

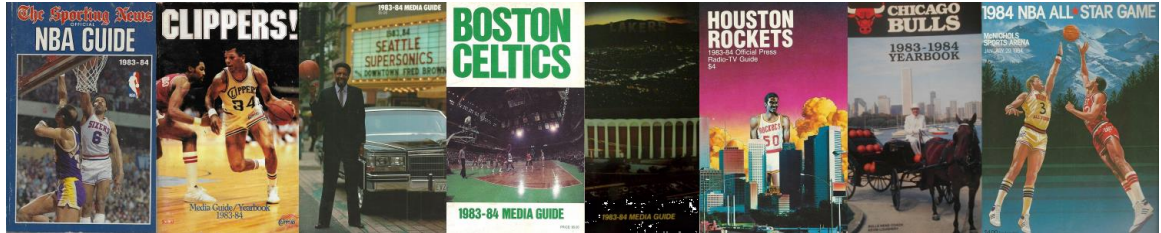


80s Era NBA + 40: Part Fifteen

1983-84 Season Review

By Michael Hamel

1983-84 In Review



Finals: Boston Celtics def. Los Angeles Lakers (4-3)

MVP: Larry Bird
ROY: Ralph Sampson

MVP Voting Top 5: Bird, King, Magic Johnson, Abdul-Jabbar, Thomas

All-NBA First Team
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Larry Bird, Magic Johnson, Bernard King, Isiah Thomas

All-NBA Second Team
Adrian Dantley, Julius Erving, Moses Malone, Sidney Moncrief, Jim Paxson

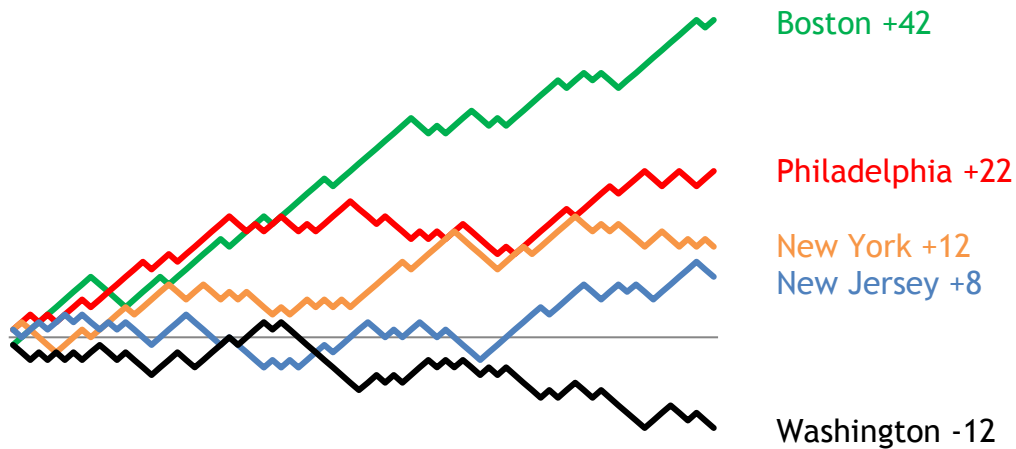
Players of the Week (Month)

- November** Eddie Johnson, Magic Johnson, Kiki Vanderweghe, Mark Aguirre (Magic Johnson)
December Rickey Green, Jeff Ruland, Adrian Dantley, Dan Roundfield (Ruland)
January Isiah Thomas, Purvis Short, Kelly Tripucka, Buck Williams (Aguirre)
February Bernard King, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Larry Bird, Magic Johnson (King)
March Mickey Johnson, Bird, Dantley, Moses Malone (Abdul-Jabbar)
April Thomas, Abdul-Jabbar, Dominique Wilkins

All-Defensive First Team
Maurice Cheeks, Michael Cooper, Bobby Jones, Sidney Moncrief, Tree Rollins

All-Defensive Second Team
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Larry Bird, T.R. Dunn, Dennis Johnson, Dan Roundfield

1983-84 Atlantic Division



10,014,543

NBA Total Attendance
(exceeds 10 million for the first time)

