

Among society, basketball and the NBA are one of the most popular and most-watched sports in the United States. Nearly 26 million Americans play basketball as a sport and an average of 1.6 million people in the United States watch the NBA. Among youth to adults, basketball is shown to be one of the most racially diverse sports. However, racial slurs and acts within the realm of basketball have also been common and it begs the question if racism in basketball is still a major issue.

Although some positive steps have been taken to address the issue, the National Basketball Association believes more needs to be done. Suspension, fines, and firings have all been punishments for any racial slurs or acts directed to any one player, fan, or official. One recent and high-profile example of racism in the NBA came from former LA Clippers Owner Donald Sterling. The former owner was banned from all NBA activities and fined \$2.5 million after he was recorded making racist comments in 2014. The most recent case of racism comes from Phoenix Suns and Mercury owner Robert Sarver has been fined \$10 million and suspended for one year by the NBA for sexist and racist language. NBA commissioner Adam Silver believes that racism is still an issue and states, "Racism and racial injustice remain part of everyday life in America and cannot be ignored."

African American athletes, in particular, have spoken out about the racism they have faced throughout their careers in the NBA. Former NBA all-star Kareem Abdul Jabbar explains why some players are not the friendliest toward fans. "When you are playing in front of people who are calling you names that are just revolting and vile, and letting you know that they despise you, while you do understand how ignorant they are, that is a very dangerous setting that can get to a point where the situation is on the

edge of violence,” Abdul-Jabbar said. Many NBA players not only speak out on racism on the court but also on racism in every day life included. On May 25, George Floyd died from police brutality sparking a movement across the United States. Many African American NBA players protested with the majority of people protesting Floyd’s death. Players such as Jaylen Brown, LeBron James, and Karl-Anthony Towns spoke about the issue and made sure their voices were heard loud and clear across America.

African-Americans athletes were not the only race targeted for racial acts. Asian players have also been a target from many fans and players. Specifically, ex-NBA player Jeremy Lin speaks out on anti-Asian racism when being called “coronavirus” during a G-League game. Jeremy Lin was well known for his run in the Knicks in 2012 being named “Linsanity” for his spectacular play. However, many fans were prejudiced and believed his skill level was not high compared to other players and that his moment of glory was based on luck. Jeremy has repeatedly spoken out about the issue saying , “I just wanted to be recognized for being a great basketball player. I was so tired of, from literally age 8 until Linsanity, it was always, ‘Oh, he’s a good basketball player, but he’s Asian.’ Lin has also spoken out about how his generation is tired of being mocked whether about physical appearance such as the eyes or yelling hurtful phrases.

Anti-Asian cases have increased to around 11,400 cases in 2022. “We are tired of Asian American kids growing up and being asked where they're really from, of having our eyes mocked, of being objectified as exotic or being told we're inherently unattractive” Lin says.

There have also been efforts in other sports, like hockey, to end racist and hateful behavior. NHL, the governing body for the sport in the United States, has composed

efforts to fight behind against discrimination. They declared in delayed October that the penalties for racial or sarcastic slurs by players would be met by harsher consequences, including a five-minute penalty, ejection from the game, and suspension from further participation – unless the issue is under review. Major sports leagues today continue to fight for racial equality. With millions of viewers tuning into these events, the message that athletes exhibit on the media impacts many lives.