

There's always popular boys who can get a girl in a heartbeat. In contrast, there's always those socially awkward ones who will struggle to find a wife until they're middle aged 30-year old man.

Something similar to this, is the differential and overall competition between small and big markets in sports. The more popular destinations are big markets, attractive to players who sign in an instant, whereas smaller markets are left waiting a long time for any infusion of superstar talent. Because of this, smaller markets need help from the NBA in terms of more publicity and money compensation, otherwise there will be a league-wide imbalance. This would practically tear down a league when billions have already gone into it, cash that could've been used for other economic problems on a global scale.

The most notable example of this power separation is depicted in the NBA. Disregarding the absolute disarray of the New York Knicks, the gap between these markets is exemplified everywhere else.

Take the blow-up of the OKC Thunder for instance. Their outlook was with some upside, as they did have two game-changing players in Russell Westbrook and Paul George.

But they were forced to trade them, and at the same time watch major markets like the Lakers and the Clippers acquire players they needed to become serious contenders. Now the Thunder look to the draft, even if Sam Presti, the Thunder's GM didn't want to initially.

“Despite our city's rapid rise and growth, Oklahoma City remains the second-smallest market in the NBA. While this brings many benefits, it also poses strategic challenges. Given the way the league's system is designed, small market teams operate with significant disadvantages,” Presti said in his interview with the Oklahoma press.

He doesn't directly mention the disadvantages, but it's evident in large part his complaint is because small markets rarely retain superstars, let alone getting them as free agents.

It's not just in OKC either. New Orleans lost Anthony Davis, and there are rumblings that without a championship Giannas Antetokoumpo might leave the Bucks.

"It's New Orleans' problem today, and a problem with a different player tomorrow for the rest of us," said an anonymous Eastern Conference GM on ESPN. "It's open season on small markets and our players."

Nonetheless, many argue that players leaving is not wrong because it's in the end their career and they could leave to be in a better location. Furthermore they say that small market teams haven't had court success even with star talent.

The Pelicans haven't made it past the second round since Davis was drafted, and the pairing of George and Westbrook weren't able to make it past the first round.

Moving on, even though the teams haven't made amazing playoff runs, we have to see what contributes to this. The limited playoff success could be because of it being hard to assemble a great cast of role players in a small market.

After all, small markets have less cap space. At one point the Thunder were \$123.7 million deep in luxury tax, and the Pelicans depleted their monetary resources with other signings.

Even though there is promise in some small markets, bigger ones contain more advantages in the all important free agency. Unless we want small cities suffering because of where they're located, they should receive compensation so they can thrive where they're at. The NBA has been a historic business, and to spread it across the world this problem is in dire need of a fix.

Caption #1: Sam Presti, the general manager of the Oklahoma City Thunder addresses the media in wake of losing both Russell Westbrook and Paul George. At various points throughout the conference, he details the issues that smaller market NBA teams face.

(Picture and Caption after Sam Presti Quote)

Caption #2: Giannas Antetokoumpo of the Milwaukee Bucks goes up for a layup against Anthony Davis, formerly with the Pelicans. The Pelicans losing Davis could foreshadow Giannas leaving the Bucks, further showing the fall of most small market teams in the NBA.

(Picture and Caption after anonymous Eastern Conference GM quote)

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