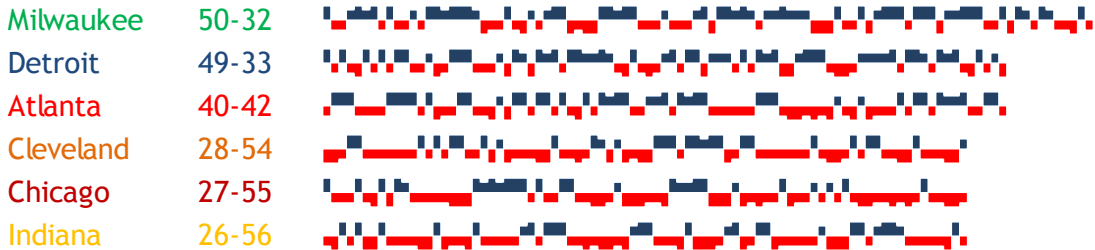
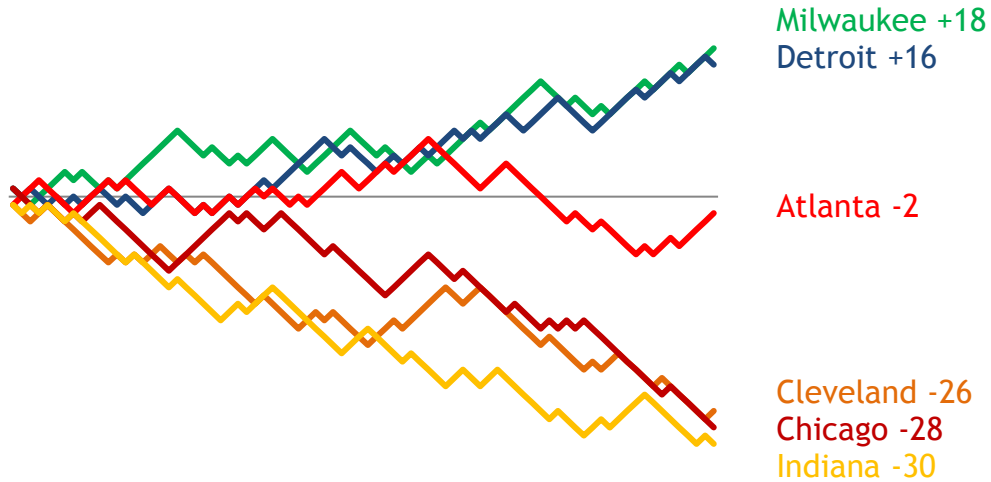
10,620

Average fans per game
(Down slightly from a peak of 11,017 in 1979-80)

652,865

Detroit Pistons' league-leading attendance at the Pontiac Silverdome

1983-84 Central Division



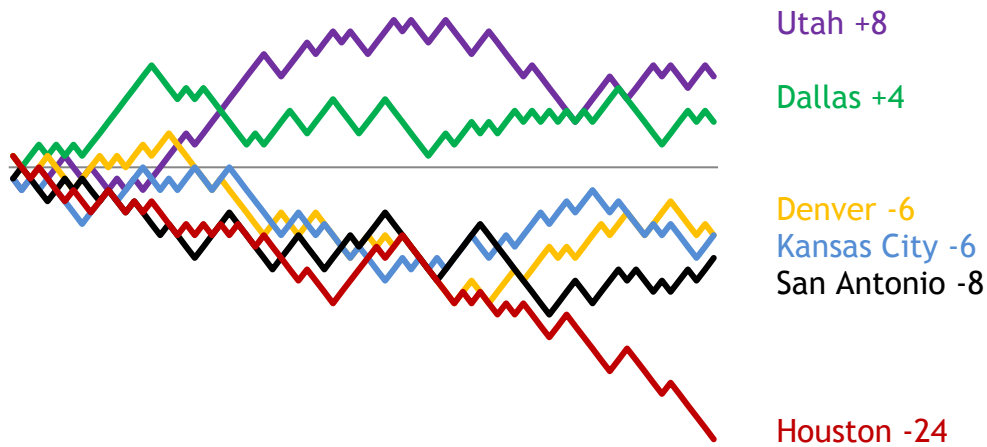
Opening Tip: Clyde Drexler, Ralph Sampson, Byron Scott

Final Buzzer: Tiny Archibald, Elvin Hayes, Bob Lanier, Swen Nater, San Diego

Stuck in the mud

For the third straight season, the Bulls, Cavaliers, and Pacers finished at the bottom of the Central standings. Cleveland did not win more than two games in a row until February, when they finished 9-5 for the month. Chicago started 5-6, then lost eight in a row before a season-high seven-game winning streak raised their record to 12-14. Indiana's longest winning streak was four games in March, but included three wins against their fellow cellar-dwellers.

