in the 2016-2017 NBA season, their excitement for the upcoming 2017-2018 season, and their general relationship with the NBA. This was designed to help gauge how fans of each team feel about the current state of the league. If fans of non-superteams were more excited to watch this upcoming season than the previous one, then it helps show superteams do not have a negative impact (Exhibit 2).

The survey also had an experiment within it. Approximately half of the respondents read a passage detailing that the league was on an upswing. It describes how the value of NBA franchises is growing, and so are players' salaries. The other half of respondents read the same passage plus a paragraph about NBA superteams and how stars are becoming concentrated on the league's top teams, but that the NBA has set a record in attendance league-wide each of the past three seasons (Exhibit 3). After reading the passage, the respondents were asked questions related to current and past superteams. The purpose of the experiment was to see if reading about superteams gave fans a negative feeling towards those teams and how they are affecting the NBA. The end of the survey asked demographics questions and gave a place for respondents to input any final thoughts.

I used a few different methods to distribute the survey. The first one was reaching out to bloggers, beat writers and podcasters of each team and of the NBA and asking them to share with their followers (Exhibit 4). Another way was by sharing with

my friends and family who live across the country and the world and having them share with their friends in their hometowns. I also posted the survey on Amazon's MTurk service. MTurk describes itself as a marketplace, or online community, for individuals and businesses to collaborate on work requires human intelligence. The survey began being distributed on July 15th, two weeks after the NBA's free agency period began for the 2017 offseason and in the midst of many trades and signings taking place. It was sent out for one month with the last response coming in on August 14th.

Quantitative Survey Data

Each respondent was asked their favorite NBA team, and I was able to get at least one respondent for every team. The team with the largest number of fans was the Golden State Warriors, with 104. There were two teams with the smallest number of fans, the Memphis Grizzlies and the Orlando Magic; there was just one respondent each whose favorite team was the Grizzlies or Magic. While likely not entirely representative, the superteam Warriors who have been to the NBA Finals three years in a row have the most fans in the sample; and small market teams in Memphis and Orlando bring up the back end. Memphis has been to the playoffs seven consecutive years, but they play in the smallest media market of all 30 NBA teams (Nielsen, 2016) and their "Grit and Grind" style of play may not be the most endearing to modern fans. Orlando plays in the 19th biggest market (Nielsen, 2016), but has not been to the playoffs in six seasons while being stuck in mediocrity and being on their fourth head coach since their last postseason berth.

Respondents were also asked their second favorite NBA team. This was to help us understand if fans like superteams outside of their own team. Our results told us that 91 respondents' second favorite team was the Warriors (Exhibit 5). This means that 195 of the 539, or 36.2%, respondents have the Warriors as their first or second favorite team (Exhibit 6). The second most popular second favorite team was the Cleveland Cavaliers, the other clear cut superteam according to Tom Haberstroh (Exhibit 5). From a broad look, this tells us that superteams are fun to watch for fans of every team.

We also inquired on why that team was the fan's second favorite. Of the 91 who said the Warriors were their second favorite team, 84 said it was because that team is the most talented, has a fun style of play or that they love a player on the team. Only seven said it was because the team was on TV often or that it was the team from the town they grew up in. The numbers were similar for fans who chose the Cavaliers as their second favorite team. All but one respondent said that the Cavaliers were their second favorite team because that team is the most talented, has a fun style of play or that they love a player on the team. The other respondent said it was because the team is on TV the most (Exhibit 6). This shows that superteams are favorable to fans of all teams.

The survey attempted to grasp which direction the NBA is heading with its fans. Prior to the 2016-2017 season, the majority of fans were convinced that it was going to be the Warriors against the Cavaliers in the Finals for the third year in a row. ESPN predicted the Warriors and Cavaliers to finish first in their respective conferences; 45 out of 47 ESPN basketball analysts picked the Cavaliers to make it to the Finals from the Eastern Conference (East Summer Forecast, 2016); and 47 out of 47 ESPN

basketball analysts picked the Warriors to win the Western Conference (West Summer Forecast, 2016). This gives the idea that the NBA season would be boring. So, we asked our survey respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “I really enjoyed this past NBA regular season.” On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being completely disagree, 3 being neither agree nor disagree, and 5 being strongly agree, the average result was 3.86 (Exhibit 7). This lends a favorable grading of this past season.

Rivalries and talent attract fans and this past season showed off both of those. This past season the NBA got a rivalry in the Warriors and the Oklahoma City Thunder, Kevin Durant’s former team. The Warriors and Cavaliers kept their rivalry alive as they faced off in the Finals for a third year in a row. This created a Finals series with such immense talent all over the floor. It is what all NBA junkies want to see, it is the best kind of aesthetic for someone who loves basketball. It also has the storyline for the casual fan, ‘Come see the best basketball players on the planet battle in a seven-game series for the championship.’

However, there was a narrative that the 2017 postseason was “boring” for fans (Nadkarni, Sports Illustrated). There were just two series that went to seven games compared to five series that resulted in a 4-0 sweep. The only upset, where the worse seed beat a better seed, was a five-seed beating a four-seed and that took place in the opening round. On their way to the Finals, as people predicted to start the season, the Cavaliers lost just one game, and it was during the conference semi-finals. The Warriors were even better. They only lost one game the entire playoffs and that didn’t come until they had a 3-0 series lead in the Finals against the Cavaliers. So, we asked our survey respondents if they enjoyed the 2017 postseason (Sports Reference LLC, 2017 NBA

Playoffs Summary). The result, from the same 1-5 scale, was an average rating of 3.60 (Exhibit 7). This is lower than the regular season, but still not a bad outcome for what was perceived to be a dull two months of basketball.

Another way to look at the direction of the NBA is to see how much fans watched this past season compared to how much they expect to watch in this new 2017-2018 season. This is of course an approximation of how many games they watched and a guess or hope of what they will watch, but it gives an idea of the mindset of the fan. The questions were asked back to back so respondents were able to think about how they watched last season and what they were expecting this upcoming season. The average percentage of their favorite team's games that fans said they watched during the 2016-2017 season was 48.12%. The percentage of games they expect to watch in the 2017-2018 season is an average of 53.97% (Exhibit 8).

Breaking those numbers down by team, fans of every team except four said that they expect to watch at least as many games in the 2017-2018 as they did in 2016-2017. The four that answered they would watch fewer are the Grizzlies, Thunder, Spurs and Raptors (Exhibit 9). The Grizzlies had just one fan respond to the survey so the data I have depends solely on that one fan which likely does not indictate the thoughts of all Grizzlies fans. The Thunder created a superteam this past offseason so it seems odd that fans are becoming less interested in watching the team play, however the survey was conducted before the team traded for All-Star Carmelo Anthony. The Spurs just made the Western Conference Finals in 2017 and have won at least 50 games in each of the past 18 regular seasons (Sports Reference LLC, San Antonio Spurs), which could be bad news for the NBA if that team's fans are losing interest in the team. And the

Raptors have made the playoffs four seasons in a row with five All-Star appearances between two players the last three years (Sports Reference LLC, Toronto Raptors), but being stuck in above average but not great territory could be getting frustrating for fans.

Fans were also asked to rank themselves on how they think they compare to other NBA fans on a 1-7 scale. Choosing 1 meant you thought you were a much weaker fan than the average NBA fan, 4 was saying that you were an average NBA fan and 7 meant you thought you were a much stronger fan than the average NBA fan. At every level except level 2, fans said that they were expecting to watch more of their favorite team play in the 2017-2018 season than they did during the 2016-2017 season.

There was a question asking explicitly if their interest in the NBA was growing. On the same strongly disagree to strongly agree 1-5 scale as earlier, the results produced an average answer of 3.79, close to a 4 which meant that fans agreed with the statement that their interest in the league is growing. This question was asked right after the respondent read either the passage about the growth of the league, or the one about its growth and about superteams concentrating the stars of the league. When breaking it up by those who read the portion with the superteams compared to the ones who did not there is hardly any difference. For respondents who read the passage without the superteam part, the average answer was 3.83; the average for those who read the part with superteams described was 3.75 (Exhibit 10).

We looked at responses to the statement regarding interest in the NBA growing by team instead of by whether the fan read the superteam passage or not, and fans of every team except the Dallas Mavericks and Memphis Grizzlies had an average over 3 (Exhibit 11). This meant that fans of each team except two at least felt neutral about

their future interest in the league. As mentioned earlier, the Grizzlies only had one respondent and that fan was not excited for the future of the league as his team was getting older and still stuck in the small market.

The experiment with just half the respondents reading about superteams did not seem to show much difference in responses to other questions either. When asked if they liked superteams from the past 10 seasons, fans who did not read the passage about superteams gave an average answer of 3.41 on the 1-5 scale. Fans who did read the superteam passage had an average answer of 3.40 (Exhibit 12). We also asked if they agree with the statement, “I like current superteams.” Again, no difference in the answers. The average for fans who did not read the superteam passage was 3.29 and the average for fans who did read the superteam passage was also 3.29 (Exhibit 12).

We also asked fans if they get upset about superteams in the NBA. On the 1-5 scale, fans who did not read about superteams had an average answer of 2.97, a very neutral response. Fans who did read the superteam passage averaged a 2.94, a really similar number to ones who did not read the statement about superteams (Exhibit 12). So, this helps us reason that reading about the concentration of stars to form superteams did not affect people’s perception of superteams on the league.

Superteams seem to go hand in hand with the state of parity in the NBA. When superteams exist, parity does not, and vice versa. We asked our respondents, after reading one of the two passages, if they agree that “the NBA needs more parity.” This means that a higher response means you agree that the NBA needs more parity. Respondents who read the passage without the superteam statement answered a 3.49 average on the 1-5 scale. If the respondent did read the passage about superteams they

had an average answer of 3.44 (Exhibit 10). Again, very little difference; however, we expected that reading about superteams would influence fans to think the NBA needs more parity, but in actuality it had, while just slightly, the opposite effect.

Qualitative Survey Data

From a quantitative standpoint, the survey data seems to tell us that the growth of superteams does not have a negative impact on the NBA and in some ways, may even have a positive effect on the league. We asked fans to “share any final thoughts on superteams in the NBA,” to hear what they had to say outside of our own questions. Fans who chose to respond to this optional question, had varying responses (Exhibit 14).

Some believe that superteams are bad for the NBA. They are very straightforward in that it makes the games more boring to watch and if their favorite team is not a superteam (which it almost always is not) then they do not have much reason to watch the league. While these fans do not have a solution for this problem, it has become a frustrating scenario for them moving forward. A Dallas Mavericks fan said, “the 2016-2017 NBA season was awful. The regular season was the worst sporting event ever because it was obvious the whole time that the Warriors were going to win. The playoffs were absolutely terrible to watch also.” However, even though the Finals ended with the Warriors winning 4-1 and with only one really close game, that Mavericks fan said, “thankfully the finals was entertaining.” However, he would not trade the good Finals for a bad regular season and playoffs.

Some think that having the same two teams make the Finals over and over is boring but that superteams are not bad. A Bulls fan of 21 years who describes himself as “a big fan of the NBA” says that he has become disinterested in watching regular season games because it is inevitable that the Cavaliers and Warriors will matchup in the Finals. He admits he is then excited to watch that Finals match up but it is a long road of boring games to get there.

