



National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center

# Stakeholder Update

from the IPR Center's

## Outreach and Training Section



### Counterfeit merchandise worth \$2.5M seized during 2020 NBA All Star Game



CHICAGO – The National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center) announced today the results of Operation Team Player during the 2020 National Basketball Association (NBA) All-Star Game in Chicago that show the seizure of counterfeit sports and entertainment-related items worth an estimated \$2.5 million.

The enforcement actions, led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Chicago, were conducted with assistance from the Chicago, Wheeling (Illinois), and Alsip police departments, that led to the arrest of five

individuals for violations of the Illinois Counterfeit Trademark Act and money laundering. Two others were arrested for attempting to sell counterfeit NBA All-Star game tickets.

During the week leading up to the NBA All Star Game weekend and during the game itself, HSI-Chicago, along with industry representatives and state and local law enforcement partners, made several observations of individuals selling counterfeit trademarked merchandise. The nearly 126,000 counterfeit sports and entertainment-related items seized were either falsely branded with NBA, NFL, MLB and NHL markings or were awaiting such markings.

Earlier this month, HSI announced the record-breaking seizure of more than 176,000 counterfeit sports-related items worth an estimated \$123 million part of Operation Team Player, an ongoing effort developed by the HSI-led IPR Center to target the illegal importation and distribution of counterfeit sports merchandise. The operation represents a collaborative enforcement operation targeting international shipments of counterfeit merchandise into the United States.

Last year, HSI announced enforcement actions related to Operation Team Player resulted in the seizure of more than \$24 million worth of counterfeit sports-merchandise. Enforcement actions related to this year's operation led to a 400 percent increase in the overall Manufacturers Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) of seized goods from Super Bowl 53.



This year's Operation Team Player began at the conclusion of last year's Super Bowl. Throughout the year, the IPR Center led coordinated efforts with major sports leagues – including the NBA – to target contraband that impacts the economy, enables additional criminality and poses potential health and safety hazards to the public.

February 24, 2020



*\*\*\*Photos show the sophisticated machinery/technology used to manufacture the counterfeit items.*

The IPR Center – formally codified in the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 – is one of the U.S. government's key weapons in the fight against criminal counterfeiting and piracy. The center uses the expertise of its 25 member agencies to share information, develop initiatives, coordinate enforcement actions, and conduct investigations related to intellectual property theft and its enforcement of international trade laws.

To learn more about the IPR Center and its partners, please visit [www.iprcenter.gov](http://www.iprcenter.gov), or follow us on Twitter: @IPRCenter.

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