

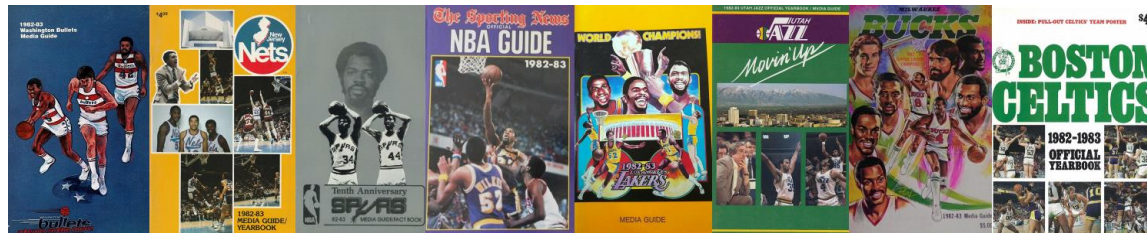


80s Era NBA + 40: Part Twelve

1982-83 Season Review

By Michael Hamel

1982-83 In Review



Finals: Philadelphia 76ers def. Los Angeles Lakers (4-0)

MVP: Moses Malone
ROY: Terry Cummings

MVP Voting Top 5: Malone, Bird, Magic Johnson, Moncrief, Erving

All-NBA First Team
Larry Bird, Julius Erving, Magic Johnson, Moses Malone, Sidney Moncrief

All-NBA Second Team
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Alex English, George Gervin, Isiah Thomas, Buck Williams

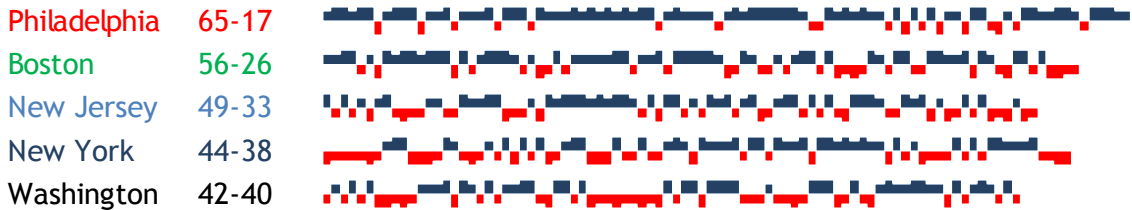
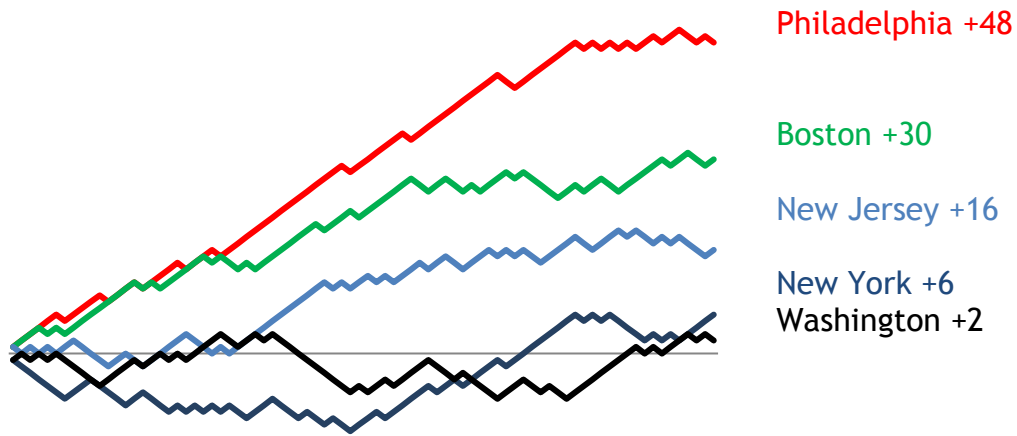
Players of the Week (Month)

