

FINAL TRIP REPORT

Boule´ /NBA Collaboration



Dakar, Senegal (July 2019)

Archon Loren R. Douglass
CHAIRMAN, GRAND BOULE´ INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

FINAL TRIP REPORT: SIGMA PI PHI/NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION BWB PROGRAM (DAKAR, SENEGAL)

Mission: Establish the International Presence of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity

Objective: Establish working relationship with NBA's Basketball without Borders and SEED Programs

Introduction:

The below is a daily account of our participation with the National Basketball Association in its recent trip to Dakar, Senegal. The NBA's program had multiple components:

- Basketball Without Borders (BWB) Training Camp
- Launch of the Basketball Africa League
- Social Action through the SEED Program (Sports for Education and Economic Development)

The Grand Boule' International Committee has been in discussions with the NBA regarding participation in the upcoming Grand Sire Archon International Getaway to South Africa. The fraternity's special invitation to participate in the 2019 BWB Program, in Dakar, grew out of those discussions.

Day 1 (Dakar, Senegal): Boulé/NBA in Dakar, Senegal

Day 1 was a day of arrivals. Having arrived on Thursday night, I started meeting those in attendance in the morning, at breakfast.

Amadou Gallo Fall, President of the newly launched Basketball Africa League and Interim Managing Director of NBA Africa greeting me very warmly and expressed his excitement about our being there. Later that afternoon, I attended the boys and girls All Star games for the SEED Project (Sports for Education and Economic Development), a sports academy founded by Amadou on the continent. Naomi Campbell and US Ambassador Tulinabo S. Mushingi, PhD were in attendance to present awards to the winning teams and MVP winners.



Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts
Dakar, Senegal

Regarding other relationships, I made a wonderful connection with Scott Layden, General Manager of the Minnesota Timberwolves. He's an ardent Jazz fan and former New York resident. In fact, his family still resides there while he works in Minneapolis. I made arrangements for him to receive 2 tickets to see Archon Marsalis during his Dec 13th tour date, in Minneapolis, as a goodwill gesture.

Day 2 (Dakar, Senegal): Day of Connections

Today, the NBA took everyone on a tour of Gorée Island, a major port of call in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The delegation included Chris Bosh, Tako Fall and other notable players and coaches. Overall, it was truly an educational and moving experience.

As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the place is full of history and symbolism and is a must see for any American, Black or otherwise, as it provides important insights that are not taught in American schools. In the words of the tour guide, who spoke 6 European languages and 7 African languages, *"...the Africa's problems started with the European's discovery of America...with the end of the slave trade came the start of colonization...a total of over 400 years of humiliation and exploitation of the African in the diaspora."*

The Ford Foundation has made a \$1.8 Million grant to assist the curators of Gorée Island establish an academic center of excellence in the study and history of the slave trade. Clearly, this is a project in which the Boule could consider getting involved, at some point, perhaps in partnership with the Ford Foundation. I suspect that Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation, had a role in the decision for their getting involved.



I attended the Welcome Meeting and kickoff reception of the Basketball Without Borders Program, a high profile Basketball camp whose main mission is talent cultivation and scouting of young future prospects. The program includes player skill development, mentored by a coaches and players, as well as a significant module of Life Skills Management.

Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts
Dakar, Senegal

I connected with Kim Bohuny, Senior Vice President of International Basketball Operations, and explained our mission and strategy of adding value and expertise to African Diaspora countries through our Foundation and direct involvement. She reacted with great enthusiasm and was quite impressed by our Room to Read initiative, in South Africa. She reacted favorably to a possible collaboration with The Boulé. In turn, she introduced me to Clarisse Machanguana, former WNBA player whose Foundation is doing major work in girls' empowerment in the continent. She also was very impressed with our strategy and approach and is interested in learning more. I will meet with her over coffee to learn more about her efforts, as well. Amadou Gallo Fall, President of the NBA Africa league joined the discussion and desires to have further discussions on how the Boulé can be a value-added partner. Clarisse is in Mozambique. I have attempted to contact an old school friend, Rogerio Zandamela, who is Governor of the Mozambique Central Bank. I hope to make the connection for everyone's behalf.