Some think it is the media creating a fuss. One fan said, “this isn’t a new thing, just the media’s way of undermining what the Warriors have been able to do.” As we have learned, and as many respondents pointed out in this free response, superteams have existed forever in the NBA but the term is now being used more than it ever has. This is not to say that the media is wrong in creating a superteam mantra for the NBA, but it tends to create a negative connotation for the term when it may not be the case.

Others say it is how the NBA is designed to work. As stated before, the NBA and its teams go through their own ebbs and flows of winning and losing. One fan points out that it was not too long ago that the Warriors were booing their new owner at a halftime presentation to recognize a Warriors Hall of Fame player, and now they are considered the superteam of superteams. Another fan talks about how the CBA and salary cap allow superteams to form if teams get lucky breaks and have management that knows what it is doing. But the CBA is also designed to only allow them to stay together for a limited time. Superteams are formed by star players who will want a lot of money; and as owners see their salary and luxury tax bill growing and growing, they may be more reluctant to keep the team together. This creates room for a new superteam to blossom.

Players occasionally agree to take less money to keep a team together, as Kevin Durant did this past summer. But this approach can be attributed to team management and the culture of an organization for convincing players to take less money to keep the best product on the floor with the best chance to compete. Other fans pointed this out in their comments. Teams that have superior management have been able to find the right bargains and have taken advantage of their opportunities more often than not.

A basketball blogger commented that the league is constantly evolving. He wrote, “the better the top team is, the faster and more extreme the evolution of the league will be. Front runners force other teams to adapt and innovate, and that’s a great thing.” Superteams in the NBA are formed in all kinds of ways, but you can study it and see how to build a culture, run a system and evaluate players.

Some recognize that superteams have existed for a long time and that is what it takes to be a great team and maintain that caliber of play. A fan of a non-superteam writes that superteams have been around for at least two decades, and they get to become superteams, “because of the particular team’s shrewd financial decision-making or excellent drafting.” He also recognizes that superteams tend to form in large markets, but he points out that “Orlando isn’t bad because they’re in a small market. They’re bad because they haven’t drafted well.” A Los Angeles Lakers fan recognizes that not every superteam works. He writes, “super teams don’t always work as chemistry is important. If the talent doesn’t mesh well, owners risk heavy salaries that don’t yield good enough results.”

And others think it is really fun to have superteams form as it makes for the most entertaining quality of basketball on the court. A Warriors fan says, “super teams

come along once every generation. The Celtics and Lakers were amazing for the league in the '80's. The Warriors are fundamentally changing how the game is being played – making it more entertaining to watch. That is great for the NBA.” A San Antonio Spurs fan, who is also the host of a basketball podcast commented that superteams “absolutely generate greater interest in the league, not just for their team accomplishments and high level of play, but also for the drama and team dynamics.” His answer also fits the evolution of play discussed above as he writes that superteams, “also force other teams to find unusual ways to compete.” A comment at the end of the survey from a Portland Trail Blazers fan said it best; “super teams are great for the NBA. They showcase basketball at its best, and offer lots of drama, especially if they get upset (e.g. the Mavs beating the Heat in the 2011 Finals).”

Further Research and Limitations

Our data collection process did not encompass as much as we originally hoped. One thing we were not able to find for our entire data series was the Las Vegas betting odds for each team at the beginning of the season. The data we found only went back as far as the 2005-2006 season. Vegas odds are helpful because they give an idea of how the public thinks a team will do in a particular season. By comparing the odds in various years, one can start to see whether exists in the league. These odds also allow one to see where the winner of the Finals that year was in the original championship odds before the season started and compared to the rest of the league.

Another piece of data that would have been very telling are the TV ratings for each team's local network and for nationally televised games. Some of these figures are available but not in great detail and not with the history that this research was looking at. Knowing the fluctuation of TV ratings, in association with the contracts that go with them, would be useful in understanding the direction the league is headed and where it has come from. It is known that there is more money in the NBA than ever and that will only continue to grow, but under what circumstances is this the case? And how has the level of fan interest changed?

In terms of the fan survey, the next step would be to follow up with the fans in the middle of the 2017-2018 season, or right after it concludes to see if fans' opinions of the league have changed after a year with more superteams than any in the previous three decades. Building a collection of these thoughts on the NBA and conducting the research each year would be interesting to track as stars continue to change rosters and NBA franchises go through their cycles.

The survey did also have its limitations. I did my best to reach a representative sample of fans, but I think it could have been accomplished more effectively. It would have created a better data set if I was able to reach more fans from each team. The survey also had a disproportionate number of fans that rated themselves as a strong fan compared to fans that said they were weaker than the average fan. Lastly, the survey was skewed toward a younger demographic. It was distributed most commonly through Twitter and MTurk which are used more by younger fans. A better, and larger, survey population that eliminated biases of my reach would have created stronger results.

Conclusion

I chose to research this topic because it was something I have read about and talked about every week since Kevin Durant signed with the Warriors on July 4th, 2016. Everyone had their own opinion about superteams and how they have affected the league. After a record breaking 73-win 2015-2016 regular season, the Warriors had come one loss away from being knocked out of the playoffs by the Thunder and Kevin Durant in the Western Conference Finals. Fans started to think the Warriors had a threat in the conference and just like that it vanished. While the numbers may say they were a superteam, or were on the brink of becoming one, no one hated the Warriors because they were “too good.” But when Durant signed there, it made them an enemy. It brought superteams back to the forefront of NBA conversations.

Adam Silver made his point about it at the Summer League in Las Vegas just a few weeks after the Durant signing. When Silver said that he did not think having the two superteams was good for the NBA, it made fans start to think about what changes might be coming. Or were the superteams really a bad thing for the league? It was a few months later, in October of 2016 that I thought of the idea and began researching the subject. No one had explored whether superteams really did have a negative effect on the league. People had their opinions, with some saying it was boring and made the league no fun; while others were ecstatic to this kind of talent on the same team.

During my research, the landscape of the NBA has evolved again. The superteam conversation has gained even more buzz. The Cavaliers and Warriors are no longer the only two superteams in the league. After a third straight Finals matchup for the two teams, the rest of the league did not shy away from competing. The Houston

Rockets, Oklahoma City Thunder, Minnesota Timberwolves, New Orleans Pelicans and Boston Celtics have each added at least one star to their team in the last 10 months. To acquire a star, a team must sacrifice some of their future, whether through cap space or future assets like draft picks or young players; and all of those teams chose to do that to do that to try and challenge the Warriors and Cavaliers.

In the end, we learned that superteams do not have a clear positive or negative effect on the popularity or growth of the NBA. The league has set attendance records three seasons in a row (Brown, 2017), TV ratings in the Finals have been higher each year and at their highest since Michael Jordan was in the Finals and teams are signing the largest local TV deals in history. (Brown, 2017) After the 2017 Finals ended, Matt Moore of CBS Sports wrote,

“There's a way to challenge Golden State. It's possible. That road is most often seen through the lens of talent, but it may actually be through team play. It's going to take a village to beat the Warriors. The Warriors have won their second title. They've also raised the bar on what it's going to take to win in the NBA. That's going to make teams better, which makes the games better, which makes the league better, which makes the sport more enjoyable for fans. It's hard to see through the dense haze of a post-Warriors competitive apocalypse, but there are flowers growing through the ashy ruins of what the Warriors have left in their wake” (Moore, 2017).

Our analysis showed us that superteams are not bad for the league. Over the course of the past three decades, fans have continued to show up regardless of the parity that exists in the league. Like we would expect, teams who struggle do not have as many fans come out. But each team goes through cycles. Since the 1995 NBA Finals, 18 different franchises have appeared in the Finals at least once (Sports Reference LLC, NBA & ABA Champions). There are currently only three teams that have playoff droughts longer than five seasons. One is the Timberwolves who just added a star and

have two stars on the rise; they were one of the “next four in” teams in Haberstroh’s superteam list (Sports Reference LLC, Minnesota Timberwolves). The Sacramento Kings have not been to the playoffs since 2006, but they have experienced great success this century having been to the playoffs every year from 1999-2006 (Sports Reference LLC, Sacramento Kings). The third team with a drought over five seasons is the Phoenix Suns. The Suns have been to the Western Conference Finals three times since 2005 and have also had a back-to-back MVP award winner with Steve Nash (Sports Reference LLC, Phoenix Suns).

Every NBA team finds success at some point. Superteams may extend low periods for teams, but superteams can also create ruts for themselves when the superteams start to fall apart. Players will get older, money will be tied and the franchise may be stuck in turmoil. There are currently only four teams who have made the playoffs more than five seasons in a row. The San Antonio Spurs are renowned for the way they operate within their organization, they have a coach who is regarded as one of the best of all time, they have had more than a few Hall of Famers play with them for a long time during this stretch, but even they had a lot of luck. Their star player David Robinson got hurt during the 1996-1997 season causing them to miss the playoffs. They got incredibly lucky to win the draft lottery that year and drafted Tim Duncan, who turned out to become a 15-time All-Star, 15-time All-NBA player, 15-time All-Defensive team player and a two time MVP (Sports Reference LLC, Tim Duncan). They got lucky when their second-round pick in 1999, Manu Ginobili, went on to become an All-Star, All-NBA player and Hall of Famer.

The small market grit and grind Memphis Grizzlies who represent the smallest media market in the NBA have been to the postseason seven years in a row. The Los Angeles Clippers, who were the laughingstock of the league next to the Warriors from 2000-2010 have made the playoffs six years in a row. Every team goes through its cycles. Management, coaching, ownership and luck are what can help maintain and prolong them, but in the end, such cycles are inevitable.

Our survey data tells us that there are some fans who are unhappy with superteams taking over the NBA today, but as a whole, NBA fans like the direction the league is heading. It may not be everyone's favorite, but the superteam era has made its mark on the league. Casual fans get to soak up the headlines and see all of the star players on the court at the same time. Less interested fans may not be able to grasp what superteams are, or what they mean for the NBA, but having many of the big-name players on TV together at the same time may help them become bigger fans of the league. An intriguing rivalry or Finals matchup can help the league generate fans, and turn weaker ones into more interested fans.

A hardcore NBA fan will always watch the NBA. Eventually their favorite team will be among the championship contenders and they will be happy with whatever state the league is in. And in the end, they will watch the NBA because it is what they love to do. Fans will make superteams the enemy and watch them just to root against them. Diehard fans love basketball too much to ever let it go, and no superteam will ever be able to take it out of their hands.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1

Results Baseline & beyond baseline results from Stars and Super Teams

Attendance (percent)

Baseline results

- Improves over time (year) ($p < .0001$)
- New arena lift (almost significant: $p < .01$)
- Capacity hurts ($p < .001$)
 - Is it just more difficult to fill a big arena?
 - Or does a big arena ruin experience?
- Win percentage helps ($p < .0001$)
- No Win % change effect when controlling for team fixed effects

Do "Stars" help above and beyond baseline? (analyzed each "star" indicator separately)

- All-stars only marginally significant ($p = .07$)
- All NBA players help (from previous season)
 - 1st team ($p = .0001$)
 - 2nd team ($p = .001$)
 - 3rd team ($p = .08$)
- Big spenders (% of league spend) ($p < .01$)
- Big spenders (% of salary cap) ($p < .01$)

Inequality (Super Teams) vs Parity

Each "indicator" assessed one at a time

- No outcome (distributions of wins) effect
- A heavy favorite (future odds) hurts ($p = .02$)
- No unequal spending effect (distribution of spending)
- No "Super Team" All Stars effect
- No "Super Team" All NBA teams effects

Depends on league standing (elite, mid tier, bottom feeders)

- "Super Team" of All Stars effect was positive for bottom feeders' (18th and worse) attendance compared to mid tier ($p = .03$) where it hurt ($p = .05$)

Exhibit 2

Thesis NBA Fan Survey

Survey Flow

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

EmbeddedData

SuperT = 0

EmbeddedData

SuperT = 1

Block: Default Question Block (33 Questions)

Page Break

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Thank you so much for taking the time to take this survey.

