

Safe and Informed Population Health Management: The National Basketball Associations COVID-19 Bubble

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships” – words spoken by Michael Jordan himself. These words take on new meaning in context of the 2020 National Basketball Association’s (NBA) finals.

Three components of Michael Jordan’s quote resonate when thinking about the 2020 NBA finals and more specifically, the NBA Bubble; Teamwork. Intelligence. Champions.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all non-essential industries including the shutdown of the 2020 NBA season. Soon after, the NBA and its partners sought to find a way to not only restart the basketball season, but to do so safely and as informed as they could. Thus, the NBA Bubble was conceived. The teamwork required from inception to implementation of the NBA Bubble is unparalleled. This closed campus, occupational health program that operated between July 2020 to October 2020 required collaborations in ways not seen before. NBA players worked with epidemiologists, working with Laboratorians, working with virologists and immunologists and more. Teamwork enabled the NBA to safely conclude its season and help bring a sense of normalcy to the public during difficult times.

Another critical success factor of the Bubble involved meticulous and fastidious use of data and data insights. Daily SARS-CoV-2 testing, symptom monitoring and input from the evolving medical field enabled not only buy in for the Bubble but enable constant updating and morphing of safety policies and procedures. Further, the evolving insights developed from the NBA Bubble were published in more than 8 peer-reviewed journals, with these contributions to the medical and scientific literature helping to guide public health measures in the US and around the globe.

The NBA Bubble was a novel and bold approach to utilize laboratory medicine to facilitate operation of a global sports league, and their innovation paid off. Through strong collaborations, unwavering use of data, the NBA finals concluded with no COVID-19 cases among players and team staff. The program created more than 6,500 jobs and bolstered the Orlando economy by more than \$200M. The data collected in the Bubble and shared through scientific publications served to advance the medical field in a time when uncertainty was the only certainty and gave a sense of hope in a time when things may have felt hopeless. An integrated clinical care team associated with the NBA Bubble was recently awarded the Top Global Honor of 2022 UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Awards Winning Team.

Congratulations to Christina Mack, Chief Scientific Officer, IQVIA, Real World Solutions, Dave Weiss, Vice President, Player matters, NBA, Jim Weisberger, Chief Medical Officer, BioReference Labs, Yonatan Grad, Associate Professor of Immunology and Infectious Disease, Yale University, David Ho, Professor Medicine and Microbiology & Immunology, Columbia University.

To learn more about the NBA Bubble and other winners please visit www.UnivantsHCE.com

For educational opportunities, including a wonderful presentation on the NBA Bubble, please visit <https://healthcarelx.com/>



(L-R) Dave Weiss, Jim Weisberger, Christina Mack, Yonatan Grad, David Ho