Day 3 (Dakar, Senegal): BWB Camp Starts

Day 3 marked the opening day of the Basketball Without Borders (BWB) basketball camp where top youth prospects from across Africa are specially invited. As mentioned, yesterday, the camp which focuses on talent cultivation will comprise of intensive training in basketball skills augmented by a Life Skills module. Workshops are taught by current and former NBA players, referees and talent scouts.

Below (***Interconnectedness: Reflections from an eye-opening encounter***), I gave an account of our trip to Le Monument de la Renaissance Africaine (the Monument of the African Renaissance). Nothing further to report, there, other than I had an extensive conversation with Rose Mutombo (wife of Dikembe and fellow monument visitor) regarding the Boulé's international strategy of building relationships through social action in strategic Diaspora countries and our upcoming investment in Room to Read. She was very pleased to hear what we are doing and was quite impressed with our focus and approach. Also, Archoussa Michelle and I sat next to her and her husband (Dikembe), at dinner, where we had the chance to get further acquainted.

After dinner, I had an extensive conversation with senior officials from the NBA Players Association (Michelle Roberts) and NBPA Foundation (Sheree Deans). I explained our strategy and objectives (received with great enthusiasm) and we committed to find ways of working together, over time.

Given the high visibility of this event and the NBA's and NBPA's access to influencers throughout Africa, growing our partnership with each entity makes sense. Our focus on relationship building and social action was universally embraced. Also, we have well placed Archons that can be very helpful in growing our relationship.

We will take appropriate care and due diligence in determining how we will work together that's consistent with each organization's priorities, resources, and constraints. Additionally, we will utilize this opportunity to identify major stakeholders and influencers, in Africa and the US, as we establish ourselves as a value added partner in social action.

**Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts
Dakar, Senegal**

Interconnectedness: Reflections from an eye-opening encounter

Day 3 included a moving experience resulting from a visit to Le Monument de la Renaissance Africaine (The Monument of the African Renaissance). Nineteen (19) Heads of African States came to celebrate the opening of this monument in 2010, so it is widely recognized as important and symbolic to those other than the Senegalese.



Below are a few key photos from the exhibit inside the great statue that shows that the liberation of Black Americans is an important and constituent part of their legacy in which they celebrate. Not surprisingly, WEB Dubois, Founder of Zeta Boule´ is noted among the “pan Africanists.” There’s a persistent perspective voiced by some Archons that the African either does not relate to or is indifferent to the Black American struggle and thus are incompatible for membership in the Fraternity. In fact, the direct opposite is true.



Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts
Dakar, Senegal

The very last exhibit paintings of the four (4) Senegalese Presidents since Senegal obtained its independence. Interestingly, the same exhibit contains a three panel display with paintings of Archon Martin Luther King and President Barack Obama. The third unifying panel contains the central themes “I have a dream” and “Yes we can”. Being displayed alongside those of the 4 Presidents, the Obama and King portraits were displayed in a place of unambiguous reverence. These portraits are a clear celebration of the African American contribution to the global struggle for liberation. This use of symbolism and iconography celebrates these important leaders and their achievements as if they are their own.



As we implement our international strategy, the international committee must make sure that this larger context is effectively communicated and understood by those Archons who may not be aware of the larger context with which our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora see themselves and the esteem with which African American contributions are held. We'll be sure to create such continuity in our communication plans as we transition to the next administration.

We will explore these connections further in an upcoming article on “Social Action in an Interconnected World.”

Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts
Dakar, Senegal

Day 4 (Dakar, Senegal): Social Responsibility Day

On Day 4, the Basketball Camp continued with a late afternoon pause to dedicate a donated basketball court for a deserving community, Ndareme Limoumalaye; a county one hour outside of Dakar. Once dedicated and handed over to the community, the court will participate in the Senegal Jr. NBA program.