I am a student at the University of Oregon conducting my thesis on fan's views of changes in the NBA. I hope you will enjoy sharing your opinion. This survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. I am interested in the opinions of all types of NBA fans. All responses are anonymous, however if you would like to be considered in a drawing for a \$100 Amazon gift card, please include your email address when prompted.

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this and help me with my research.

Page Break

Team Please select your favorite NBA team

▼ Atlanta Hawks (1) ... Washington Wizards (30)

Page Break

YrsFan How many years have you been a fan of
 \${Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}?

Years (1)	
-----------	--

WhyFan I became a fan of the \${Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} because

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
They are my hometown team (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My favorite player was on the team (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My family or friends were fans of the team (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
They were good when I started to follow them (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





WhyStill I have remained a fan of the $\{\text{Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}\}$ because

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
They have always been good (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I love their players (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became passionate about the team/sport (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy talking about them with other people (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a loyal personality (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

follow What percent of the $\{\text{Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}\}$ regular season games did you follow closely **last season**?

Percent of games you watched on TV or listened to on the radio? (1)	
Percent of games you followed on social media? (2)	
Percent of games you discussed with others? (3)	
Percent of games you read about online or in print, or listened to a discussion about the game on radio or podcast? (4)	

WilFol What percent of the $\{Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ regular season games do you expect to follow closely **this upcoming season?**

Percent of games you will watch or listen to live? (1)	
Percent of games you will follow on social media? (2)	
Percent of games you will discuss with others? (3)	
Percent of games you will read about online or in print, or listen to a discussion about the game on radio or podcast? (4)	

Page Break

PastPerf How would you characterize the
\${Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} performance the past few seasons?

- Terrible (1)
 - Poor (2)
 - Average (3)
 - Good (4)
 - Excellent (5)
-

FutPerf How well do you expect the \${Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} to
perform over the next few seasons?

- Terrible (1)
 - Poor (2)
 - Average (3)
 - Good (4)
 - Excellent (5)
-

StrngTm Compared to most people, how strong a fan are you of the
\${Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}?

- Much weaker (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - the same (4)
 - (5)
 - (6)
 - Much stronger (7)
-

StrngNBA Compared to most people, how strong a fan are you of the NBA (the league
in general)?

- Much weaker (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - the same (4)
 - (5)
 - (6)
 - Much stronger (7)
-

Rooting Please rate your agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Outside of rooting for the $\{\text{Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}\}$ I couldn't care less about rooting for the NBA (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really enjoyed this past NBA regular season (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really enjoyed this past NBA playoffs (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

OthTeam Aside from the $\{\text{Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}\}$, who is your favorite team to watch?

▼ Atlanta Hawks (1) ... I don't watch any other team (31)

Skip To: WhyFan If Aside from the $\{q://QID1/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$, who is your favorite team to watch? = I don't watch any other team

WhyOth Why are the $\{\text{OthTeam/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}\}$ the most fun to watch?

- They are the most talented (1)
- Their style is really fun (2)
- I love a player/players on the team (3)
- They are on TV the most (4)
- They are the local team/where I grew up (5)

Page Break

WhyFan Please rate how strongly you agree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I take a lot of pride in my team when it performs well (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rooting for the \${Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} is important because it helps bond our city and bring our community together (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I love sports that can provide a thrill of the unexpected (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy being able to talk to other fans about what is happening in the NBA (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to make small talk with other people about the NBA (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to make small talk with other people about sports (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to play fantasy basketball (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to play other fantasy sports (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to gamble on the NBA (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like keeping up with the drama of the NBA's star players (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a basketball fanatic and love watching the highest quality of basketball in the world (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like knowing what is going on in the world of sports (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If SuperT = 0

Basic Please read the following about changes and trends in the NBA. We will ask you questions about this info and how you feel about it.

The value of NBA franchises in general surged from 2013 to 2015, thanks to skyrocketing television revenue as well as the sale of the Los Angeles Clippers for a record \$2.0 billion. According to Forbes, the average value of an NBA team was around \$400 million in 2010 and rocketed up to over \$1 billion by 2015. The growth in value of the average NBA team slowed a bit the last two years and is currently \$1.4 billion.

Salaries for players have increased as well. The team salary cap increased from \$57 million in 2010 to \$94 million last season and \$102 million this upcoming season. The average salary last season for NBA players was \$6.2 million which is ahead of NFL and MLB average salaries. The NFL is the most popular sport in the US, but the NBA has international appeal and NFL team salaries are divided among 53 players on each team.

Display This Question:

If SuperT = 1

SuperT

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Talent across the NBA has also really started to cluster onto "super teams." Golden State has 4 current All-Stars and Cleveland has 3 All-Stars while many others now have

2 All-Stars on their team. This is causing some teams to feel like they have no shot at contending and they therefore choose to "tank." During this same time period though, the NBA has seen record attendance levels each of the past three seasons.

Page Break

Grow Please indicate your agreement with the following statements

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My interest in the NBA is growing (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect to closely follow the 2017-2018 NBA season (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will watch more NBA games this upcoming season than I did last season (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will spend more money on NBA products (tickets, gear, etc.) this upcoming season than I did last season (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

X→ X→

STRate How do you feel about the following statements

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I get upset about Super Teams in the NBA (STRate_1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would prefer more parity in the NBA (STRate_2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parity makes sports entertaining to watch (STRate_3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The NBA is boring if everyone believes that there are two teams who will inevitably matchup in the Finals (STRate_4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the Super Teams that currently exist in the NBA (STRate_5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the Super Teams that have existed in the NBA in the past 10 years (STRate_6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

It has been fun with the Warriors and Cavaliers matching up in the Finals three straight years (STRate_7)



With today's NBA stars concentrated on a few teams, it is fun for fans to watch the best players play together (STRate_8)



It is part of the NBA franchise cycle to have a few teams at the top of the talent level and some that are rebuilding and developing (STRate_9)



Page Break

Initiatives How do you feel about the following statements

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The Warriors are good for the NBA (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Cleveland Cavaliers are good for the NBA (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Philadelphia 76ers are good for the NBA (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The current Collective Bargaining Agreement is good for the NBA (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The current salary cap is good for the NBA (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The current setup of the "max salary" is good for the NBA (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Age Please select your age

▼ Under 18 (1) ... 85 or older (9)

gender Please select your gender

Male (1)

Female (2)

Gender neutral (3)

OthSp Which other leagues/sports are you a fan of?

College Basketball (men's or women's) (1)

College Football (2)

NFL (3)

College Baseball (4)

MLB (5)

MLS (6)

European Soccer (7)

NHL (8)

Tennis (men's or women's) (9)

Golf (men's or women's) (10)

WNBA (11)

State What state do you live in?

▼ Alabama (1) ... International (51)

DistT How far away do you live from the $\${Team/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}$?

▼ 0-30 miles (1) ... 500+ miles (6)

Edu The highest level of formal education I received is:

- Less than high school (1)
 - High school graduate (2)
 - Some college (3)
 - 2 year degree (4)
 - 4 year degree (5)
 - Professional degree (6)
 - Doctorate (7)
-

Conserv My political views tend to be

- Very Liberal (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - Independent / In the middle (4)
 - (5)
 - (6)
 - Very Conservative (7)
-

Page Break

WatchSoc I usually watch NBA games _____

▼ Alone (1) ... With friends (3)

LocWatch I usually watch NBA games _____ (location)

▼ At home (1) ... At a friend's (3)

Ineq Inequality is a big problem in the United States

- Strongly agree (1)
 - Somewhat agree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat disagree (4)
 - Strongly disagree (5)
-

Page Break _____

Email1 Please input your email here if you would like to qualify for an Amazon gift card

Email2 Please input your email here if you would like to receive a copy of the final write up of this project

Final Please share any final thoughts you have on Super Teams in the NBA

End of Block: Default Question Block

Exhibit 3

Display This Question:

If SuperT = 0

Basic Please read the following about changes and trends in the NBA. We will ask you questions about this info and how you feel about it.

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Display This Question:

If SuperT = 1

SuperT

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Exhibit 4

Hi _____,

My name is Jordan Finci and I'm a senior at the University of Oregon.

I have created a survey for my thesis project which revolves around the NBA, and in particular assessing some of the trends that have taken place in recent years. I'm reaching out because I understand you are passionate about the NBA and will have valuable input in my project.

Also, as a growing basketball blogger I presume you have many friends and followers who are fans of the NBA and I would love their opinions as well. I am looking to gain the perspective of fans from all 30 teams and would greatly appreciate if you could share this with your friends and followers

This survey should take about 10-15 minutes and there is a \$100 Amazon gift card reward for one random person who completes the survey.

Thank you so much!

Exhibit 5

Second Favorite Team is Hawks	12
Second Favorite Team is Celtics	27
Second Favorite Team is Nets	9
Second Favorite Team is Hornets	5
Second Favorite Team is Bulls	24
Second Favorite Team is Cavaliers	60
Second Favorite Team is Mavericks	11
Second Favorite Team is Nuggets	11
Second Favorite Team is Pistons	3
Second Favorite Team is Warriors	91
Second Favorite Team is Rockets	21
Second Favorite Team is Pacers	11
Second Favorite Team is Clippers	12
Second Favorite Team is Lakers	24
Second Favorite Team is Grizzlies	6
Second Favorite Team is Heat	8
Second Favorite Team is Bucks	11
Second Favorite Team is Timberwolves	12
Second Favorite Team is Pelicans	1
Second Favorite Team is Knicks	7
Second Favorite Team is Thunder	22
Second Favorite Team is Magic	1
Second Favorite Team is 76ers	14
Second Favorite Team is Suns	2
Second Favorite Team is Trail Blazers	20
Second Favorite Team is Kings	5
Second Favorite Team is Spurs	35
Second Favorite Team is Raptors	8
Second Favorite Team is Jazz	3
Second Favorite Team is Wizards	14
Don't watch second team	49

Exhibit 6

First or second favorite team is Warriors	195
Percentage of first or second favorite team is Warriors	36%

First or second favorite is Cavaliers	88
Percentage of first or second team favorite is Cavaliers	16%

First favorite is Warriors, second favorite is Cavaliers	15
First favorite is Cavaliers, second favorite is Warriors	2

If second favorite is Warriors, because they are most talented	27
If second favorite is Warriors, because style is really fun	46
If second favorite is Warriors, because I love a player on the team	11
If second favorite is Warriors, because they are on TV the most	6
If second favorite is Warriors, because they are the team where I grew up	1

If second favorite is Cavaliers, because they are most talented	12
If second favorite is Cavaliers, because style is really fun	8
If second favorite is Cavaliers, because I love a player on the team	39
If second favorite is Cavaliers, because they are on TV the most	1
If second favorite is Cavaliers, because they are the team where I grew up	0

