

Was the NBA Right to Ban Don Sterling for Racist Comments?

The NBA has banned Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling from the league for life after admitting to making racist remarks in a conversation with his former girlfriend. It's the harshest punishment ever handed down to a professional sports team owner.

The phone conversation was taped and broadcast Saturday by the tabloid television show TMZ.

"It bothers me a lot that you want to broadcast that you're associating with black people," Sterling says in the recording. "Do you have to?"

Speaking at a New York press conference Tuesday, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver made it clear the league will not tolerate **racism** in its ranks—especially from team owners.

"As part of the lifetime ban, Mr. Sterling may not attend any NBA games or practices, be present at any Clippers office or facility, or participate in any business or player personnel decisions involving the team," Silver told reporters.

"He will also be barred from attending NBA Board of Governors meetings and participating in any other league activity," Silver said.

Sterling will also be required to pay a \$2.5 million fine, which the NBA Players Association will donate to charities.

Sterling's remarks came as no surprise to some NBA players and long-time associates, who said the Clippers owner has a long history of making racist comments.

In 2009, he was forced to pay nearly \$3 million after the U.S. Justice Department brought suit against him for housing

discrimination against minority tenants.

The NBA's disciplinary action was met with widespread praise from coaches and players.

"This is a great day," Clippers guard Chris Paul said.

Clippers Coach Doc Rivers said, "The healing process has started and so we're going to keep trying to get away from this."

Former NBA player, now Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson said, "I hope that every bigot in this country sees what happened to Mr. Sterling. "

Meanwhile, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, also known as one of the investors from the hit television show *Shark Tank*, weighed in with a slightly different perspective.

Cuban called Sterling's remarks "abhorrent," saying, "There's no place for racism in the NBA."

Nevertheless, he asked, "If it's about racism and we're ready to kick people out of the league, OK? Then what about homophobia? What about somebody who doesn't like a particular religion? What about somebody who's anti-Semitic? What about a xenophobe?"

Cuban said people in America "are allowed to be morons."

Now the question is, will the NBA succeed in its plans to force Sterling to sell his team? If that happens, Sterling will end up doing just fine financially.

He purchased the Clippers in 1981 for just \$12 million, but some estimates now put the market value of the team at more than \$1 billion.

Meanwhile, the controversy didn't seem to have a negative impact on the Clippers' playoff performance. The team won

their game Tuesday night, and now take a 3-2 game lead in the series against the Golden State Warriors.