Attended by local dignitaries, the surrounding community, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, NBA Players and staff, we were greeted by an African drum welcome (video to be sent under separate cover) with approximately 100 school kids (boys and girls) seated in neat arrays waiting for the ceremony to start. We were addressed by the local Mayor (who spoke only French), Commissioner Silver, and NBA Africa President Fall. A ceremonial first basket, made by one of the girl players, opened the court for business. After the ceremony, NBA Players and staff conducted a basketball clinic for those children in attendance.



The living conditions of the surrounding community are tough, to say the least. The streets were made of sand (unpaved), the houses were dilapidated, and scores of seemingly wild goats roamed the streets. That said, the spirit of the community was high and openly appreciative of the NBA's gift to them. Local BWB staff will continue to hold clinics and games in hopes of not only building future players, "but good citizens, overall."

Our presence there was warmly acknowledged individually by Archon Mark Tatum (Deputy NBA Commissioner) and NBA Africa President Amadou Gallo Fall. Each is excited about the collaborative possibilities and have already broached the idea of our having a bigger role in next year's BWB trip to Africa.

My preliminary recommendation is for us to consider a possible foundation grant along with recruiting a Boulé delegation of health care professionals and/or real estate developers that may be interested in donating products and services to the chosen community. This is not a well formed thought but just a kernel of an idea from which to start.

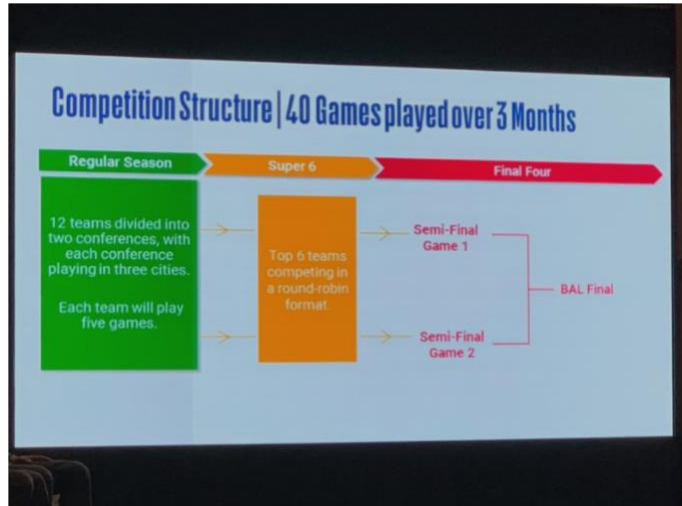
The NBA's goal, as articulated by Commissioner Silver, "is to make the NBA one of the most recognized brands on the continent within the next 10 years." The goals, objectives and approach of the NBA's social responsibility initiative seem congruent with our own activities and thus could make for a good partner as we build our international presence.

Day 5 (Dakar, Senegal): Launch of NBA Africa League

As in previous days, Day 5 marked the continuation of the Basketball camp. Day 5 also marked the official launch of the NBA Africa League. In February, the NBA and the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) announced a ground-breaking partnership to launch the Basketball Africa League (BAL). The BAL is a league that will produce the Champion of Champions in African club competition. The league is the first collaboration to operate a league outside of North America.

**Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts
Dakar, Senegal**

A reception and dinner was held at the **Museum of Black Civilization** where NBA legends, league officials, and local and national dignitaries were in attendance. The President of Senegal sent a representative to offer warm greetings and congratulations to the group. Additionally, the President of the NBA Africa League (Amadou Gall Fall) and NBA Commissioner Adam Silver made presentations as to the structure and near term operation of the league (picture below). This time, Commissioner Silver was specific about the league’s ultimate objective, “the be Africa’s leading lifestyle brand in ten years.”



