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FIBA has positively reconsidered IBBA's requests concerning the national status and eligibility of Cohen and Baron

Blog

Exciting news for the [Israel Basketball Association](#) (IBBA) as its requests to include the American-born players Alexandra Cohen and Alyssa Baron in the Israeli women's national team without any restrictions, have been exceptionally granted by FIBA.

FIBA who had dismissed similar requests in 2019, has now positively reconsidered IBBA's requests concerning the national status and eligibility of Cohen and Baron after such requests were filed by our Sports Law department at Gornitzky & Co.

FIBA's regulations provide that a national team may have only one player who has acquired the legal nationality of that country by naturalization or by any other means after having reached the age of 16, regardless of whether such nationality acquired is deemed effective at birth or whether the claim for such nationality could have been granted at birth but was only requested after the age of 16.

Since Cohen and Baron both acquired their Israeli nationality only at the age of 22, IBBA was prevented, under the said regulations, from participating them both together in its national team. Only Cohen was included in the team but under the restriction of being the one naturalized citizen that can participate in the Israeli national team's games.

Among other issues, we raised in our requests an interesting argument that IBBA's requests should be exceptionally granted since the Israeli Citizenship Law is unique and different from the immigration laws of any other country as it allows Jews from paternity from all over the world to immediately receive their Israeli citizenship (at any age or time), just by arriving in Israel and formally declaring they want to make "Aliyah".

Both Cohen and Baron moved to Israel to exercise their birthright under the Israeli Citizenship Law-1952, to make "Aliyah" and receive their Israeli citizenship because of their Jewish descent.

In its recent revised decisions, FIBA did not refer to such an argument (but did not refute it). Among other circumstances for granting IBBA's requests, FIBA mentioned the significant amount of consecutive years Cohen and Baron have been living and playing basketball in Israeli clubs and their "extensive ties" to Israel, including family members, knowledge of the Hebrew language, marital status and more.

These important decisions are excellent for the Israeli women's national team as it starts its preparations for the 2023 EuroBasket tournament which Israel will co-host next summer.

Following FIBA's decisions, Cohen and Baron are now both eligible to play for the national team without restrictions, making room for Israel to include in its team, another naturalized Israeli player who purchased her citizenship after the age of 16.

We are honored to be able to represent the Israeli Basketball Association once again in facing the complex and important issues involving the national status and eligibility of players.

Good luck Alex, Alyssa and the Israeli women's national team!

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