November Reggie Theus, Kelly Tripucka, Alex English, Larry Bird (Bird)
December Buck Williams, Bird, Isiah Thomas, Maurice Lucas (Larry Drew/Moses Malone)
January Kiki Vandeweghe, Mickey Johnson, English, Joe Barry Carroll, Gilmore (English)
February Malone, Larry Nance, Walter Davis (Malone)
March John Drew, Magic Johnson, Andrew Toney/Gus Williams, Jeff Ruland (Ruland)
April Bird, Magic Johnson, Mike Glenn

All-Defensive First Team
Maurice Cheeks, Dennis Johnson, Bobby Jones, Moses Malone, Sidney Moncrief, Dan Roundfield

All-Defensive Second Team
Larry Bird, Michael Cooper, T.R. Dunn, Kevin McHale, Tree Rollins

1982-83 Atlantic Division



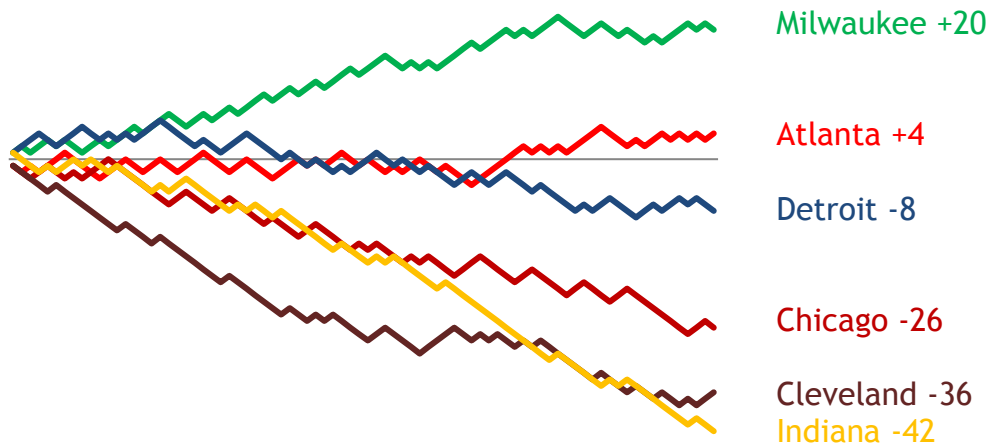
Opening Tip: James Worthy, Terry Cummings, Dominique Wilkins

Final Buzzer: Dave Cowens (again), Spencer Haywood, Steve Mix, Brian Winters, Cleveland's original "jousting Cavalier" logo

All Heads above Water

All five Atlantic Division teams finished at or above .500, the first time that had happened in a division since the five Pacific Division teams accomplished the feat in 1977-78. Prior to that, it had occurred just three times: 1970-71 Midwest, 1956-57 East, and, before the BAA-NBL merger, the 1947-48 Western Division in the BAA.¹

1982-83 Central Division

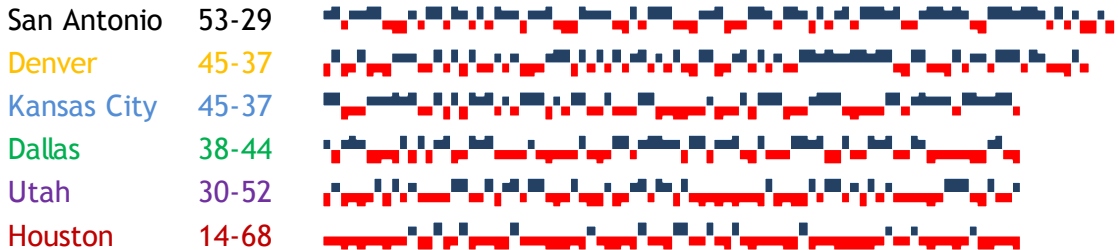
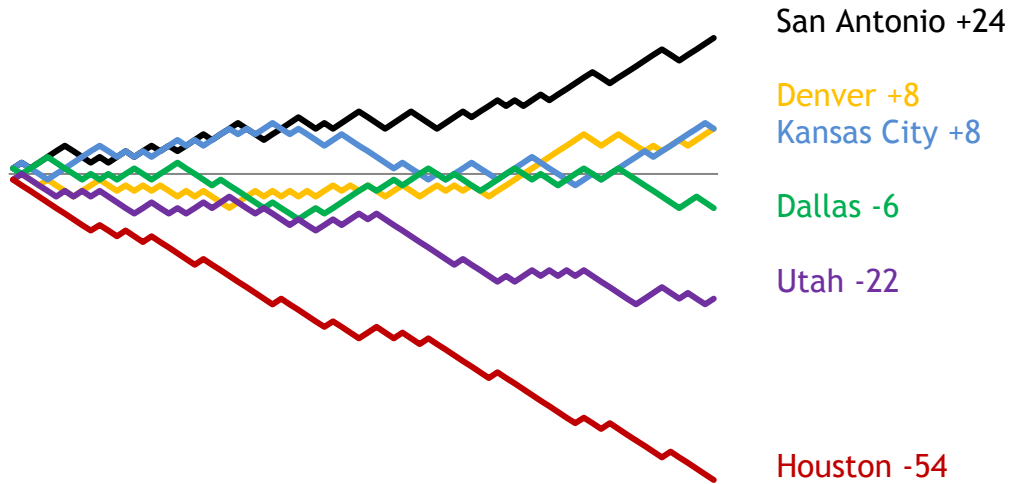