Given the visibility of the NBA’s efforts in building the league and it’s posture toward social responsibility reinforces the efficacy of leveraging the Boule’ ’s relationship with the NBA in getting to know important stakeholders in Africa. The NBA’s focus on social responsibility is most certainly congruent with Boule’ priorities and values.

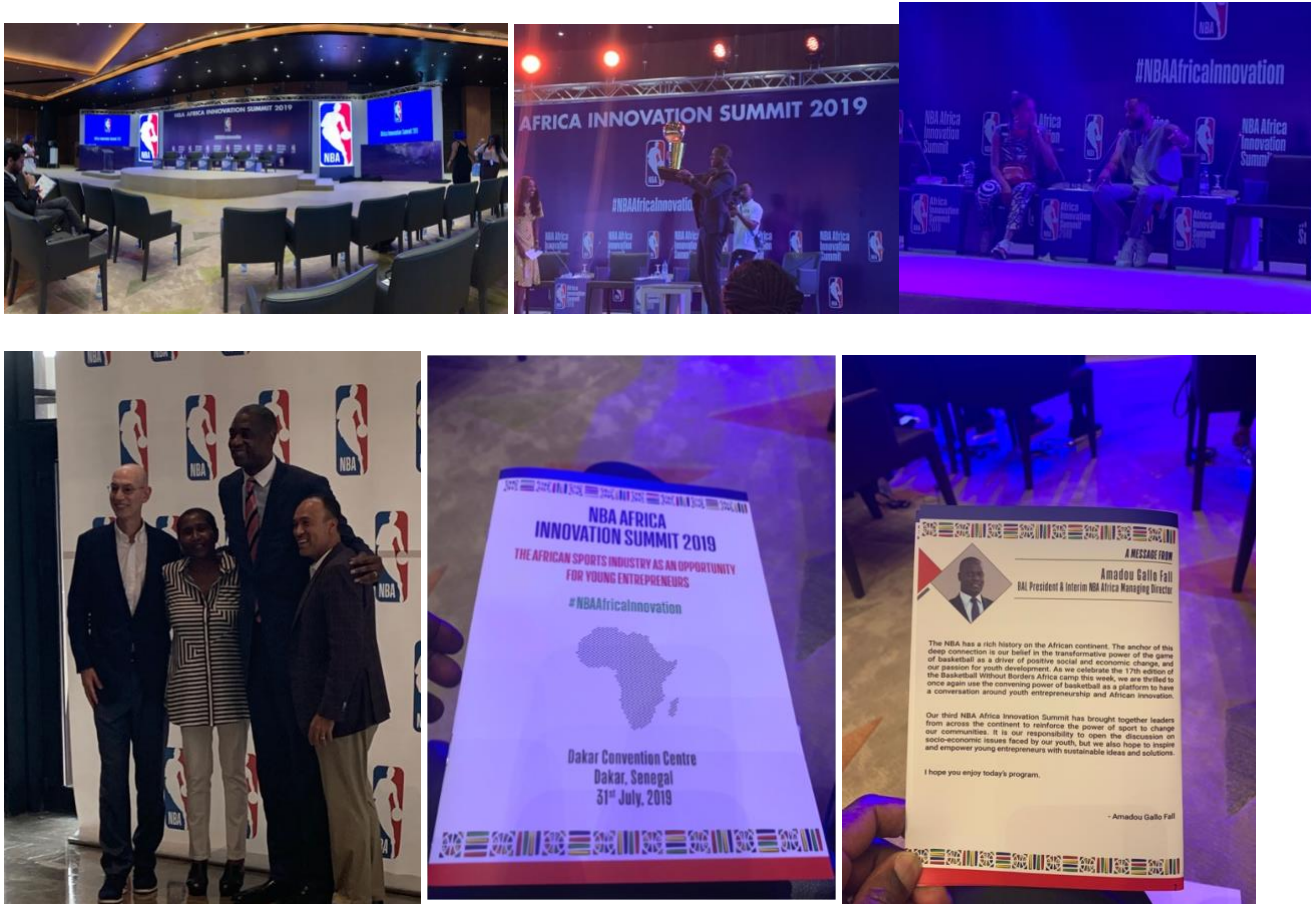
Day 6: Africa Innovation Summit

Having just safely returned to the US, I respectfully submit my final day report. The African Innovation Summit, held at the Dakar Convention Center (Centre International de Conférences Abdou Diouf), was truly the crescendo of a groundbreaking week of activities. Speakers ranged from Ndonga Ndiaye, Special Advisor to Senegal’s President; NBA Commissioner Adam Silver; Michele Roberts, NBA Players Association Head; Masai Ujiri, President of the World Champion Toronto Raptors; leading NBA players, Grammy nominated entertainer; Jidenna, and others. Discussions were moderated by noted African journalists and broadcasters. It was attended by Senegalese Business Leaders, Policy Makers,

**Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts
Dakar, Senegal**

Entertainers and Entrepreneurs along with close to 100 teens and young adults. In fact, I ran into a graduate school classmate from The Wharton School (Papa Ndiaye, CEO of AFIG Funds), who coincidentally is in conversations with NBA Africa regarding financing business that will grow up around the sports/entertainment ecosystem.

Successful cultivation of sports & entertainment ecosystem businesses was a major theme of the summit. NBA Commissioner Silver and Basketball Africa League President Fall were emphatic regarding the need to cultivate successful businesses and providing opportunities to young entrepreneurs in this emerging ecosystem. Pictures will be sent under separate cover of the newly built **Palais des sports de Diamniadio** (Dakar Arena) and the roads that are still being built to service the arena and the surrounding area.



Africans are awakening to their growing importance to the global economy and are actively seeking to ensure that Africans are in the driver's seat, thus reversing the trend of exploitation and colonization that has defined much of its past. As such, there is great interest in building relationships with African American entrepreneurs, bankers, and other professionals as a means of strengthening their ability