



**ChabDog™ Sports Blog Interview With
Ray LeBov, founder of the blog, “Basketball Intelligence”**

<http://basketballintelligence.wordpress.com>

July 28, 2014

ChabDog: Ray, thanks very much for taking the time to speak with ChabDog about your blog, “Basketball Intelligence” (BI) and to give us some insights about NBA basketball.

First, tell our readers a bit more about BI. When did you start this website, and what was your mission or objective in putting it together?

Ray: I started BI just prior to the 2013-14 NBA season. Like many people, I was frustrated and disappointed by the overall quality of NBA coverage in print and online. I decided that the best antidote to the nonsense that had been proliferating was to create a site that linked daily to the "best of the blogosphere". To do this, BI uses its "4 I" test: we link to stories that are Interesting, Intelligent, Informative and Insightful.

ChabDog: I noticed all the likes for your site, and it looks like you have excellent numbers in terms of readership. To what do you attribute this large and growing following to?

Ray: I attribute it to the thirst/hunger for quality NBA coverage. While *I believed that many people shared my frustration with the state of coverage, I had no idea how pervasive that feeling was. So it turned out to be a case of "build it and they will come."*

ChabDog: It looks like you’ve been intensely following the NBA summer league action. Has anybody caught your eye in particular? Any surprises? Any disappointments?

Ray: This year's Las Vegas Summer League was the best edition yet. To me, the biggest surprise was Tony Snell, who showed a lot more than he did last regular season, averaging 20 points in the Bulls' five games. Snell shot 46.6 percent overall and 50 percent from 3-point range and averaged 4.0 rebounds and 2.8 assists. As he said, he "got a lot stronger and faster." I was also glad to see that Delonte West played well in his attempt to come back to the Association. My disappointments focused on players who suffered injuries, like Alex Len and Pierre Jackson. Jackson's achilles injury was particularly disheartening due to its severity.



ChabDog: What do you think is in store for NBA fans in the upcoming 2014-2015 season? Do you see the Spurs repeating? Is the West still head and shoulders better than the East? Regarding the East, who is the current favorite in view of the much publicized personnel changes?

Ray: The East will be significantly stronger than it was last season with the return to health of players like Brook Lopez, Nerlens Noel, Derrick Rose, Rajon Rondo, Al Horford and Larry Sanders as well as the possibility that Kevin Love will join the Cavs. New coaches Blatt, Hollins and Van Gundy should also help along with rookies Wiggins (unless traded), Parker, Gordon, Smart, Payton, McDermott, Payne. And we will also likely see continued growth from teams such as the Raptors, Wizards and Magic. It is too early to talk about a favorite since rosters will change before the season starts (e.g. we may see LeBron & KLove team up).

ChabDog: Any teams/organizations that stand out in your mind as being particularly forward thinking and well managed? Do you see differences in the way the top teams operate vs. the rest of the league?

Ray: The Spurs stand out, starting at the top with RC Buford and Gregg Popovich. OKC has done a very good job which likely would have had a bigger payoff if they had not suffered key injuries at critical times the past few seasons. Daryl Morey has done well at Houston up until this offseason but as he says sometimes you swing and miss. I'm intrigued by the approach Sam Hinkie is taking in Philadelphia and like his commitment to staying the course. He has a plan that I think is likely to pay off big-time in a few years. It will also be interesting to see how Danny Ainge's efforts to rebuild the Celtics turn out. On the flip side, the most detrimental approach is usually a function of owner interference (e.g. not leaving the basketball decisions to the basketball folks). Probably the best example is how Dolan's influence has kept the Knicks from prospering for so long. The Kings' Maloofs are another good example. They starved the team and tied the hands of the people who should have been making the decisions.

ChabDog: Should we know about any rule changes or other new developments (e.g. salary cap changes) that will be important to keep in mind for the new season?

Ray: One interesting development relates to the rights of D-League teams to players on their NBA parent team's draft list: more information on this subject can be found at http://www.nba.com/dleague/austin/nbadrafted_nba_dleague_playe_2014_03_04.html

The CBA & cap issues nearly make my head explode so I rely on Larry Coon and Mark Deeks for coverage and explanations (see next question below).



ChabDog: What are some other good sources for news and information about the NBA?

Ray: To me, Zach Lowe of Grantland.com stands out as the LeBron of NBA writers. Some aggregating sites that I like are ESPN's True Hoop, Yahoo's Ten Man Rotation and NBA.com's Morning Shootaround. Larry Coon's FAQ and Mark Deeks at Shamsports.com are the best on the CBA and cap-related issues. With apologies to those who I have inadvertently overlooked (since I'm doing this off the top), some of my other favorite writers are Mike Prada, Paul Flannery, Jonathan Feigen, Rob Mahoney, Steve Aschburner, Kevin Arnovitz, Jonathan Abrams, JA Adande, David Aldridge, Tom Haberstroh. I try to avoid the ones who deal in rumors and "sources". Also, some of the blogs which cover individual teams stand out. Tony Markovich at complex.com compiled his list of the best blogs for each team in 2012. While I might disagree with a few of his choices and must note that it is 2+ years old, it remains a very good list: [The Best Blog for Every NBA Team \(www.complex.com/sports/2012/01/best-blog-every-nba-team\)](http://www.complex.com/sports/2012/01/best-blog-every-nba-team).

ChabDog: Ray, thanks very much for taking the time to speak with ChabDog. We really appreciate your insights. And to our readers, you can receive BI daily by either "following" it (clicking on the "follow" tab at the blog itself) or sending your email address to Ray at judco12000@yahoo.com.

Ray: Same here ChabDog!