Milwaukee	51-31	
Atlanta	43-39	
Detroit	37-45	
Chicago	28-54	
Cleveland	23-59	
Indiana	20-62	

Off the Court

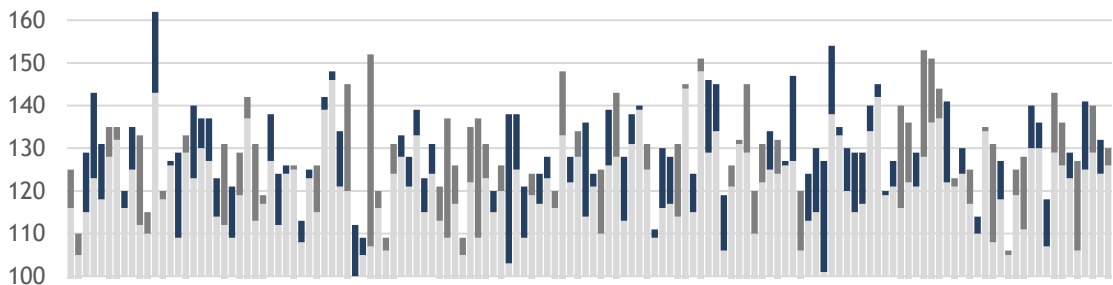
November	Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated; Michael Jackson releases <i>Thriller</i> , best-selling album of all-time
December	First permanent artificial heart implanted
January	ARPANET officially switches over to TCP/IP, a network protocol that becomes the backbone of the "Internet" ²
February	Last episode of <i>M*A*S*H</i> draws a record television audience
April	63 people are killed in suicide bombing at US Embassy in Beirut
May	<i>Return of the Jedi</i> , the last of the original <i>Star Wars</i> trilogy, premieres

