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The following are the results of the George Mason protests of games 1 and 2 against George Washington on November 19th, 2017.

Games 1 & 2 were protested by George Mason for an Officials Qualifications violation.

**Requested action** – Replay Games.

PROTEST: (James Harrar President George Mason Club Basketball)

“REQUESTED HIGH SCHOOL CREDENTIALS TO BE SHOWN AT THE END OF THE SECOND GAME OF THE DAY.” Additionally “After the first game I had a discussion with my team and we felt that these referees did not have high school certification. After the second game it became clear that the referees were affecting the game in a negative way and it was time to see their credentials. My coach and I approached the referees table after the second game to show them the rule book. I left that meeting with the referees to talk to the president of GW. My coach then let the referee table know that we would be protesting the games at the end of their discussion where they stated they thought the game was a scrimmage and they were scheduled by the intramural department for the games. Both notice of protest and initial request for credentials happened at the end of the second game.”

DEFENSE: (Matt Hanessian Head Coach George Washington Club Basketball)

**“Game 1:**

Official Certification:

We have hosted club basketball games (both through NCBBA and independently) for the last 5+ years, and we have never had a complaint. For the 3 years that I have been the coach, the University has always provided the refs for us and actively dissuaded us from finding and hiring our own refs. The reasoning behind this is that the University requires that anybody who will be paid for services on University grounds must go through significant logistical legwork and approval prior to being eligible to receive payment. As such, the University has a pool of eligible referees that they deploy as necessary.

Unfortunately, due to the timing of this request, I was unable to get in contact with any University official (as the University is closed for Thanksgiving Break). As such, I cannot in good faith confirm that the referees are "High School Certified", but as an Assistant Coach on my staff is a referee employed by the University, I can ensure that they are all accredited referees who have completed a robust training course.

Unfair Advantage:

The claim that our refs created an unfair advantage for either side is nothing short of ludicrous. In this game, George Mason was the first to reach the bonus in both halves (i.e., we were called for more fouls), and they held a 5 point lead with under a minute remaining. In that final minute, we made two three-pointers and a layup, while benefitting from diving on a loose ball after a bad inbounds pass (resulting in a jump ball) and a missed



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free throw from George Mason. I am extremely proud of the way that my players executed in the final minute of that game - they showed composure and poise when it mattered most. To me, calling this game into question based on the refs is a juvenile and faulty excuse for the opposing team's inability to close a game.

### **Game 2:**

#### Official Certification:

The referees in Game 2 were the same referees as Game 1, so the argument for their certifications is the same. I have copied and pasted the argument from Game 1 below:

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#### Unfair Advantage:

This game played out similarly to the first game. Again, George Mason was the first to enter the bonus in both halves. George Mason took the lead with 4 minutes left, and was up 2 points with 6 seconds to go. After we fouled, the George Mason player made 1 of 2 free throws to put them up by 3. After a timeout, we ran a play to get one of our shooters the ball to take a last-second three-pointer. When 3 George Mason defenders collapsed on our point guard, he passed it to a teammate, who was left wide open. He hit the three-pointer, with the buzzer sounding as the ball went through the net. The emotion from that buzzer beater carried us into overtime, where we executed a number of set plays and opened up to a quick 7 point lead (without any calls from the officials). Unlike our counterparts, we held that lead for the remainder of the game. Similar to the first game, this game was won because of our ability to execute late in the game and the opposition's inability to close the game, and had nothing to do with any calls from the referees.

### **Final Comments:**

Basketball has been an enormous part of my life and my family for 20+ years. I have played for 9 head coaches and countless assistants, from 7th grade ball to high school to AAU to college. I've played in rec leagues in the DC and Chicago area, at summer camps across the country, and I've played on national television in NCAA Division I games. With regard to referees, one thing is consistent - no player, coach, or fan has **ever** walked off of a court and said "Yeah, those refs were pretty good". However, I am proud to say that no team that I have



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ever been a part of has resorted to blaming a loss on the officiating. It's cowardly, immature, and frankly disrespectful to the game of basketball that I love so much. As a testament to the childish nature of this protest, please note that George Mason elected not to protest the third game of the series (officiated by the same refs), as they won that game. I suppose GMU was less concerned about the refs' official certifications in that game.

As I stated above, I don't know whether or not our refs are "High School Certified". I do know that the refs showed consistency throughout all three games (the most important characteristic of a ref), and certainly did not create an unfair advantage either way. To approve this protest would be to reward a team for finding a technicality and exploiting a loophole, and for disrespecting the honor and integrity of the game of basketball."

**NCBBA RULES RELEVANT TO THIS INVESTIGATION:**

**11.00.00 (Officials)**

11.01.0 During **NCBBA Sanctioned Basketball Games**, the home team is responsible for providing officials for each competition.

11.03.0 The officials **MUST** be High School certified or higher.

11.03.1 The visiting team reserves the right to request proof of the official's credentials prior to the start of any **NCBBA Sanctioned Basketball Game**.

**21.00.00 (Protests)**

21.01.0 No protest ever shall be permitted on judgment decisions by the Officials.

**21.02.0 On Court Protests**

21.02.1 On Court Protests consists of protests regarding Uniform Violations, Equipment Violations, Official decisions believed to be in violation of NCBBA rules, Official Qualifications, and **ALL** Roster Violations.

21.02.2 Any On Court protest by the coach of a competing team must be made at the time of the action or incident that caused the protest and before play is resumed.

21.02.2.1 If the game ends (legal contest) in a protest able situation, the offended team has until all players have left the court to voice its protest intentions.

21.02.2.2 All On Court protests must be made to the Referee.

21.02.2.3 All On Court protests must be reported to the NCBBA (via the NCBBA **GAME PROTEST FORM**) no later than midnight E.S.T. of the Tuesday following the "NCBBA Week" in which the protested game occurred.

**INVESTIGATION:**

NCBBA SAR Coordinator Joe Shaffer, spoke to both officials (Jason and Henry) who confirmed that they are **NOT** high school certified however they are referees in the IM department at GW and were required to take a referee class to become eligible to referee IM games at GW. They both confirmed that GMU requested certifications at the end of game 2. GW won game 1 64-61 and GW won game 2 75-70.



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RULING:

Protest denied. Due to the fact that GMU did not request officials certifications or announce their intent to play under protest until the end of game 2, they failed to adhere to NCBBA Rule 11.03.1 which requires them to “request proof of the official’s credentials prior to the start of any **NCBBA Sanctioned Basketball Game.**” Thus the NCBBA has no choice but to deny their protests of Games 1 or 2. Since GMU did request certifications and announced their intent to play under protest prior to the start of game 3 they were eligible to protest game 3, but since GMU won game 3 62-50 they decided not to proceed with an official protest of game 3.

NOTE:

The NCBBA rules on protest are very specific and are designed to give an offending team an opportunity to correct a rules infraction at the moment it is identified so that the game can be played as a legal contest. Additionally the protest rules are designed to prevent offended teams from waiting to determine the outcome of the game before voicing their complaints regarding a possible rules infraction that may have been correctable at the time of it’s identification. NCBBA Rules clearly require that officials be High School Certified or better as the NCBBA Membership has been adamant in previous rules discussions that they do not want IM caliber referees officiating NCBBA basketball contests. George Washington has officially been warned and any future infraction of this rule will result in being placed on probation or possibly having their games forfeited should the games in question be protested properly.

Sandy Sanderson

President  
National Club Basketball Association