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BASKETBALL

Can a Woman Play In the NBA?

Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban says he might select Baylor's Brittney Griner in the NBA draft. Is he serious?

By Sean Gregory @seanmgregory April 04, 2013



On Tuesday, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban made waves — shocker, I know — by suggesting that he would be open to selecting 6'8" Baylor center Brittney Griner in the second round of this year's NBA draft. Or he'd invite Griner, probably the most dominant player in women's basketball history, to play on Dallas' summer league team. Said Cuban, via ESPN Dallas/Fort Worth:

"If she is the best on the board, I will take her ... I've thought about it. I've thought about it already. Would I do it? Right now, I'd lean toward yes, just to see if she can do it. You never know unless you give somebody a chance, and it's not like the likelihood of any late-50s draft pick has a good chance of making it."



Cooper Nail / Getty Images

Baylor center Brittney Griner



Cuban admitted that the move would have strong marketing potential. At the very least, it would draw more interest in the NBA summer league. "That'd sell out a few games," Cuban said.

(MORE: U.S. Women Win Fifth Consecutive Basketball Gold. Will The WNBA Benefit?)

But at least one prominent women's coach isn't buying Cuban's talk. Geno Auriemma, the women's coach at UConn, and coach of the U.S. national team that won gold in London last summer, had this to say during a teleconference:

"Obviously Mark Cuban is a genius because he's been able to parlay some great ideas into billion dollar industries and he's done a great job as owner of the Dallas Mavericks. He's won an NBA championship and he's done an awful lot for basketball. His genius would take a huge hit if he drafted Brittney Griner. And if Brittney Griner tries to make it to an NBA team, I think it would be a public relations thing and I think it would be a sham. The fact that a woman could actually play right now in the NBA and compete successfully against the level of play that they have is absolutely ludicrous."

In an email response to USA Today, Cuban emphasized that Griner would have to excel in pre-draft workouts in