

Sports Geek Nation AMA with Liam Bednarski

Liam Bednarski will be our Sports Geek Nation Ask Me Anything (AMA) opener for November. Liam's passion for sports and technology has led him to a variety of experiences in sports journalism, sports marketing, sports event management and coaching soccer. He is currently the Digital and Database Coordinator for Basketball Australia where he leads the digital basketball scoring project and digital customer support services. He is also in charge of the organisation's data management and content.

Connect with Liam Bednarski on Twitter [@liamednarski](https://twitter.com/liamednarski), [LinkedIn](#) and Slack [@liamednarski](#)

Find out more about Basketball Australia at <http://australia.basketball/>

Here's the full transcript:

Links to names will link you into Slack community, if you are not a member [please sign up here](#).

Q. [Sean Callanan](#): I'll start [@liamednarski](#) can you tell us more about your role at Basketball Australia and your recent projects?

A. [liamednarski](#): Firstly thanks for getting me involved in the AMA series [@seancallanan](#)

My role at Basketball Australia is to scope, implement and support the use of digital technology to drive the sport and business of basketball into the future.

A personal focus would be to enable the stories of the sport to be told through digital means regardless of the level of digital literacy from stakeholders.

One of our projects include digital scoring for grassroots Basketball:
<https://sportstg.com/courtside-form/>

The free application has been on the market for a year and is in use in over 20% of grassroots basketball associations nationally, we expect that to double in the next year.

A closely linked project is the recording of game footage (video) in grassroots basketball facilities to tie in with the digital scoring:

<https://gloryleague.basketball>

This allows for all in-game footage to be recorded, basic statistics to be time-stamped against the video, with your own personal highlights being emailed to yourself after your game.

Lastly, we are continuing to enhance, expand and build anew on our National Registration System to enable basketball participation dataset to be as complete and robust as possible as the future of data continues to evolve.

Looking forward to your questions, you can also reach me on <https://au.linkedin.com/in/liambednarski>

andrewwaltonx: Hello @liambednarski is Glory League working with NBL now? Is there any crossover features to something like Hudl?

liambednarski: Hey @andrewwaltonx as the NBL is a private enterprise. I'm not privy to the full range of technology they are using or wish to use.

I would expect it to integrate with FIBA Live Stats imminently.

I foresee Glory League integrating with other leading sports data companies.

Q. joshuaduboff: @liambednarski What initiatives are you working on to help increase global awareness of Australia Basketball/capitalizing on the success of Australians in the NBA?

A. liambednarski: @joshuaduboff We have established a global academy in conjunction with the NBA, USA Basketball is playing two games at Marvel Stadium in August of 2019 against The Boomers.

I'm sure there is much more in the pipeline, Larry Kestelman is doing a great job with the NBL as well.

In terms of my role, we are continuing to work on ensuring our data is well structured to enable our marketing team to capitalise on the visit of Basketball USA in 2019.

Q. joliegee: @liambednarski what are the challenges in rolling out the digital scoring project for grassroots basketball?

A. liambednarski: Thanks for the question @joliegee there is a number given the scope of Basketball Australia's involvement in the project.

1. Unifying the sports national priorities with the developers whilst juggling the large variety of stakeholders (feedback) in the Basketball community.

Ensuring that the 'right' changes are made to the application in the correct manner, as quickly as possible to benefit the sport of Basketball.

There were many learning curves over the first year of the project, we are very happy with the product currently.

2. Having to be creative given the size of our marketing budget for the project.
I work with some excellent creative people who were able to inspire and be inspired to overcome this challenge, it's one we face again as we look to heavily rollout the product.
3. Inspiring others to take the lead with confidence to their own stakeholders.

My coaching has really helped me with this one, as we ramp up phase two of the application rollout I'm really excited as a community leader to pass on my product knowledge and expertise to our new employees and state representatives.

The sports priorities on development, budget and inspiring others are constant challenges but ones we are confident in overcoming, and have overcome over this project.

Q. [sophiemoore](#): Hi @liambednarski, how are you integrating the basketball culture from street/pickup style/lifestyle into the professional space or grassroots participation outside of the indoor court format of the sport?

A. [liambednarski](#): Hey @sophiemoore, great question as the 'new frontier' for Basketball in Australia.

These things take time, I'm confident the format can establish and integrate itself into the street/pickup style/lifestyle eco-system which already exists here.

For more on the current pathway endorsed by Basketball Australia check out on the 3x3 hustles currently being run by the NBL -
<https://www.3x3hustle.com/videos/australias-3x3-pathway/>

Q. [Rick](#): Hi @liambednarski, obviously the popularity of basketball in Australia has taken a dramatic u-turn this past years, with the ever-increasing numbers of Australian players in the NBA, a healthy NBL after many years of decline (from the booming days of the late 80s-90s), the Opals consistently in the top-tier of world rankings (again losing to the US this past Northern summer World Championships), and the Boomers again being one the top tier nations.

So we have the playing and the coaches I believe to foster this talent in Mens & Womens, how does Australian Basketball then become world beaters in the Front Office? Obviously, there is tremendous sports business talent in other sports in Australia. It's hard to recruit

foreign front office talent to Australia - unless you have a special interest or relationship already (much like players in the 80s/90s), so how does BA foster the front office nous that will lead into the future? The NBL teams have solid relationships with the NBA team (from the pre-season games), the USA basketball game in 2019 will be interesting but I think TPG are organizing a lot of it, so I assume you there needs to be thought about the future and having the right sports business people in place to leverage the growing popularity.

A. liamednarski: @Rick The Basketball USA game is just the beginning with the 2019 World Cup in China and 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, two major events for Basketball in our region.

The qualifiers for the World Championships has given Basketball greater exposure, the Boomers hadn't played a competitive match on Australian soil since 2015.

In terms of my role ensuring we have depth and quality in our data enables our decision-makers to make the best possible decisions.

In terms of the front office. I work with a very intelligent, driven, hard-working, dynamic team.

Dynamic being very important, as the business will need to continue to pivot towards a digital future within the Asian region.

My personal thoughts are that recruiting from overseas is extremely difficult as the Australian sporting landscape has perhaps unique challenges.

Extremely competitive sporting environment, geographically large country with a low population which is expensive to travel around with each state being unique in its own manner.

On top of that, a number of NSO (National Sporting Organizations) are largely funded by Sport Australia (government) and are not-for-profit.

That said our current CEO (acting) is American! Paul Maley.

To close, I'm excited for the future of Basketball in Australia, it has great potential with a strong NBL to boot.

What is Sports Geek Nation?

Been forwarded this from a colleague? That's great we love seeing our members get credit for sharing their knowledge. Sports Geek Nation is a curated sports business community in Slack and Facebook which will help you learn from the very best in the world. Sports Geek Nation was founded by Sean Callanan in 2015 (as #SportsBiz Slack), it connects sports executives who work in digital, data and technology.

Sports Geek Nation has members from (in alphabetical order) Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, Lithuania, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States working in sports such as basketball, football, ice hockey, baseball, AFL, horse racing, golf, rugby league, netball and more.

You can join Sports Geek Nation by going to SportsGeekNation.com