

Sterling banned for life by the NBA

Written by Administrator
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NEW YORK (AP) — Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling has been banned for life by the NBA in response to racist comments the league says he made in a recorded conversation.

Commissioner Adam Silver said he will try to force the controversial owner to sell his franchise. Sterling has also been fined \$2.5 million, and Silver made no effort to hide his outrage over the comments.

He said a league investigation found that the league's longest-tenured owner was in fact the person on the audiotapes that were released over the weekend.

"We stand together in condemning Mr. Sterling's views," Silver said. "They simply have no place in the NBA."

Sterling acknowledged he was the man on the tape, Silver said.

Sterling is immediately barred from attending any NBA games or practices, be present at any Clippers office or facility, or participate in any business or player personnel decisions involving the team.

He also cannot participate in any league business going forward.

"This league is far bigger than any one owner, any one coach and any one player," Silver said.

The fine will be donated to organizations dedicated to anti-discrimination and tolerance efforts that will be jointly selected by the NBA and the Players Association, Silver said.

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Sterling's comments were released over the weekend by TMZ and Deadspin, and numerous NBA owners and players have condemned them. Even President Barack Obama weighed in on the crisis, the first of Silver's brief tenure as commissioner.

Before Silver took the podium, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban tweeted out a photo of the NBA Constitution, saying "It exists for a reason."

The announcement of the sanctions came just hours before the Clippers will play Golden State in Game 5 of a knotted-up Western Conference first-round playoff series.

Several sponsors either terminated or suspended their business dealings with the team on Monday, though individual deals that some of those companies have with Clippers stars like Chris Paul and Blake Griffin will continue and were not affected. Still, it was a clear statement that companies, like just about everyone inside the league, were outraged.

The issues raised when the tapes were released over the weekend represent just another chapter in Sterling's long history of being at the center of controversy.

In the past, he's faced extensive federal charges of civil rights violations and racial discrimination in his business dealings, and some of his race-related statements would be described as shocking.

He has also been sued in the past for sexual harassment by former employees, and even the woman who goes by the name "V. Stiviano" — purportedly the female voice on the tapes at the center of this scandal — describes Sterling in court documents as a man "with a big toothy grin brandishing his sexual prowess in the faces of the Paparazzi and caring less what anyone else thought, the least of which, his own wife."

Stiviano is being sued by Rochelle Sterling, who is seeking to reclaim at least \$1.8 million in cash and gifts that her husband allegedly provided the woman.