Exhibit 7

Fans Enjoyment of 2016-2017 Regular Season on a Scale from 1-5		Fans Enjoyment of 2017 Post-Season on a Scale from 1-5	
Average enjoyed past regular season of NBA fan 7	3.80	Average enjoyed past post season of NBA fan 7	3.76
Average enjoyed past regular season of NBA fan 6	4.19	Average enjoyed past post season of NBA fan 6	3.94
Average enjoyed past regular season of NBA fan 5	3.81	Average enjoyed past post season of NBA fan 5	3.38
Average enjoyed past regular season of NBA fan 4	3.89	Average enjoyed past post season of NBA fan 4	3.28
Average enjoyed past regular season of NBA fan 3	3.57	Average enjoyed past post season of NBA fan 3	3.17
Average enjoyed past regular season of NBA fan 2	3.60	Average enjoyed past post season of NBA fan 2	3.50
Average enjoyed past regular season of NBA fan 1	3.44	Average enjoyed past post season of NBA fan 1	3.17

Scale of 1-5, Disagree to Agree	
Average enjoyed past NBA season	3.86
Average enjoyed past NBA postseason	3.60
Average growing interest in NBA	3.79

Exhibit 8

Percentage of Favorite Team's Games that Fans Plan on Watching in 2017-2018 Season		Percentage of Favorite Team's Games that Fans Watched in 2016-2017 Season	
Average Watch upcoming season of 7 in Strong fan of NBA	58.48	Average Watch past season of 7 in Strong fan of NBA	52.62
Average Watch upcoming season of 6 in Strong fan of NBA	64.62	Average Watch past season of 6 in Strong fan of NBA	60.23
Average Watch upcoming season of 5 in Strong fan of NBA	63.45	Average Watch past season of 5 in Strong fan of NBA	47.14
Average Watch upcoming season of 4 in Strong fan of NBA	61.80	Average Watch past season of 4 in Strong fan of NBA	54.74
Average Watch upcoming season of 3 in Strong fan of NBA	50.31	Average Watch past season of 3 in Strong fan of NBA	46.55
Average Watch upcoming season of 2 in Strong fan of NBA	38.80	Average Watch past season of 2 in Strong fan of NBA	39.50
Average Watch upcoming season of 1 in Strong fan of NBA	40.33	Average Watch past season of 1 in Strong fan of NBA	36.06

Exhibit 9

Average Percentage Will Watch 2017-2018 vs. Did Watch 2016-2017 by Team	
If favorite team is Hawks will watch	63.30
If favorite team is Hawks did watch	56.90
If favorite team is Celtics will watch	64.67
If favorite team is Celtics did watch	51.52
If favorite team is Nets will watch	49.75
If favorite team is Nets did watch	43.75
If favorite team is Hornets will watch	67.57
If favorite team is Hornets did watch	59.57
If favorite team is Bulls will watch	46.00
If favorite team is Bulls did watch	43.44
If favorite team is Cavaliers will watch	51.82
If favorite team is Cavaliers did watch	48.36
If favorite team is Mavericks will watch	53.91
If favorite team is Mavericks did watch	38.18
If favorite team is Nuggets will watch	36.25
If favorite team is Nuggets did watch	29.00
If favorite team is Pistons will watch	52.14
If favorite team is Pistons did watch	44.43
If favorite team is Warriors will watch	68.84
If favorite team is Warriors did watch	65.41
If favorite team is Rockets will watch	63.56
If favorite team is Rockets did watch	60.89
If favorite team is Pacers will watch	61.94
If favorite team is Pacers did watch	58.61
If favorite team is Clippers will watch	61.73
If favorite team is Clippers did watch	54.00
If favorite team is Lakers will watch	62.42
If favorite team is Lakers did watch	46.33
If favorite team is Grizzlies will watch	23.00
If favorite team is Grizzlies did watch	24.00
If favorite team is Heat will watch	67.15
If favorite team is Heat did watch	58.23
If favorite team is Bucks will watch	52.31
If favorite team is Bucks did watch	47.85
If favorite team is Timberwolves will watch	74.00
If favorite team is Timberwolves did watch	54.42
If favorite team is Pelicans will watch	92.50

If favorite team is Pelicans did watch	83.75
If favorite team is Knicks will watch	56.36
If favorite team is Knicks did watch	56.29
If favorite team is Thunder will watch	71.80
If favorite team is Thunder did watch	75.50
If favorite team is Magic will watch	60.00
If favorite team is Magic did watch	25.00
If favorite team is 76ers will watch	44.77
If favorite team is 76ers did watch	34.57
If favorite team is Suns will watch	46.33
If favorite team is Suns did watch	45.50
If favorite team is Trail Blazers will watch	51.10
If favorite team is Trail Blazers did watch	45.80
If favorite team is Kings will watch	93.67
If favorite team is Kings did watch	77.00
If favorite team is Spurs will watch	37.71
If favorite team is Spurs did watch	40.29
If favorite team is Raptors will watch	51.25
If favorite team is Raptors did watch	52.00
If favorite team is Jazz will watch	41.00
If favorite team is Jazz did watch	36.67
If favorite team is Wizards will watch	41.11
If favorite team is Wizards did watch	35.67

Exhibit 10

Scale of 1-5, Disagree to Agree	
Average of agree “interest in NBA is growing” if didn't read superteam	3.83
Average of agree “interest in NBA is growing” if did read superteam	3.74
Average agree that “I will watch more NBA games in 2017-2018” if didn't read superteam	3.68
Average agree that “I will watch more NBA games in 2017-2018” if did read superteam	3.79
Average agree that “get upset about superteams” and didn't read superteams	2.97
Average agree that “get upset about superteams” and did read superteams	2.94
Average agree that “I want more parity in the NBA” and didn't read superteams	3.50
Average agree that “I want more parity in the NBA” and did read superteams	3.44
Average agree that “NBA is boring if only two teams are competing” and didn't read superteams	3.17
Average agree that “NBA is boring if only two teams are competing” and did read superteams	3.27

Exhibit 11

1-5 scale, Disagree to Agree	
If favorite team is Hawks interest is growing	4.40
If favorite team is Hawks will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.50
If favorite team is Hawks growth average	4.08
If favorite team is Celtics interest is growing	3.81
If favorite team is Celtics will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.52
If favorite team is Celtics growth average	3.87
If favorite team is Nets interest is growing	3.38
If favorite team is Nets will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.13
If favorite team is Nets growth average	3.06
If favorite team is Hornets interest is growing	3.43
If favorite team is Hornets will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.57
If favorite team is Hornets growth average	3.46
If favorite team is Bulls interest is growing	3.53
If favorite team is Bulls will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.70
If favorite team is Bulls growth average	3.38
If favorite team is Cavaliers interest is growing	3.71
If favorite team is Cavaliers will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.96
If favorite team is Cavaliers growth average	3.53
If favorite team is Mavericks interest is growing	2.91
If favorite team is Mavericks will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.82
If favorite team is Mavericks growth average	3.18
If favorite team is Nuggets interest is growing	4.25
If favorite team is Nuggets will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.50
If favorite team is Nuggets growth average	4.13
If favorite team is Pistons interest is growing	4.00
If favorite team is Pistons will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.29
If favorite team is Pistons growth average	4.00
If favorite team is Warriors interest is growing	4.06
If favorite team is Warriors will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.42
If favorite team is Warriors growth average	3.78
If favorite team is Rockets interest is growing	4.56
If favorite team is Rockets will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.67
If favorite team is Rockets growth average	4.17
If favorite team is Pacers interest is growing	3.66
If favorite team is Pacers will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.81
If favorite team is Pacers growth average	3.83
If favorite team is Clippers interest is growing	3.73
If favorite team is Clippers will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.27

If favorite team is Clippers growth average	3.64
If favorite team is Lakers interest is growing	3.60
If favorite team is Lakers will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.40
If favorite team is Lakers growth average	3.78
If favorite team is Grizzlies interest is growing	1.00
If favorite team is Grizzlies will closely follow 2017-2018 season	2.00
If favorite team is Grizzlies growth average	2.25
If favorite team is Heat interest is growing	4.15
If favorite team is Heat will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.92
If favorite team is Heat growth average	3.67
If favorite team is Bucks interest is growing	3.69
If favorite team is Bucks will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.31
If favorite team is Bucks growth average	3.58
If favorite team is Timberwolves interest is growing	3.58
If favorite team is Timberwolves will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.50
If favorite team is Timberwolves growth average	3.79
If favorite team is Pelicans interest is growing	4.25
If favorite team is Pelicans will closely follow 2017-2018 season	5.00
If favorite team is Pelicans growth average	4.00
If favorite team is Knicks interest is growing	3.89
If favorite team is Knicks will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.07
If favorite team is Knicks growth average	3.76
If favorite team is Thunder interest is growing	4.20
If favorite team is Thunder will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.67
If favorite team is Thunder growth average	3.98
If favorite team is Magic interest is growing	4.00
If favorite team is Magic will closely follow 2017-2018 season	5.00
If favorite team is Magic growth average	4.00
If favorite team is 76ers interest is growing	3.71
If favorite team is 76ers will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.07
If favorite team is 76ers growth average	3.63
If favorite team is Suns interest is growing	3.17
If favorite team is Suns will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.00
If favorite team is Suns growth average	3.54
If favorite team is Trail Blazers interest is growing	3.60
If favorite team is Trail Blazers will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.40
If favorite team is Trail Blazers growth average	3.68
If favorite team is Kings interest is growing	4.67
If favorite team is Kings will closely follow 2017-2018 season	5.00
If favorite team is Kings growth average	4.33
If favorite team is Spurs interest is growing	4.00

If favorite team is Spurs will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.29
If favorite team is Spurs growth average	3.66
If favorite team is Raptors interest is growing	4.25
If favorite team is Raptors will closely follow 2017-2018 season	4.00
If favorite team is Raptors growth average	3.81
If favorite team is Jazz interest is growing	3.33
If favorite team is Jazz will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.83
If favorite team is Jazz growth average	3.50
If favorite team is Wizards interest is growing	3.78
If favorite team is Wizards will closely follow 2017-2018 season	3.89
If favorite team is Wizards growth average	3.50

Exhibit 12

Scale of 1-5, Disagree to Agree	
Average of like current superteams and didn't read superteam	3.29
Average of like current superteams and did read superteam	3.29
Average of like superteams of last 10 and didn't read superteam	3.41
Average of like superteams of last 10 and did read superteam	3.40
Average of like current superteams and didn't read superteam and is 7 strength NBA	3.38
Average of like current superteams and did read superteam and is 7 strength NBA	3.38
Average of like superteams of last 10 and didn't read superteam and is 7 strength NBA	3.37
Average of like superteams of last 10 and did read superteam and is 7 strength NBA	3.57
Average of like current superteams and didn't read superteam and is 6 strength NBA	3.22
Average of like current superteams and did read superteam and is 6 strength NBA	3.40
Average of like superteams of last 10 and didn't read superteam and is 6 strength NBA	3.61
Average of like superteams of last 10 and did read superteam and is 6 strength NBA	3.51
Average of like current superteams and didn't read superteam and is 5 strength NBA	3.23
Average of like current superteams and did read superteam and is 5 strength NBA	3.02
Average of like superteams of last 10 and didn't read superteam and is 5 strength NBA	3.26
Average of like superteams of last 10 and did read superteam and is 5 strength NBA	3.20
Average of like current superteams and didn't read superteam and is 4 strength NBA	3.43
Average of like current superteams and did read superteam and is 4 strength NBA	3.33

