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Athletes, Celebrities Talk NBA

Basketball and football players discuss hoops at Justin Tuck's billiards tourney.

by [Kyle Stack](#) / [@KyleStack](#)

Justin Tuck has a lot of friends—or at least a lot of people who like a good billiards tournament. Tuck, captain and defensive end of the New York “Football” Giants, hosted his annual celebrity billiards tournament Thursday at Slate, an upscale pool hall in the Flatiron district of New York City.

A litany of pro athletes and celebrities attended an event that raises funds for Tuck's R.U.S.H. for Literacy charity. (A press release at the event showed that the charity has raised over \$800,000 and donated over 21,000 books to children in New York and central Alabama, where Tuck grew up.)

SLAM caught up with a few of the attendees, who were playing for a grand prize package that included a luxury vacation hosted by The Four Seasons Resort of Nevis West Indies, Beats by Dr. Dre headphones, David Yurman jewelry and a gift certificate to Del Frisco's Steakhouse.

[Andy Rautins](#), Guard, New York Knicks

SLAM: What have you been up to?

Andy Rautins: I've been at the facility almost every day since the season ended, working hard up there. I'm going to go out to L.A. and work out with [Landry \[Fields\]](#) for a little bit, at Athlete's Performance. And then July 15 I'm gonna play with the national team for Canada again.

SLAM: Obviously you're looking forward to that.

AR: Yeah, it's huge, especially considering the circumstances of next season; it might be up in the air. It'll be a great way to stay in shape and get my game going.

SLAM: What particular facet of your game do you have to work on?

AR: I think handling the ball. Being at the 1 and getting comfortable there. I think I made a good transition this season, throughout practices and what little time I had during games, but that's definitely my main focus.

SLAM: You think you might work out with [\[Chauncey\] Billups](#)?

AR: Yeah, I'm supposed to see Chauncey in Vegas for a week or so. I'm just gonna soak it in because there's a lot of veterans around and Chauncey is a great guy to learn from, too.

SLAM: You watching the Finals?



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AR: [Smiles] Yeah, I'm following it closely. I'm a big fan of Dallas and the way they play. I love watching the way they move the ball and make the extra pass and shoot it. We'll see what happens.

SLAM: What do you think is key strategically on the court during the series?

AR: It seems to come all down to defense. The key is whoever makes less mistakes.

SLAM: Does it seem like [Miami's](#) defense is much better than during the regular season?

AR: When we played against them they were certainly tough. The way they helped and recovered for one another, their speed and athleticism is huge. If anything, they've gotten a little better.

SLAM: What do you think of Shaq retiring?

AR: The game is definitely going to miss him. As great of a player as he was, he was a character, too. Everybody sees him around the League and we're definitely going to miss him.

Michael Boley, linebacker, New York Giants

SLAM: You have a dog in the race for these Finals?

Michael Boley: I'm gonna go with the Heat.

SLAM: Why?

MB: Nobody likes them.

SLAM: Some people like them – people in Miami.

MB: I'm just going with them because a lot of people didn't like them, because of [LeBron \[James\]](#) and his whole decision to go to Miami.

SLAM: You think the team is good for the NBA?

MB: It drives up ratings. Look at baseball – the Yankees have been doing it for years. They go out, get the best players money can buy and try to build a championship roster. It's all about winning. That's what it was all about. It wasn't about hurting anyone's feelings. [LeBron] just wanted to win.

SLAM: You go to a lot of games?

MB: I went to a couple [Knicks](#) games, but not a lot. [Smiles] I got kids at home, man, I don't make it out a lot. [Laughs]

SLAM: Who was your favorite team growing up?

MB: I was a Bulls fan growing up.

SLAM: Were you conflicted last round [in the Eastern Conference Finals]?

MB: Uhh, not really conflicted. I would've loved to have seen the Bulls win.

SLAM: Shaq just retired the other day. Do you know him?

MB: I don't know him but he's a great player.

SLAM: What kind of player you'd think he would make on the gridiron? You'd think he survive out there?

MB: It's possible. I mean, Shaq had that physical mentality, that go-get-it attitude. But it's different. From getting a little bit of contact every now and then to full-on contact all day, every day. [Laughs]

SLAM: Got one more for you. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar made the news recently complaining about not having a statue outside Staples Center in L.A. What current NBA player do you think is most deserving of a statue?

MB: Give [Dirk](#) a statue. He's been doing it for years. Thirteen years in the NBA and constantly scoring; he's been getting it done.

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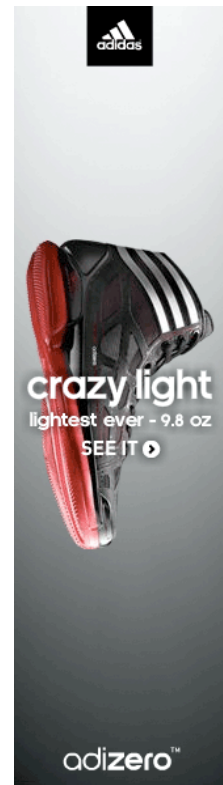
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5 Responses to "Athletes, Celebrities Talk NBA"

[airs](#) Posted: Jun.3 at 4:40 pm

i know i couldn't have ben the only one thinking 'who the hell is andy rautins?'

[Rigo Gonzalez](#) Posted: Jun.3 at 5:21 pm

Nope.
If they play in the NBA chances are, I've heard of them.
But since I only follow basketball, I had no idea who those football cats were.
Anyways, on to more pressing matters – why the heck is Cliff Robinson not rocking a headband?
That should be mandatory for all public appearances! LOL

[vanillagorilla](#) Posted: Jun.3 at 5:53 pm

Unless you're a die hard basketball fan or from NY Andy Rautins isn't a well known name.

[IAMORANGE4EVER](#) Posted: Jun.4 at 8:47 am

Andy Rautins is a cold blooded shooter, and a winner.

[Boing Dynasty](#) Posted: Jun.4 at 12:33 pm

OR if your Canadian, or a fan of the 'Cuse or college ball or if you watch international ball...

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