The NBA announced Wednesday night that they have suspended their season due to the coronavirus outbreak. We don’t know when, or if the 2019-2020 season will resume. If the league can start up again within the near future, there is a solution that would benefit the NBA for years to come.

The NBA should play the rest of their scheduled regular-season games when they are ready to do so. After the regular-season, the NBA would move-along with the playoffs as normal procedure. Depending on when the NBA can start up again, this season might not end until August. That wouldn’t leave enough time to hold the NBA draft, summer league, free agency and give the players enough time to rest for the upcoming season, which normally starts in October. However, what if the NBA didn’t start their regular-season in October?

Earlier this month, Atlanta Hawks CEO Steve Koonin stated that the NBA should start their season in December. Currently, the NBA starts in October which means they have to compete against the NFL for TV ratings. Each NFL team plays 16 games every regular-season while NBA teams play 82. Because of that, NFL regular-season games have been and will continue to have a bigger impact on the overall season than NBA regular-season games do. Sporting events are more likely to receive a big audience when there’s a lot at stake, and NBA regular-season games are often devoid of that kind of suspense. That, along with how popular football is in America means that the NBA shouldn’t expect to de-throne the NFL in ratings when both leagues are active.

Currently, the NBA has to compete with the NFL for ratings for four months, October, November, December, and January during their season. However, that would change if the NBA started in December. professional Basketball starting up around Christmas means that there would be action until August. The NBA would have a significantly easier time competing against regular-season baseball for ratings than they currently do against the NFL.

Sports fans should hope that the NBA decides to start their seasons in December. The NFL and NBA are easily the two most popular sports leagues in America, and at least one of those leagues would always be active under this proposal. Hawks CEO Steve Koonin has already proposed this idea, and the NBA may have no choice but to adopt it if they don’t want to cancel the 2019-2020 NBA season.