Average of like superteams of last 10 and didn't read superteam and is 4 strength NBA	3.53
Average of like superteams of last 10 and did read superteam and is 4 strength NBA	3.27
Average of like current superteams and didn't read superteam and is 3 strength NBA	3.29
Average of like current superteams and did read superteam and is 3 strength NBA	2.92
Average of like superteams of last 10 and didn't read superteam and is 3 strength NBA	3.29
Average of like superteams of last 10 and did read superteam and is 3 strength NBA	3.00
Average of like current superteams and didn't read superteam and is 2 strength NBA	2.33
Average of like current superteams and did read superteam and is 2 strength NBA	2.86
Average of like superteams of last 10 and didn't read superteam and is 2 strength NBA	3.00
Average of like superteams of last 10 and did read superteam and is 2 strength NBA	3.00
Average of like current superteams and didn't read superteam and is 1 strength NBA	2.43
Average of like current superteams and did read superteam and is 1 strength NBA	3.29
Average of like superteams of last 10 and didn't read superteam and is 1 strength NBA	2.86
Average of like superteams of last 10 and did read superteam and is 1 strength NBA	3.29
Average of upset about superteams and didn't read superteam and is 7 strength NBA	3.03
Average of upset about superteams and did read superteam and is 7 strength NBA	2.80
Average of upset about superteams and didn't read superteam and is 6 strength NBA	3.17
Average of upset about superteams and did read superteam and is 6 strength NBA	2.83

Average of upset about superteams and didn't read superteam and is 5 strength NBA	2.64
Average of upset about superteams and did read superteam and is 5 strength NBA	3.27

Average of upset about superteams and didn't read superteam and is 4 strength NBA	3.02
Average of upset about superteams and did read superteam and is 4 strength NBA	3.04

Average of upset about superteams and didn't read superteam and is 3 strength NBA	2.65
Average of upset about superteams and did read superteam and is 3 strength NBA	3.00

Average of upset about superteams and didn't read superteam and is 2 strength NBA	2.00
Average of upset about superteams and did read superteam and is 2 strength NBA	2.71

Average of upset about superteams and didn't read superteam and is 1 strength NBA	3.29
Average of upset about superteams and did read superteam and is 1 strength NBA	3.14

Average of prefer more parity and didn't read superteam and is 7 strength NBA	3.55
Average of prefer more parity and did read superteam and is 7 strength NBA	3.27

Average of prefer more parity and didn't read superteam and is 6 strength NBA	3.72
Average of prefer more parity and did read superteam and is 6 strength NBA	3.33

Average of prefer more parity and didn't read superteam and is 5 strength NBA	3.26
Average of upset about superteams and did read superteam and is 5 strength NBA	3.76

Average of prefer more parity and didn't read superteam and is 4 strength NBA	3.44
Average of prefer more parity and did read superteam and is 4 strength NBA	3.51

Average of prefer more parity and didn't read superteam and is 3 strength NBA	3.24
Average of prefer more parity and did read superteam and is 3 strength NBA	3.83

Average of prefer more parity and didn't read superteam and is 2 strength NBA	3.33
Average of prefer more parity and did read superteam and is 2 strength NBA	2.86

Average of prefer more parity and didn't read superteam and is 1 strength NBA	3.43
Average of prefer more parity and did read superteam and is 1 strength NBA	3.14

Exhibit 13

Average Percentage of Games of Fan's Favorite Team they will Watch Based on Distance from Team Home Town and Team's Past Performance in 2016-2017 Season	
Average watch upcoming season distance 1 and past perf 1	72.00
Average watch upcoming season distance 1 and past perf 2	66.90
Average watch upcoming season distance 1 and past perf 3	56.32
Average watch upcoming season distance 1 and past perf 4	59.00
Average watch upcoming season distance 1 and past perf 5	71.83
Average watch upcoming season distance 2 and past perf 1	53.25
Average watch upcoming season distance 2 and past perf 2	60.17
Average watch upcoming season distance 2 and past perf 3	48.00
Average watch upcoming season distance 2 and past perf 4	53.20
Average watch upcoming season distance 2 and past perf 5	72.44
Average watch upcoming season distance 3 and past perf 1	70.00
Average watch upcoming season distance 3 and past perf 2	60.33
Average watch upcoming season distance 3 and past perf 3	43.00
Average watch upcoming season distance 3 and past perf 4	56.71
Average watch upcoming season distance 3 and past perf 5	78.25
Average watch upcoming season distance 4 and past perf 1	61.00
Average watch upcoming season distance 4 and past perf 2	60.00
Average watch upcoming season distance 4 and past perf 3	50.07
Average watch upcoming season distance 4 and past perf 4	64.17
Average watch upcoming season distance 4 and past perf 5	56.80
Average watch upcoming season distance 5 and past perf 1	54.00
Average watch upcoming season distance 5 and past perf 2	52.33
Average watch upcoming season distance 5 and past perf 3	54.67
Average watch upcoming season distance 5 and past perf 4	68.40
Average watch upcoming season distance 5 and past perf 5	76.67
Average watch upcoming season distance 6 and past perf 1	40.52
Average watch upcoming season distance 6 and past perf 2	54.67
Average watch upcoming season distance 6 and past perf 3	42.92
Average watch upcoming season distance 6 and past perf 4	54.88
Average watch upcoming season distance 6 and past perf 5	60.38

Distance 1 = 0-30 miles away, Distance 2 = 30-60 miles, Distance 3 = 60-100 miles, Distance 4 = 100-300 miles, Distance 5 = 300-500 miles and Distance 6 = 500+ miles
 Past performance 1 = Terrible, Past Performance 2 = Poor, Past Performance 3 = Average, Past Performance 4 = Good and Past Performance 5 = Excellent

Exhibit 14

Answers to final question of survey. Not applicable responses haven't been included. "Please share any final thoughts you have on Super Teams in the NBA"

It is very interesting

While I really enjoyed the Finals because it was amazing basketball, I'd prefer more parity.

They suck

I don't think super teams are an issue, but I do think that the salary cap and max contract structure should change. The artificial cap means players like LeBron and Durant are inherently undervalued, in the open market a team like the Knicks could pay 50 million a year for one superstar. As it is currently structured, Durant knows what his max salary is and knows if he took slightly less he could have a better team and make more endorsement money. Keeping some form of a salary cap but removing individual maxes would probably actually lead to less super teams and would allow players to earn their true worth.

ALL NBA TEAMS ARE GOOD

Super Teams are OK, but having 2 surefire conference champions has not been good.

I have no problem w/ the Warriors or any other "Super Team", I'm a fan of good basketball, and the stars of the NBA.

Whether or not they've been called "super teams" they've always existed. All the teams follow the same set of guidelines and although cities and franchises may have advantages over other cities and franchises this perceived disadvantage is not insurmountable. Growing up the warriors were bad. They just were not a good team and no one outside of the Bay cared. They built their team through the draft and used this team to attract talented free agents. The warriors aren't bad for the NBA they are what every NBA front office is trying to achieve.

They are entertaining and exciting, and it is on team management and ownership to make a team competitive. Even the Jazz and Pacers who supposedly did everything right made mistakes to lose their homegrown stars.

Man, I hated when LBJ took his 'Talents to South Beach' but it did become fun to hate the Superteam in Miami. Lets face it, that was not the first big three, and even as a Celtics fan, we had Rondo, Pierce, Allen and Garnett, which lets face it, was somewhat of a superteam as well at one point in time.

I read that in the Mavs Heat finals year, viewership went up after every Heat loss, simply because people wanted to hate on the Super Team.

Sports need good guys and bad guys. Its fun to hate on those that take the easy way out, and you want to see a dog rise up and send them packing unexpectedly. Its just entertaining....

When a player gets cut, traded or dropped down a league we all claim 'that it is part of the game'. No one last forever. LeBron will one day sit in the stands and no longer be fit to start for an NBA team (a memo Kobe should have gotten earlier and Manu's decision today....

shake my head). Why can't the same be said for those who play the system to their favor. Golden state played the best game of cards and without stacking the deck, they came up with a hell of a hand. Needless to say this has a lot to do with the front office, and West keeping Thompson over K Love, getting Durant to buy into the team, Curry refusing to tryout for the Grizzlies as a draft prospect... and most importantly of all, losing to the Cavaliers last year. Draymond doesn't kick a guy in the nuts... get suspended.. Cavs win... KD does not go to Golden State. Talk about a consolation prize.

It's a game, and like all games, there are rules. Sure we hate on Golden State now, but hey, LeBron moves west? Looks like Boston and Toronto are gearing up for a run in 2 or 3 years. Washington? Who knows... it's exciting and both a short game and a long one. Will I follow next year? Hell yes! Will the Warriors likely win... prob.. will I still be sitting on the edge of my seat.. you better believe it.

Good luck with your project! I am the Editor in Chief of SportsbookReview.com and a big fan of this topic. With this topic, I have never felt strongly for or against super teams. For me, I have always had a hatred for LeBron James and always root against him. That's why I don't like the '12 Heat and the '16 Cavs. I loved Stephen Curry and Kevin Durant all of my life. While I do not love Durant's move to the Warriors, I don't hate the move because it makes the Warriors really good. I more so just wanted to see that specific Thunder team win a championship. Now that Kevin Durant is a Warrior, I still continue to root for him and Steph to take down LeBron. Additionally, I am a Celtics fan and was 12 years old in 2008. Of course I liked that team, a team many consider to be the first super team, at least in this era of basketball.

Overall, I think I am still figuring out where I stand on super teams and the CBA. We'll see what happens the next few years.

Too much imbalance is clearly a potential issue, but the Warriors are so great to watch it makes up for a lot of this. And they were not built on high draft picks. Draymond Green was a second round pick. Steph Curry the 7th pick, and I believe Thompson was around the 10th pick. They made nice acquisitions like Iguodala. They were champions even before signing Durant so they built that team not through forming a superteam through player directed free agency (like Miami had done), but through smart drafting, trades and minor signings before Durant.

There have almost always been in NBA history a small number of dominant franchises with a few exceptions like the late 1970s. That has always driven fan interest without losing interest in the local teams who may not have much of a chance at a championship.

The great if they're your team.

□

There will always be super teams in any sport, it's the nature of the beast. But I firmly believe salary caps are too high.

I like watching good teams but current superteams are too good. Two teams can be expected to go to the finals but I would hope they face a little adversity to get there. Both of them going basically 12-0 was not fun at all.

They make for great entertainment in the Finals.

I like the teams that form, but I wish that the system wasn't set up so that they formed in

the first place, if that makes any sense.

It would more interesting to watch is the league were more competitive

I think its just a natural development that eventually would change as some people might eventually do not want to sacrifice as much (see Chris Bosh, Kevin Love, and now Kyrie Irving), the CBA / Max Salary will be able to regulate Superteams to a certain extent, and I love how teams are gearing up to challenge Warriors this summer, that part of the league's development is exciting.

I think the bigger problem is how to implement regulations to help smaller market teams develop and maintain quality players. We have seen quite a number of smaller market teams losing top players to larger markets. I want to see each team challenging each other further, and it would be nice for the league office to do something about the talent disparity better between major and minor markets.