to build sustainable businesses with significant growth potential. The NBA is also interested in the Boule' playing a role in fostering these relationships given our rich history and preeminent membership with its deep and broad expertise and resources. Basketball Africa League President Amadou Gallo Fall, AFIG Funds CEO Papa Ndiaye, and I tentatively agreed to meet in Johannesburg during our upcoming visit to South Africa. It would be a great opportunity for you to meet them and others in the NBA Africa organization. In the upcoming weeks, I'll be drafting discussion points on how we move forward in this worthwhile endeavor. Surely the Ghana trip will provide additional insights that will prove helpful to our activities on the African continent.

***Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts
Dakar, Senegal***

Conclusion:

The week's events were a great success. We firmly established ourselves as value-added participants and the NBA expressed a desire to grow our relationship. Leaders of the NBA and the NBA Players Association were truly grateful for our participation in the program and will be inviting us to participate, again, next year, perhaps in a bigger role. Launch of the Basketball Africa League and our emerging relationship with the top leadership of the league will provide the fraternity access to valuable relationship building opportunities as we grow our international presence, as per the Grand Boule' Strategic Plan. Additionally, we'll have visibility into "ground floor" building of the "sports business ecosystem." Native Africans expressed a strong desire to get to know us for possible collaborations and access to professional expertise and resources for both business and philanthropic purposes. All were very impressed with our upcoming social action work in South Africa and our excursion into Ghana, later this month. I scheduled a tentative meeting with Mark de Leiburne, Head of Partnership and Africa Business Development in the NBA's Johannesburg offices for when we are in South Africa for the Grand Sire International Getaway. We will continue to explore how we will work together in the coming 12 months and beyond into the Murray administration. Clearly, we are on our way to building a solid foundation upon which to build our Africa presence. Our initiatives in Europe, Canada, and The Caribbean will complement our Africa effort as we make the linkages across the diaspora.