1983-84 Midwest Division

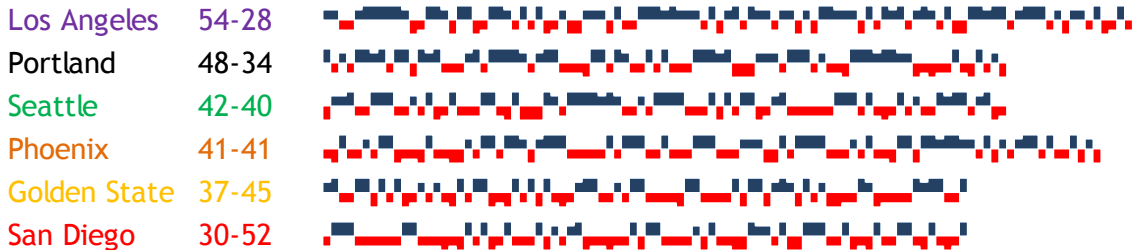
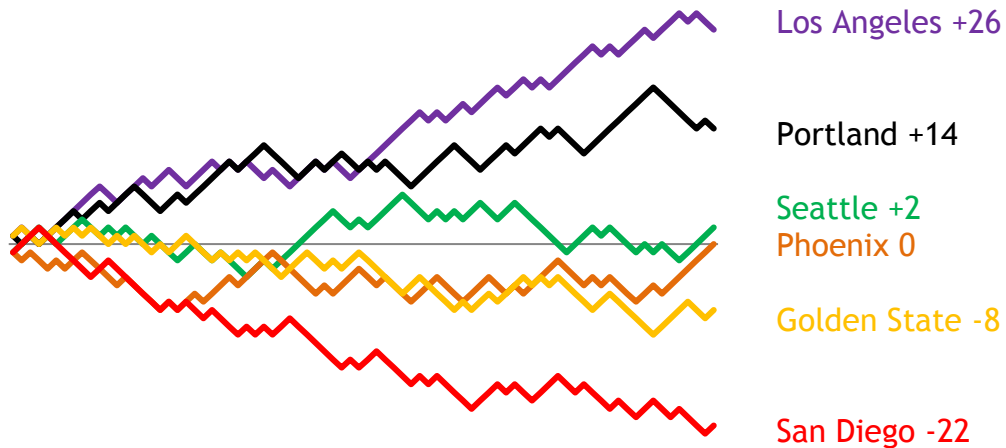


Utah	45-37	
Dallas	43-39	
Denver	38-44	
Kansas City	38-44	
San Antonio	37-45	
Houston	29-53	

Off the Court

October	George Halas, longtime Chicago Bears head coach and a co-founder of the NFL, dies at age 88
November	The post-apocalyptic Nuclear War drama <i>The Day After</i> premieres on ABC television
January	First Macintosh computer released by Apple Computer; Apple's corresponding "1984" advertisement airs during Super Bowl XVIII
March	Rob Reiner's mockumentary film <i>This Is Spinal Tap</i> debuts
May	Soviet Union announces they will boycott the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles

1983-84 Pacific Division



Center of Attention

Ralph Sampson was the consensus #1 overall pick in the 1983 draft, which began a string of five straight years where a “franchise” center was selected at the top of the draft.

4

Number of former #1 overall picks who started games at center for Pacific Division teams (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar 1969, Bill Walton 1974, Mychal Thompson 1978, Joe Barry Carroll 1980)

3

Number of former #1 overall picks who started games at center for the other three divisions—17 teams—combined (Bob Lanier 1970, Kent Benson 1977, Ralph Sampson 1983)

NBA Head Coaches

New coaches at start of season

1983-84

9 (39%)