I'm a nets fan who enjoys to endure pain and suffering. Super teams do not affect me. I had to watch the fucking boston celtics win the lottery with our pick. Jaylen brown should have been my favorite player. I WANT MY BABY DADDY LUKA DONCIC.

good talented players are in there. i keep watcching their skills.

I like super teams in the NBA. They establish standards of excellence and cause teams in the second tier to work harder and make smart decisions to catch up.

[Expletive] super teams

Marketing wise, Super Teams are great for the NBA in terms of media coverage and fan interest whether that be positive or negative based. It's always something to talk about.

Parity wise, Super Teams destroy the NBA. Even as a big fan of the NBA I am incredibly disinterested in watching regular season games knowing that in the end it will be a rematch of Cavs vs. Warriors. A great finals match up, but the agony of waiting all season for it to happen loses my interest throughout the season.

Super teams add an interesting storyline to the season and the offseason.

Over the past 15 years (since the Shaq/Kobe Lakers), the super teams that have existed in the NBA have existed because of the particular team's shrewd financial decision-making or excellent drafting. Miami offered good weather and tax breaks, sure, but they also were smart enough to figure out how to clear enough cap room for three close to max guys.

If all the super teams were in huge markets and just existed because they outspent everyone, I might feel differently. But I don't think the league should make changes to eliminate super teams because I don't believe their existence is due to some systemic inequalities among teams. Orlando isn't bad because they're a small market. They're bad because they haven't drafted well.

I think they are good for the league and make the league more entertaining.

My main issue with Super Teams at this point is not the team themselves, but LeBron.

I somehow feel that Super Teams are to some extent a threat to the popularity and excitement of NBA. I would be more interesting to watch an unpredictable tournament than a tournament in which it is almost but sure who would be qualifying for the finals. This has not been the case for last few years due to the two super teams. It would be more interesting to watch more closely fought matches and unpredictable tournaments.

Don't like them, but since the NBA has a salary cap already not much you can do if players

accept less.

It's cyclical

People claim that when you know the final result the league is no fun -- I can't disagree with that any more. I think the NBA has gotten so much more fun for me in the last year, probably in large part due to betting

I believe they are beneficial to casual fans more so than committed fans. It is likely that casual fans are more likely to watch an NBA final between Golden State and Cleveland when they know recognizable names like LeBron James, Kevin Durant and Steph Curry will be playing. More dedicated fans will be less happy with super-teams as they obviously take parity from the league. From a financial viewpoint they are a positive for the league.

I am not from US but I like to watch NBA, I am not good at basketball and when I see these guys I am like "How they're doing this!"

It's not "fair" but there's nothing to do to stop it, nor should there be. There have been dynasty's since the inception of the league, people complain about super teams but don't complain that the Celtics or lakers were in every single finals appearance in the 80s, or that the bulls had 2 3-peats, and would have been 7 in a row if MJ didnt retire.

My opinions might be different if Cleveland wasn't my team. I'd like to think they wouldn't be, but we'll see in a couple years.

I think super teams are making the league and others team take a big effort to pair up with the super teams, because teams without players as LeBron James o Steph Curry can't stand a chance if they don't work their strategy to beat them up. Super teams make other teams work harder.

While Super Teams may be cyclical, there must be a tipping point. There needs to be at least the illusion of competition.

Super teams will always be a part of the NBA but while unrealistic, it would be better if there was more parity, and yes I do dislike KD lol, ruined what could have been an all time great finals matchup

They should be addressed in some form. Haven't heard a convincing argument for one method or another yet though

If they are balanced, then I believe they are good for the NBA. In the case of the warriors, their super team is so much better any other team that could be assembled, that's why I believe they aren't great for the NBA.

Super Teams exist in the NBA, because sometimes, there's just several talented players, on one team.

The 2016-17 NBA season was awful. The regular season was the worst sporting event ever because it was obvious the whole time that the Warriors were going to win. The playoffs were absolutely terrible to watch also. Thankfully, the finals was entertaining, but I would never trade a good Finals for an awful regular season and playoffs.

I wish the talent was more spread out so the playoffs and reguylar season is less predictable.

I don't like how a few teams dominate. I think the NBA would be more interesting if there weren't a couple teams totally dominating.

The warriors are the best thing to ever happen to the NBA. Basketball at its highest level.

Watching the best compete at the highest level against the best people in their field is always the most exciting viewing experience. It lends itself towards more "legendary" moments and allows great players to dominate games against other greats, while still

having to rely on other "lesser" players to come through in big moments.

Super teams come along once every generation...The Celtics and Lakers were amazing for the league in the '80's. The Warriors are fundamentally changing how the game is being played -- making it more entertaining to watch. That is great for the NBA.

This is what we want

i basically like NBA and their styles especially golden warriors

They're great. I support watching the best players competing together and against each other at the highest level

Super teams have almost always existed in the NBA. Now many people are upset with the notion of Super Teams for they are player built through freedom of choice, rather than through teams and drafting players (imagine being forced to live in a city for 4-7 years after graduating college).

As both a fan of the warriors and a fan of the NBA as a whole, the last season was interesting because I simultaneously found myself wanting the warriors to do well and being kind of frustrated that relatively good/young teams like the Bucks, Wizards and Rockets, which feature young talent that is exciting and good for the league, are just inevitably going to lose to the Warriors and Cavs. Watching last season was conflicting because as a fan of basketball, the superteam phenomenon is frustrating because it can be seen as stunting the success of other young talent and a wide array of teams that are fun to watch as a fan of the game of basketball as a whole. But I've also been a Warriors fan for years and am happy to see them doing well.

I'd probably be more negative about super teams if MY team wasn't the super team. There have always been strong and weak teams due to strong and weak front offices. The problem is that (much like politics) the difference between each team's abilities have now become more polarized due to the sheer incompetence of many Eastern Conference team front offices (this is probably the part where I say #FireGarPax). Force the Eastern Conference to become more competitive, force the owners to make a quota on wins or success if possible or something, and there will be parity in the league once again.

Oh, and please do not give out my email, for security reasons of course.

I wrote about this for BBALLBREAKDOWN (titled "The Warriors, Super Teams, and Innovation", if you care) - I think the league always evolves. The better the top team is, the faster and more extreme the evolution of the league will be. Front runners force other teams to adapt and innovate, and that's a great thing.

warriors super team has been drafted with the exception of kd.

As a Warriors fan, I'm biased but I feel that the "super teams" have drawn in a lot more casual fans which is overall good for the NBA

Super teams make other teams and players have to work harder.

The NBA has always been a league where the teams with the best players win the title. In the past 30 some odd years, only what, 9-10 teams have won an NBA championship? The Warriors benefited from great drafting, shrewd preparation by their front office and a little luck that the collective bargaining agreement caused the salary cap to increase which allowed them to sign Kevin Durant. To say that they created a super team seems unfair. But ultimately, the NBA, is better and there is more interest when a few teams excell year after year.

Good luck with your project.

Super teams are a function of the luck, cap and good management. The Warriors super team is a direct result of Bob Meyers masterful contract for Curry, as well as stellar drafting.

Obviously I'm a fan of a current super team. But I loved the Bulls in the 90s and America did too...this isn't bad for the NBA, it's the opposite.

Selfishly, I don't mind them because the team I root for is probably one of the greatest Super Teams in NBA history. But from an outsider's perspective who's not a fan of the current Super Team who are true contenders (i.e. Warriors and Cavaliers), I can see why they'd raise an issue with parity in the league. I too would be ticked off if my team stood no chance at all against these powerhouses.

Fact of life - see Celtic/lakers 80's

The structure of basketball (5 players on the floor per team) promotes super teams because the variance in skill between players has a greater impact. That said, two competitive advantages are (1) ownership (compare Spurs / Warriors to Knicks / Kings) and (2) medical staff (compare Suns / Heat to 76ers / Knicks).

As long as teams don't cheat or break the rules to form super teams, it seems like the trend and is okay. I did not like the Heat when they formed a super team, but have found myself a fan of the Warriors, who are one. So I see both sides of the coin.

As more talent comes into the NBA and society keeps saying winning is the only thing that matters, more super teams will come along. This initially will have a few very stacked teams, but hopefully it will become more fair in the future and make a necessary cycle of teams coming in and out of doing well.

Super Teams are not new in the NBA. If the league did not rig the conference finals (in the Warriors favor) and finals (in the Cavs favor) Kevin Durant would still be on the Thunder. The NBA has a self inflicted problem or poor officiating and favoring certain players. It is a more superstar driven league than MLB, NFL, NHL, ETC. This accounts for many of the issues of individual vs. collective- which leads to super teams.

this is media fabrication. Miami Heat was a super team. the old boston celtics and LA Lakers were super teams of their area. Whenever a dynasty is built and there have been many, by definition they are a super team. This isn't a new thing, just the media's way of undermining what the Warriors have been able to do. How is Cleveland or Boston or San Antonio not a super team? And most teams aspire to be super teams

They are good for the NBA and parity is overrated.

If ppl dont like super teams then fhe next CBA should eliminate salary tiers

I don't have a problem with it.

Star players are and will always be good for the league. They generate revenue and interest and by playing together they do this even more.

Super teams are fine up until a certain point but the Warriors are to strong to make it competitive. I will enjoy season until the finals.

Super teams have nothing to do with it. The style of play does...Steph Curry is Steve Kerr back in the 90's. They have changed the paradigm much like the spread offense in college football. The Warriors will revert back to the mean.

I think the super team trend has both pros and cons that affect fan interest in the NBA. For the general fan who doesn't follow the NBA much, I think the storyline of a finals rematch 3 years in a row would be compelling to someone with not much knowledge of the NBA. To someone like myself who more closely follows the NBA, I very much enjoy watching the

best players intensely compete at the highest level, but at the same time cannot realistically fathom any other teams besides the Cavs and Warriors making the finals. This makes the regular season irrelevant which I think is bad for the league.

Don't mind it when it's done organically (2014-2016 warriors). Hate when it is done inorganically (Lebron on the Heat, Lebron on the new Cavs)

They have been around since the 1960s, nothing new about them.

I have always been a fan of parity in the NBA, and I would love for the league and its superstars to find a way for teams to only be able to have 1 or 2 (max) on a team to create more competition throughout. While ratings may improve due to super teams, I come from the fan base that really enjoys seeing 6-12 teams potentially have the legitimate chance to win the title each year once the playoffs start.

I think that they make the NBA somewhat more entertaining for the non NBA fan. It give them a reason to continue watching.

NBA has always had super teams and the only era where you could say there wasn't any(the 70's) no one mentions or has much interest compared to the other eras of basketball. Now they are much harder to maintain due to the nature of the repeater tax of being over luxury cap, the warriors as currently constructed can only really be maintained as is for 2 or 3 more years just as Klay and Draymond Green's contracts end.

with the draft they won't last forever, and I get mad when the same team wins over and over, but it also makes it that much better when they lose. Go clips

Wait and see how next season goes. But if its Warriors and Cavs again will be sad. Previous 2-3 post seasons have been the best post seasons of any sport in a long time. This year was boring

There have always been super teams in the NBA even back in the 50s and 60s. The difference now is players have more options and mobility between teams and they aren't always loyal (or beholden) to the franchise that drafted them.

Good for the league, does make some matchups in the regular season a bit tougher to watch. Good look on your thesis!

The League should aim to control it like in Fantasy basketball where you can have a couple of superstars, then role players surrounding them. There are too many loopholes for GMs to use in the CBA.