1982-83 Midwest Division



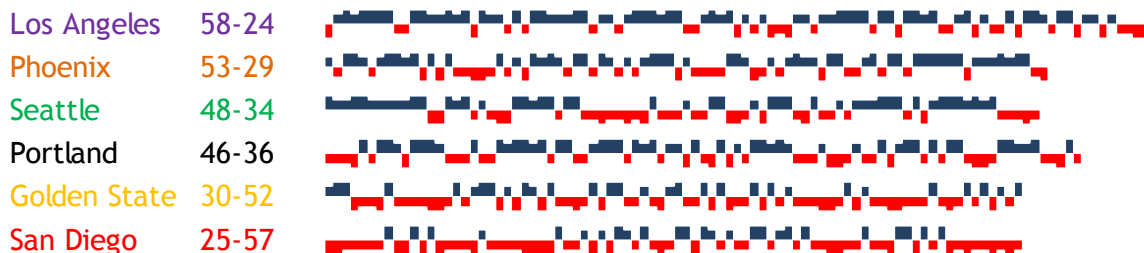
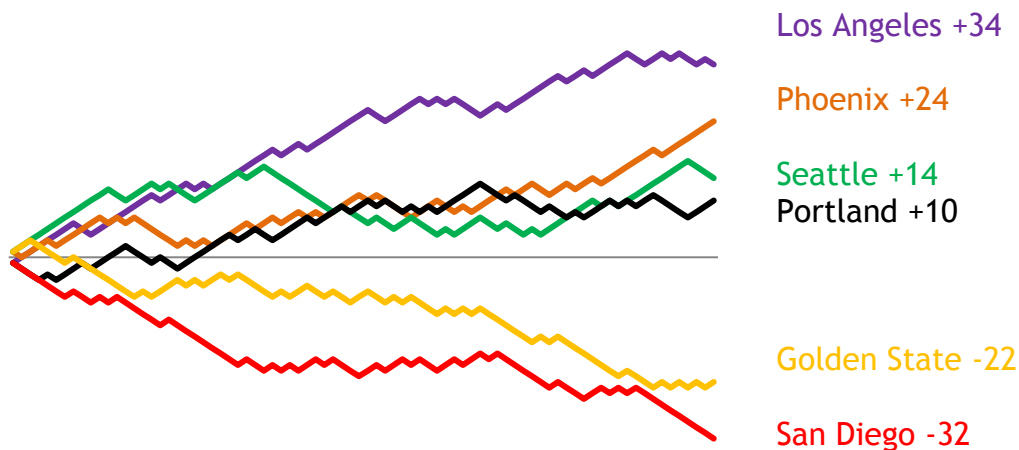
Peak Production

On December 9, 1982 the Denver Nuggets lost to the Washington Bullets 98-90. It was the first time since January 18, 1981 that the Nuggets scored fewer than 100 points—a streak of 136 regular season games (74-62), a record that still stood as of 2022.³



Denver's wins are shown in blue, losses in gray; length of bar represents the margin of victory/defeat.

1982-83 Pacific Division



Rolling Doubles

During the 1982-83 season, four players scored in double-figures in every game they played, including ROY Terry Cummings, and four others fell one game short. English, who led the NBA in scoring, shot 3-for-16 in a February game in San Diego and finished with six points; Vandeweghe scored seven against the Lakers in early November.⁴

Player	Team	G	PPG	Max	Min	< 15
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar	Los Angeles	79	21.8	38	10	12
Moses Malone	Philadelphia	78	24.5	38	11	4
George Gervin	San Antonio	78	26.2	47	13	4
Terry Cummings	San Diego	70	23.7	39	13	1
Alex English	Denver	81 (of 82)	28.4	45	7	3
Kiki Vandeweghe	Denver	81 (of 82)	26.7	49	6	4
Jamaal Wilkes	Los Angeles	79 (of 80)	19.6	36	5	12
World Free	GS-Cleve	72 (of 73)	23.9	38	5	6

135 Days and 3 Seconds

On November 30, 1982 the Los Angeles Lakers (12-3) were in San Antonio (11-6) for their first meeting of the season with the Spurs.⁵ The defending champion Lakers had won five in a row, but fell behind by nineteen points in the second quarter. They slowly clawed back into the game, never taking a lead, and with three seconds remaining they still trailed 114-113. Los Angeles then fouled the Spurs' Johnny Moore intentionally to try to get the ball back, and took a timeout. During the stoppage in play, Laker broadcaster Chick Hearn loudly told referee Jack Madden—while on the air—that more time should be on the clock.⁶ Madden conferred with the timekeeper at the official scorer's table, and added an additional second. Moore then made both free throws.

