

Once again on the Caitlin Clark controversy.

Recently, as a passionate fan and dedicated student of the game of basketball, I wrote a two-part article speaking to important questions involved with what is an often heated controversy around the outstanding women's basketball player Caitlin Clark, who is now in her first year in the women's professional league (WNBA). The title of this two-part article (available at revom.us) points to the important issues involved: "BASKETBALL AND BIG QUESTIONS: *The Caitlin Clark Controversy*—Greats, 'Greatest Of All Time,' white stars in a 'Black sport,' Racism and the Fight Against it, and the Kind of World We Should Strive to Have."

Clark is a "white star in a 'Black sport,'" and with her entering the WNBA, the controversy has kicked up again in a pretty big way. A lot of people have had a lot to say about this—much of it (though not all of it) coming from one wrong direction or another. My article at revcom.us speaks to the bigger social questions involved with all this. Here I am going to focus on how this finds expression in the game itself.

Clark's experience in the WNBA so far has been uneven—with some truly outstanding games and some that have been more frustrating—and a repeated theme is that Clark needs to learn to adjust to the WNBA, because there is a higher level of competition than in women's college basketball. There is some truth to that, but the *much greater* truth is that the WNBA needs to learn to *adjust to Clark* and her potential for elevating the level of the game and the WNBA overall.

This applies to the officials, who have too often allowed opposing players to get away with fouls, even "hard fouls," against Clark. It applies to those members of other teams who don't just play their best against Clark, which of course they should, but also engage not just in verbal but also *physical* cheap shots against her. And it applies to whether or not her ability is fully recognized and unleashed, in the way it needs to be, as the pivotal player for her team (the Indiana Fever).

But isn't there racism in professional basketball, as there is in every other part of this society? Yes—but, important as that is, and as important as it is to oppose racism wherever it actually exists, that is a different question than how to evaluate and appreciate performers in different fields, including basketball. As indicated by the title, my article gets into all this in depth.

The fact is that Clark has the ability to be a superstar in the WNBA, now. Yes, she will need to prove it on the court, but she doesn't need to go through any ridiculous "rookie initiation" and other b.s. that places artificial obstacles in her path, and could cause serious injury to her. Instead of resentment about what she will contribute, there should be a welcoming of the fact that it will elevate the level of and appreciation for the women's game overall.

Clark is not just another very good basketball player coming out of college: A strong case can be made that she is the best player to come out of college ever, at least up to this time. (My article gets into that extensively.)

Are there ways Clark could improve? Of course. In any field of human activity, everyone—including the very best—can and should continue to find ways to improve...unless what is involved is actually something terrible (no good is served by someone becoming a better mass murderer!).

Clark has demonstrated an eagerness and a facility to improve. But this needs to be clearly recognized: Someone with her extraordinary ability, in many dimensions of the game, *can only thrive if this ability of hers is fully unleashed*, with the play of her team responding to, and revolving around, what she is capable of doing and how that can lift the level of the whole team.

If this is not recognized and given expression in the way it needs to be, then she will be frustrated in her ability to contribute on the extraordinary level she could, and not only her team, but the WNBA overall, will be the worse for it.

Finally, to return to this important truth: It is the case that bigger social questions are bound up with and are influencing all this. Once again, my article at revcom.us speaks to that. Although it was written before Clark entered the WNBA, its basic analysis applies now that Clark has begun playing in the WNBA. Anyone who wants to get a deeper understanding of this should read that article.

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WHO IS BOB AVAKIAN?

Bob Avakian (BA) is a revolutionary leader who has developed a whole new framework for human emancipation: the new communism. This includes the analysis and strategy for a real revolution in this country, at the soonest possible time (yes, a “physical revolution”). As such, he is loved by many—and he is slandered by people who have a stake in the current system or can see no further than getting such a stake.

BA has written on the Middle East and the crucial struggle against U.S. imperialism and its “attack dog” Israel for 40+ years. At @BobAvakianOfficial, he is speaking to the hardest questions and bringing truth the powers-that-be don't want you to have. He breaks down why we need a revolution, and how that revolution could be possible. If you don't know this, then you don't know what you need to know.