I believe that the addition of star talent to a team in order to create a super team is part of sports and should not be disallowed

It is like college football or college basketball the up and down. It's the. It's the nature of sports.

Super teams don't always work as team chemistry is important. If the talent doesn't mesh well, owners risk heavy salaries that don't yield good enough results.

-Have always been around, no problem with them

-Warriors probably have taken it to a crazy level (two in-the-prime MVPs, and 2 near-their prime all-star players usually doesnt happen), but overall everyone needs to chill.

To my mind there are a few ways to get a Super-Team: 1) Smart drafting and free-agency work (Warriors, Celtics attempt); 2) What the Heat did; or 3) What the Sixers hope to do. I feel like it's more "fair" to do method 1, method 2 is weak, and method 3 is within the rules but not very fun (need changes to draft rules.) But in the spirit of the Pareto rule, where fans only watch 20% of the games, might as well make them as much fun as possible by pitting super-teams against each other.

In the world of Salary caps, every team can hope to build a Super-team if they have a good enough front-office.

They seem to be a problem. I don't think the answer is to break up the super teams, we just need more super teams. You mentioned the 76er's they have sucked for 30 years now! More should be done to help out some of these teams that will never be able to pull in good players - Bucks, 76er's, Charlotte, New Orleans, etc etc.

The draft is a problem. If a medium team like the Trailblazers or Rockets could get a high pick that might change things for the better. Mix is up!

It makes the regular games almost without meaning. Just jump to the playoffs with 4 teams and be done with it. Recently moved from the Los Angeles area to the Bay area, but still a Laker fan.

I like all the teams in the NBA. And watching their games regularly.

It's a lot of fun watching the best player in the world play together. I'd love for the Lakers to be a super team, but at least we have Lonzo :)

I'm fine with them, it happens in cycles. I mean it was 5 years ago that the Warriors were terrible and the fans were booing the owners at that Rick Barry halftime thing.

Generally the existence of some super teams is fun and I fully support the ability for players to decide where they want to play. Kevin Durant going to a Warriors team that was already historically great removed the sense of uncertainty that makes the game fun. Inevitability is boring. I do not hold this against Durant or think it requires a drastic change in policy. I just don't watch many Warriors games anymore. The number of blowouts in the playoffs among all series led to me watching fewer games, though that seems like an outlier aside from the Warriors.

They need to be disbanded!!!

The NBA has become what it is today due to the rivalries of the 1980s between the Lakers and the Celtics - rivalries in general are good for the sport. However, what is going on today is a product of the CBA/salary cap and the application of sports analytics to these rules. I personally think it is more interesting to have more parity and to see players need to rise to the occasion to win a championship rather than have an overwhelmingly stacked team.

Bad for the game

The problem that I see with super teams is that they shift the balance of the conferences as the West is super stackss while the East is very mediocre. Everyone wants to beat GS but those guys are not leaving for at least two more years. However, not many franchises have won the NBA other than SA, GSW, Cleveland, Lakers and Boston in the last 20-30 years so I guess these franchises will still dominate the league in years to come.

No max salary cap LeBron deserves 50 mil say goodbye to super teams

I'm little biased here because I want my lakers to be great again. But I do think it's boring that every superstar wants to play with each other instead of having a hate towards each other (in a competitive sense)

The super teams are made for players that just want to win the easy way.

In the 80's teams were put together via draft and free agents, not players deciding to play with each other. Magic, Jordan or Bird would have never played together to win they wanted to beat each other to win. To be the best you have to beat the best.

Penaizing a team so It cannot form a super team lessens the importance of a front office. Good GMs and good coaches will always have better players.

Kevin Durant sucks but super teams have led the league to have its most popularity ever- also I'm a heat fan so I'm kinda just pissed LeBron left me

they are not good for the nba

Regardless of if it's good for the NBA or not the players should have the power to control their own destiny and if they want to form super teams that's fine with me

They're ruining it.

Super Teams are an interesting discussion. I really disagree that they are bad for the NBA. The Warriors and Cavs striving to make roster moves to make their team as great as they can be are a model for the rest of the league. Teams that want to be good should be rewarded. The most important change that needs to be made is the luxury tax. It was meant to limit the spending of big market teams, but has it really done that? If anything, with the massive contracts given out last summer, it has disallowed smaller markets to overpay for talent they wouldn't otherwise get. The tax needs to be reformed.

My one final thought on super teams is on the idea that what Kevin Durant did being comparable to what LeBron James did with the Miami Heat. If we look back at the time LeBron made the switch to the heat. The Miami heat were not a championship team. They made it to the playoffs and lost in the first round. Before Kevin Durant made the switch, the golden state warriors had already made it to the finals the previous year and then Kevin Durant came on the scene. What Kevin Durant did would be like LeBron joining the Boston Celtics in 2011. So when looking back Kevin Durant was the tipping point for super teams.

I think it is good for the NBA in the sense that a team such as the Warriors plays the game the right way and at such an incredibly high level. At the same time though they are so far and above other teams that it almost isn't fun knowing that they won't be stopped on their way to the finals. This also makes the playoffs as a whole very uninteresting until the finals which has been good.

Super Teams are not a new phenomenon within the NBA. Since the league's inception there have been pockets of power (namely due to the small amount of teams in the NBA & ABA), a trend that has continued since the merger.

If you want a more detailed (3000+) word response to this question, feel free to email me at xminns88@gmail.com

I believe that super teams are good for the NBA, especially in this media climate, in terms of generating interest and content on a larger scale. I am also a fan of super teams because as much as sports fans love to champion parity in competition, it is more entertaining to watch the best teams play at the highest level. I also support the ability to form super teams because the players are what drives the league, and they should be able to choose to team up other great players.

They are amazing and always make my day.

It's not that bad. I think its all part of a cycle

Super Teams ruined the NBA probably for the next 3-5 years.

Golden State will continue their dominance and NBA 2018 season will probably be GSW vs Cavs again with GSW taking it easily

Despite what the general consensus was about Kevin Durant joining Golden State, I really enjoyed watching them play this year.

I really think they're good for the game. I just find NBA thoroughly entertaining anyway.

They are great for ratings, interest, etc. Fans automatically have a rooting interest one way or another.

Shit happens. Super teams have always been around and always will be and no amount of incessant bitching is going to change that.

What's the point of playing the season if it's just going to be a few good teams. It starts to look like a Harlems Globetrotters game after awhile. The Washington Generals always lose.

Hate the idea that at the beginning of the season expectation is the same w teams in the finals. The only reason the past season regular season was interesting was due to James Harden and Russell Westbrook competing and constantly out performing each other.

I believe if we are going to talk about "Super Teams" we also have to consider the Spurs ultimately being a super team for the last few years. Tony Park (although aging but is a premiere PG), Kawhi Leonard (MVP candidate), Tim Duncan (Hall of Famer), and one of the best 6th man of all time, Manu, as well as an All Star in Lamarcus Aldridge.

People complain about the GSW, yes they may all be in their prime BUT they did the same thing that the Spurs did, except they added a high(er) caliber FA. (Comparing KD to Lamarcus)

So why didn't people complain about San Antonio? Golden State does have every right to do what they did, people should not complain, it may or may not be bad for the NBA but look around, I'm pretty sure the NBA is doing just fine.

****ALSO, I'm a poor college student at Florida Gulf Coast University and I would highly appreciate and be forever grateful if I could somehow win that amazon gift card <3****

The NBA is in the middle of a transfer of power. From organizations to players. Some of it has come back to bite them both (wanting a one time surge in the salary cap instead of it spread it out helped the Warriors add Durant). Players are exercising more unconventional ways to join forces and decide where they play.

I dislike the term "Super Team" because it implies that there has never been disparity in sports before. There have always been dynasties that are created when superstars emerge. Athletes are competitors and their goal is to win, so that they can achieve their goals and make money. Of course superstars want to group up to provide themselves greater odds of winning, but this isn't a new phenomenon, it's simply the increased media coverage due to the growing information-driven society of the Internet age.

The soft salary cap employed by the NBA makes it somewhat fair for all participants. Those willing to pay the tax can benefit on the court while the other franchises benefit financially. A hard salary cap will make the on-the-court game fair.

The 76ers will be the next Super Team and will win at least one title by 2021.

Super teams have always existed in sports, not just the NBA; so this is not a new thing to sports. Growing up everyone loved the Bulls, a super team: Jordan, Pippen, Rodman, Kukoc, Ron Harper, etc., and no one said a word. 80s Lakers, Magic, Worthy, Jabbar; 00s Lakers...the current super teams are only an issue because of the amount of media exposure available to humans today. In the 90s SportsCenter ran 3 times/day, not 24/7, there was no Twitter/Insta/Facebook, you got the paper daily and the west coast games weren't even covered before it went to print. Social Media has become news media for

many which has spawned the idea of "fake" news; when our sources were limited we knew less and were exposed to less. Now it's create a headline and hope someone clicks on it aka the click bait mentality.

Increased exposure can be great and damaging at the same time.

Good Luck on your paper!

The league allowed for this to happen back when the CBA negotiations were underway - the owners/league gave in to the players' demands against the "cap smoothing." I don't like it, but so it goes, I guess.

They seem to be a necessary evil.

I don't see anything wrong with owner of a team, any team going after the best players. I think it benefits a city, the game and to respond to a question from the survey that was something like, It is just the same 2 teams in the finals every year. Well, there is a reason that they play the games. Nothing is ever for sure until it is done.

Superteams make the nba boring because the finals are decided in October

Super teams mean best possible quality of basketball. Even if Warriors are winning by 40, the level they play at is aesthetically pleasing.

Super teams are great for the NBA. They showcase basketball at its best, and offer lots of drama, especially if they get upset (e.g. the Mavs beating the Heat in the 2011 Finals).

seriously fuck the warriors and steph curry. that team is so arrogant. kd is a sorry ass ring chasing bitch.

the best scorer in the league goes to a 73 win team? that's just stupid

I feel like Super Teams aren't a new trend in the NBA, they have happened for years. I don't think they are bad for the NBA overall, however I can see why some fans find it boring over a short year or two period. A lot of things have to align in order for a super team to be built and that means that they can rarely stay together very long.

The Warriors in the 2015 and 2016 finals were a great team made up of mostly homegrown talent that was very impressive to watch. Although I prefer hardboard to-the-rim basketball, it was undeniable that Steph Curry was changing the way the game of basketball is played at the highest level. However, my real issue with the Warriors began with the Kevin Durant signing. I don't think the organization did anything wrong, they signed the best player available. But the whole situation has to make you wonder as a fan of competitive sports, where did that competitive instinct go for so many pro athletes? Kevin Durant was up 3-1 in the western Conference finals the year before to the Warriors, who came back and defeated his team. A few months later and he is signed with the very team that beat him. In my opinion, that is equivocal to getting your butt kicked by the kid down the block, then trying to make friends with him the next day so you don't get your ass beat again. Many superstars in professional sports today seem to carry no pride for THEIR TEAM. It is about them. And if they can win more easily somewhere else, then they barely spare a thought about leaving their team and fans.

The dominance of the Warriors and Cleveland Cavaliers has set an unrealistic standard for the other 28 teams. This is no fun if you are not a fan of Cavaliers or Warrior. I don't like it, but is there something we can do about it?

The golden state warriors did everything fairly, but it still doesn't seem right for the league.