Spurs coach Stan Albeck had told his players to immediately foul if Moore made both shots; accordingly, Nixon was fouled with three seconds left. Nixon made the first to pull the Lakers within 116-114, but then decided to employ some subterfuge by faking the second shot before releasing it. "I just wanted to get everyone scrambling to get out of the lane so that it would improve our chances to get the rebound," Nixon said afterwards.⁷ But before he could shoot the ball, Madden blew his whistle and declared a double lane violation since players on both sides were in the free throw lane prior to the shot. Now, a jump ball would determine possession. Abdul-Jabbar won the tap, and the ball ended up in Magic Johnson's hands. Magic then fed Nixon for a 20-foot jumper at the buzzer to tie the game. Magic later made a layup with two seconds remaining in overtime to force a second extra session, and the Lakers won 137-132 in double overtime.

But San Antonio general manager Bob Bass filed a protest, (correctly) claiming that since Nixon never took his second free throw, the violation did not really happen. On December 14, Commissioner Larry O'Brien agreed, and ordered that the last three seconds of the game be replayed when the Lakers next visited the Spurs, which would not happen until April 13, the last week of the season.

By then, both teams had clinched their divisions.⁸ With Nixon back on the foul line with three seconds to play, his attempt to miss the shot on purpose again worked too well. Nixon missed the rim entirely, which automatically gave the ball back to the Spurs. Johnny Moore was intentionally fouled again, and he made one of two free throws to seal the 117-114 victory. San Antonio then won the regularly-scheduled game 114-109.

This incident was the first successful protest by an NBA team since the New Jersey Nets won a protest in November 1978, when they argued that referee Richie Powers had illegally given both Bernard King and coach Kevin Loughery a third technical foul midway through the third quarter of a game against the Philadelphia 76ers when they refused to leave the court. (Powers would be

suspended for five games without pay for the mistakes.) The NBA would not uphold another protest until 2007, when the league agreed that a scorer's error had resulted in Shaquille O'Neal of the Miami Heat being given his sixth foul (disqualifying him from the game against the Atlanta Hawks) when it should have been only his fifth infraction. Unlike the Spurs-Lakers game, these two protests did not change the final outcome.⁹

	Original Box Score ¹⁰					Official Box Score				
	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	PTS	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	PTS
LOS ANGELES										
Landsberger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilkes	10	18	3	3	23	8	15	1	1	17
Abdul-Jabbar	11	26	5	5	27	8	21	5	5	21
Nixon	11	23	3	3	25	10	21	3	4	23
E. Johnson	9	14	6	9	24	6	11	5	6	17
Cooper	1	5	1	2	3	1	5	1	2	3
Worthy	11	17	0	0	22	10	16	0	0	20
McAdoo	6	10	1	1	13	6	9	1	1	13
C. Johnson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rambis	DNP - injured left ankle					0	1	0	0	0
	59	113	19	23	137	49	99	16	19	114
	Rebounds: 43 (Worthy 12); Assists: 38 (Nixon 13)					Rebounds: 39 (Worthy 10); Assists: 30 (Nixon 11)				
SAN ANTONIO										
Banks	9	16	2	2	20	9	16	2	2	20
Mitchell	14	27	1	3	29	12	23	1	3	25
Gilmore	10	16	0	1	20	8	13	0	1	16
Moore	8	13	4	6	20	7	11	5	8	19
Gervin	9	14	0	1	18	9	14	0	1	18
Willoughby	3	6	0	0	6	3	5	0	0	6
Dunleavy	3	12	1	1	9	3	9	1	1	9
Rains	5	7	0	0	10	2	2	0	0	4
Phegley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	66	111	8	14	132	53	93	9	16	117
	3-point goals: Dunleavy 2; Fouled out: Banks, Moore, Gervin; Reb: 56 (Gilmore 16); Ast: 41 (Moore, Dunleavy 9)					3-point goals: Dunleavy 2; Fouled out: Gervin; Reb 48 (Gilmore 15); Ast: 35 (Moore 9)				

	Original Box Score			Official	
	1	2	3	4	F
LA	26	32	28	30	114
SAS	34	35	25	22	117

Next Time: The Boston Celtics – How They Were Built

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Notes

¹ The gap between 1957 and 1971 can be partially explained by the expansion of the NBA. In 1957 there were just two four team divisions; by 1970 the NBA had two *seven* team divisions, which reduced the odds of an entire division finishing above .500. In 1970-71 the NBA added three more teams and split into four divisions. Remarkably, only one of the four teams in the 1970-71 Midwest Division had finished above .500 the year before (the Bucks, who went on to win the 1971 title).

