

# Rookies Thrown Out of NBA Transition Program May Struggle to Manage Legal Issues

by Anthony Caruso on August 14, 2013

Shabazz Muhammad made headlines recently when it was announced that he was sent home from the National Basketball Association's Rookie Transition Program for violating rules. The Minnesota Timberwolves rookie was dismissed from the program for "bringing a female guest into his hotel room," a direct violation of the program's rules, USA Today recently reported. However, some sports analysts are wondering how dismissal from these programs may impact players' ability to manage legal issues in the future as their careers progress.

The NBA's program is designed specifically to help rookies handle the pressures, legal complexities, contractual issues, and other off-court problems that may arise during their careers. Since the program's inception, several have been removed from the training course or fined for violating the rules it imposes. Yahoo Sports recently noted that a number of players who were dismissed from the program during their early playing years have still achieved marked success both personally and professionally, calling into question the program's role in keeping players out of trouble. For example, Mario Chalmers of the Miami Heat and Darrell Arthur of the Memphis Grizzlies were removed from the rookie training program in 2008 after drug offenses and having women in their rooms. Both continue to have lucrative playing careers, despite their early dismissal.

However, as the sports industry begins to change and more emphasis is placed on players' actions and on off the court, others may be wondering if these rookies courses are essential in helping young athletes avoid legal issues that could derail their careers.

"You have to learn to be an adult," NBA veteran Kevin Martin said of the program, according to Yahoo Sports. "The NBA has a great program about hanging out with the right people and all that. It all factors into one great event for the rookies. Now it's time to be an adult."