I like the way the CBA functions and how it prevents only a handful of teams being dominant for significant periods of time. I'm a big EPL fan but I prefer the long term parity of the NBA.

I also understand the very unlikely circumstances that led to this Warriors team (TV deal leading to the cap spike, drafting perfectly, signing Curry to a cheap contract when his future health was uncertain, KD hitting free agency at the right time), so I do not think of them as an issue. I actually rather enjoy having them for now. However, if it became inevitable that the NBA would always have such a polarised talent distribution, it would hurt my enjoyment of the league.

Since this is not the case, I have no issue with super teams in the NBA.

It's not particularly good for the game but is part of the "normal" NBA cycle (e.g., Boston in the 1960s, Boston and Lakers in the 1980s, Chicago in the 1990s.) The so-called "salary cap" should be strictly enforced (i.e., no "luxury tax" for exceeding the cap) so that all teams are forced to compete with the same funding limitation without exception.

Although not covered by your survey, the proliferation of the three-point shot has made the NBA more exciting to watch, at least for now, but has probably led to an overall deterioration in the skill level of the players. I would like to see a return to more fundamental basketball, including with players playing with their backs to the basket.

I like them

There's nothing wrong with them. Pretty clear given the Warriors cap situation that they won't last forever. Dominance is entertaining.

As the host of a basketball podcast and as someone who appears regularly on radio shows to discuss the NBA, I have a unique perspective on Super Teams. They absolutely generate greater interest in the league, not just for their team accomplishments and high level of play, but also for the drama and team dynamics. Is there a lack of parity in the NBA? Sure. But it also forces other teams to find unusual ways to compete. Additionally, the NBA's salary cap (while not necessarily fair to the top tier players in the league) has allowed for smaller market teams to land elite players as long as those teams are creative with their signings and make smart decisions. Thus, the NBA is controlled by the league's most intelligent executives (Bob Myers, R.C. Buford, Daryl Morey, Masai Ujiri, Danny Ainge, etc.) and its top level players. And for a basketball junkie, that's how it should be.

Too much parity is garbage. There's a middle ground to be had, I reckon. Changing the max salary rules so stars could earn more and take more cap space would be alright, but it'd increase inequality in the league. I think it was in the Australian Basketball League (NBL?) that teams could only have a certain number of players that qualified for a certain "tier" of talent to ensure a better spread of talent. I don't know who'd be in charge of tiering though. Kind of like baseball's old arbitration system with Elias ratings (Type A/B comp on free agents). Cool study, and good luck!!

I was fine with super teams until this year's playoffs. I hardly watched after TOR made it to the 2nd round because it was so predictable.

In general, the NBA needs to find a way to help smaller market teams keep the players they draft and develop. A harder cap would help; also, too many "lower quality" players being paid way too much.

I hate them. Completely unfair and terrible for the league.

too early to tell with this current incarnation of what a super team is, GSW different than

super teams of the past

I feel like superteams are a vehicle for individual employees to express their mobility. Just like how kids want to be on teams with their friends and with the best players, NBA players most likely want the same thing.

Exhibit 15

Darren Rovell is a sports business reporter with ESPN



Darren Rovell ✓

@darrenrovell

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Warriors fatigue setting in. Tickets got as low as \$34 on StubHub tonight in Brooklyn. Last year, vs Nets, cheapest ticket was \$130.

4:26 PM - 22 Dec 2016

Exhibit 16

J.A. Adande is the Director of Sports Journalism at the Medill School at Northwestern University and a contributor to ESPN



J.A. Adande ✓

@jadande

Following



3 highest NBA payrolls this season:
Cleveland, Portland, Detroit. So much for the
tyrant big markets buying all the
championships

10:33 PM - 4 Jan 2017

Exhibit 17

Brian Mahoney is an NBA writer for the Associated Press



Brian Mahoney ✓
@briancmahoney

Follow



NBA playoffs had most-watched first round on ABC since 2011 and the most-watched first round on ESPN since 2014.

12:59 PM - 2 May 2017

Exhibit 18

Ben Cafardo is a Communications Director at ESPN



Ben Cafardo

@Ben_ESPN

Follow



2017 **#NBAFinals** surpasses 2016 NBA Finals as the most-watched since 1998. And last year was seven games compared to just five this year.

1:46 PM - 13 Jun 2017

Exhibit 19

Chris Towers is a Senior NBA writer at CBS Sports



Chris Towers ✓

@CTowersCBS

Follow



I don't think the Warriors are bad for the NBA as a whole, but man it stinks that 90% of their games are so non-compelling.

9:09 PM - 17 Oct 2017

Exhibit 20

Nate Duncan is an NBA salary cap expert, podcast host and scout. The Brooklyn Nets were valued at \$2.3 billion on October 27, 2017 according to a CBSSports.com report. The team has made the playoffs three times since 2007 with one playoff series win. Mikhail Prokhorov bought the Nets at a valuation of \$800 million in 2010. The trade Duncan is referring to saw the Nets bring in veterans to help them in one playoff run, while sending out multiple first round picks that have become top-5 in the draft. This has elongated the Nets' struggles as it is difficult to build a team without young talent or cap space.



Nate Duncan ✓

@NateDuncanNBA

Following



The Nets crippled their franchise with one of the worst trades in NBA history and experienced a near 10x increase in value over 10 years

8:28 AM - 27 Oct 2017

Exhibit 21

This data from the SportsBusiness Journal compares local TV market ratings from the 2014-2015 season to the 2015-2016 season.

NBA Team RSN Ratings			AVG. RATING CHANGE		
AVG. RATING			TOP 6		
TOP 5			TOP 6		
TEAM	RSN	AVG. RATING (CHANGE*)	TEAM	RSN	CHANGE* (AVG. RATING)
Golden State Warriors	CSN Bay Area	9.76 (+160%)	Golden State Warriors	CSN Bay Area	+160% (9.76)
Cleveland Cavaliers	FS Ohio	9.31 (+17%)	Orlando Magic	FS Florida	+63% (1.32)
San Antonio Spurs	FS Southwest	8.71 (+4%)	New York Knicks	MSG	+58% (1.98)
Oklahoma City Thunder	FS Oklahoma	6.70 (-6%)	Philadelphia 76ers	CSN Philadelphia	+40% (0.93)
Miami Heat	Sun Sports	4.50 (-9%)	Cleveland Cavaliers	FS Ohio	+17% (9.31)
BOTTOM 5			BOTTOM 5		
TEAM	RSN	AVG. RATING (CHANGE*)	TEAM	RSN	CHANGE* (AVG. RATING)
Philadelphia 76ers	CSN Philadelphia	0.93 (+40%)	New Orleans Pelicans	FS New Orleans	-32% (1.23)
Charlotte Hornets	FS Southeast	0.87 (-12%)	Washington Wizards	CSN Mid-Atlantic	-34% (0.86)
Washington Wizards	CSN Mid-Atlantic	0.86 (-34%)	Dallas Mavericks	FS Southwest	-35% (1.58)
Denver Nuggets	Altitude	0.80 (-4%)	Chicago Bulls	CSN Chicago	-37% (2.96)
Brooklyn Nets	YES Network	0.46 (-6%)	Atlanta Hawks	FS Southeast	-45% (1.20)
<small>* Compared with 2014-15 season. Notes: Information for Memphis, Utah and Toronto was not available. Source: SportsBusiness Journal analysis of Nielsen data</small>					

Exhibit 22

These are local TV ratings courtesy of SportsBusiness Journal. It is a comparison of 2015-2016 season to the 2016-2017 season. It is evidence of major declines, much different than the previous season.

NBA teams' RSN ratings

Highest rating

TEAM	NETWORK	2016-17 AVG. HOUSEHOLD RATING (CHANGE FROM 2015-16)
Golden State Warriors	CSN Bay Area	8.79 (-10%)
Cleveland Cavaliers	FS Ohio	7.38 (-21%)
Oklahoma City Thunder	FS Oklahoma	6.50 (-3%)
San Antonio Spurs *	FS Southwest	5.78 (-34%)
Indiana Pacers	FS Midwest	2.91 (-1%)

Lowest rating

TEAM	NETWORK	2016-17 AVG. HOUSEHOLD RATING (CHANGE FROM 2015-16)
Dallas Mavericks	FS Southwest	0.84 (-47%)
Charlotte Hornets	SportSouth	0.78 (-10%)
Denver Nuggets	Altitude	0.71 (-11%)
Orlando Magic	FS Florida	0.64 (-52%)
Brooklyn Nets	YES	0.33 (-28%)

Biggest gain

TEAM	NETWORK	CHANGE (RATING)
Philadelphia 76ers	CSN Philadelphia	+84% (1.71)
Houston Rockets	Root Sports	+35% (1.92)
Washington Wizards	CSN Mid-Atlantic	+24% (1.07)
Milwaukee Bucks	FS Wisconsin	+24% (2.17)
New Orleans Pelicans	FS New Orleans	+17% (1.44)

Biggest decline

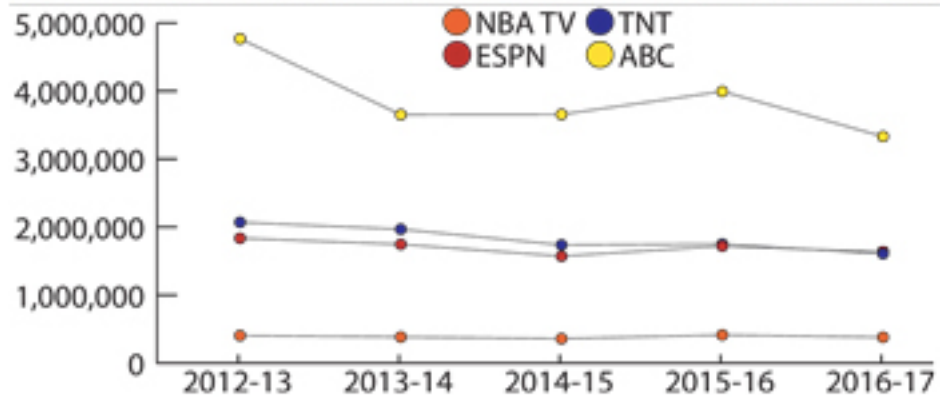
TEAM	NETWORK	CHANGE (RATING)
San Antonio Spurs *	FS Southwest	-34% (5.78)
Portland Trail Blazers	CSN Northwest	-34% (2.23)
Detroit Pistons	FS Detroit	-34% (1.14)
Miami Heat	Sun Sports	-38% (2.81)
Dallas Mavericks	FS Southwest	-47% (0.84)
Orlando Magic	FS Florida	-52% (0.64)

Note: Data for the Nashville Predators, Carolina Hurricanes and the six Canadian clubs was not available.
 * See story for details.

Exhibit 23

Data compiled by SportsBusiness Daily shows trends in the national TV market for NBA games. The 2016-2017 season is when the colossal new TV deal with ESPN and Turner kicked in.

VIEWERSHIP TREND FOR NBA REGULAR-SEASON GAMES



SEASON	ABC (000S)	TNT (000S)	ESPN (000S)	NBATV (000S)
2016-17	3,263	1,540	1,565	312
2015-16	3,926	1,682	1,652	345
2014-15	3,588	1,669	1,504	291
2013-14	3,584	1,900	1,678	316
2012-13	4,701	2,002	1,768	336

Source: SportsBusiness Daily research

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