² <http://www.internetsociety.org/internet/what-internet/history-internet/brief-history-internet>

³ See: https://www.basketball-reference.com/leaders/team_pts.html . The Nuggets also allowed 100 or more points in each of these games. During the streak, Denver played ten overtime games, but had exceeded the 100 point mark by the end of regulation in all of them, so the significance of the streak is not tarnished by overtime results. The Nuggets also scored 100 or more points in each of their three playoff games during the streak, for 139 games overall. The second-longest streak belongs to the San Antonio Spurs, who had scored 100 or more points in 129 consecutive regular season games from December 12, 1978 through March 14, 1980. The Basketball Reference Team Streak Finder (<http://www.basketball-reference.com/play-index/tstreak.cgi> , now available at <https://stathead.com/basketball/tstreak.cgi>) was essential to this research, and game results and W-L records were obtained from <http://www.shrpsports.com>.

⁴ The list of the six players is taken from the *1983-84 Philadelphia 76ers Statistical Yearbook*, p21. The figures for PPG, Max, Min, and number of games with fewer than fifteen points are based on the author's research using <http://www.basketball-reference.com> . Abdul-Jabbar would score in double-figures in every regular season game he played for a decade from October 1977 through December 1987; he was held to six points in Game 5 of the 1982 Finals, which broke a string of 420 consecutive games with 10+ points in regular season and playoffs; see Bob Ryan, "Jabbar's Streak Gets Deep-Sixed," *Boston Globe*, June 7, 1982.

⁵ Sources for this section include several wire story reports from December 1982 and April 1983. Also see Dan Shaughnessy, "Pro Basketball: Don't Rule Out Spurs' Protest," *Boston Globe*, December 5, 1982.

⁶ Bruce Newman, "From High Above The Western Sideline," *Sports Illustrated*, April 9, 1984.

⁷ Quoted from December 1, 1982 *Los Angeles Times* in "This Day in Laker History: November 30th," a posting on the *LakerNation.com* website (<http://lakernation.com/this-day-in-laker-history-november-30th/>)

⁸ Team records as of April 13, 1982 before the completion of the suspended game. Note that <http://www.basketball-reference.com> lists these records incorrectly because they assume that the

suspended game from November 30 had already gone into the record books as a win for San Antonio, which is accurate only in hindsight. However, <http://www.shrpsports.com> correctly shows the records for both teams on that day as they were at the time, and lists both the completion of the suspended game and the originally scheduled game as having taken place on April 13.

⁹ The Nets originally lost to the 76ers 137-133 in double-overtime on November 8, 1978; on March 23, 1979 they lost 123-117 in regulation. See "Nets Awarded Protest In Nov. 8 Loss to 76ers," *New York Times*, November 23, 1978, available at: http://www.nba.com/media/njn_protest.pdf. Note that Loughery's second and third technical were assessed after King's third technical, so Loughery was eligible to coach the conclusion of the game. The Heat originally lost 117-111 in overtime on December 19, 2007. They would also lose 114-111 in overtime when the game resumed on March 8, 2008. See "Heat, Hawks to replay final minute of Dec. 19 game later this year," (AP), available at <http://espn.go.com/nba/news/story?id=3192421> .

¹⁰ Three players who played on November 30 were not available for the conclusion of the game. Bill Willoughby was waived by the Spurs on February 10; on April 13, he was playing for the Nets at Madison Square Garden against the Knicks. James Worthy had broken his leg on April 10 and was done for the season, so the Lakers used Kurt Rambis in his place when the game resumed; Rambis had missed the original game with a left ankle injury. Bob McAdoo hurt his right foot in February and did not return until the playoffs. Also note that Ed Rains lost six points as the result of the commissioner's ruling; he had scored in double-figures just eight times prior to this game, and never did again.