Former Pro Players

9

Former College Head Coaches

14

Both

2

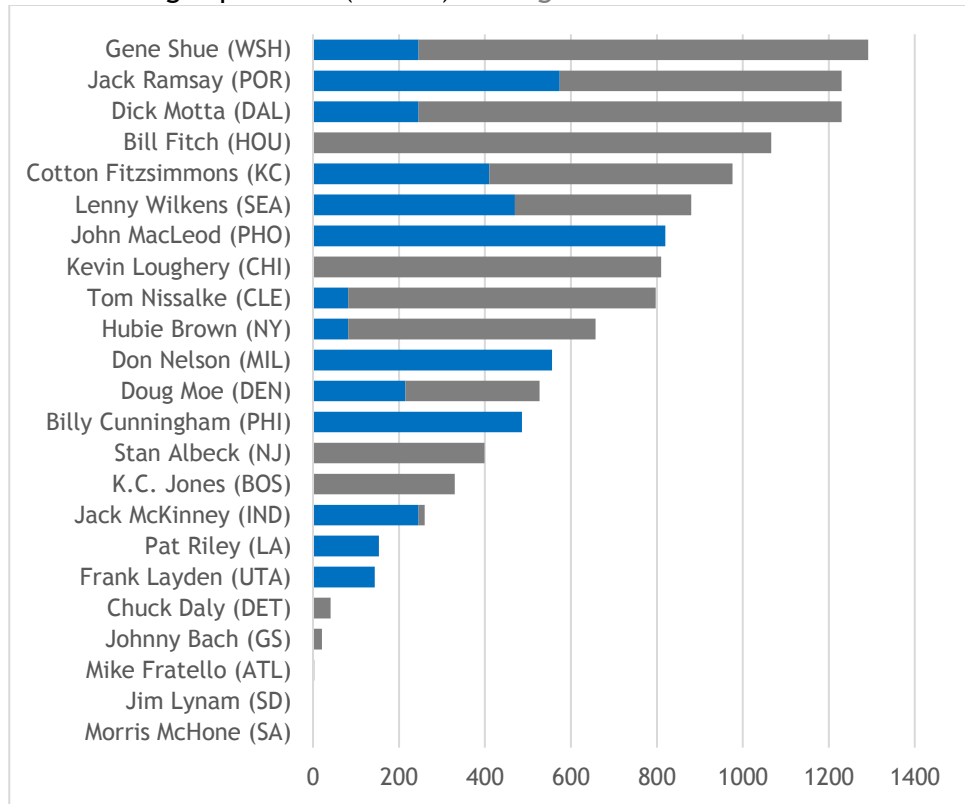
(Bach, Jones)

Fired Mid-Season

1

(McHone)

Pro Coaching Experience (Games) Through 1983 and with 1983-84 Team



New Head Coaches by the Numbers

		Pro Record through 1983*				Final Record for new team					
		W	L	Pct	Playoffs / Titles	W	L	Pct	Playoffs / Titles		
Stan Albeck	NJ	217	182	.544	3 0	87	77	.530	2 0		
Johnny Bach	GS	6	15	.286	0 0	89	157	.362	0 0		
Chuck Daly	DET	9	32	.220	0 0	467	271	.633	9 2		
Bill Fitch	HOU	546	520	.512	7 1	216	194	.527	4 0		
Mike Fratello	ATL	0	3	.000	0 0	324	250	.564	5 0		
K.C. Jones	BOS	185	145	.561	4 0	308	102	.751	5 2		
Kevin Loughery	CHI	387	423	.478	6 2	65	99	.396	1 0		
Jim Lynam	SD	0	0	.000	0 0	52	91	.364	0 0		
Morris McHone	SA	0	0	.000	0 0	11	20	.355	0 0		

*Includes ABA records¹

By the Numbers

Fans' fascination with uniform numbers has been part of watching sports for decades, ever since the New York Yankees put numbers on the backs of their players in 1929 (conveniently arranged by their position in the opening day batting order; Babe Ruth wore number 3). Several years ago, the company Mitchell & Ness produced a graphic showing their selections for the best NBA player that wore a particular uniform number.² An 80s Era edition is a little more difficult, as there are fewer all-time greats to consider, but it was a fascinating exercise. No player wore a number higher than 55 during the 80s Era, so this list is a bit shorter than the Mitchell & Ness version.

#	Name	Main Tm	Comments (specific to 80s Era only)
00	Robert Parish	BOS	7x AS, 3 time champion
0	Orlando Woolridge	CHI	Only player to wear number 0 (during 80s Era)
1	Gus Williams	SEA	2x AS, 2x All-NBA, top 5 assists and steals 2x
2	Alex English	DEN	6x AS, 3x All-NBA, top 5 scoring 5x
3	Dennis Johnson	BOS	4x AS, 8x All-Defense
4	Sidney Moncrief	MIL	5x AS, 2x Def Player of Year, 5x All-NBA and All-Defense
5	Bill Walton	BOS	Best of poor group (John Bagley, Billy Paultz)
6	Julius Erving	PHI	81 MVP, 8x AS, 5x All-NBA
7	Kelly Tripucka	DET	Honorable mention: Tiny Archibald
8	Marques Johnson	MIL	4x AS, 2x All-NBA
9	Lionel Hollins	PHI	Best of mediocre group (Jim Chones, Randy Smith)
10	Maurice Cheeks	PHI	Cheeks (4x AS, 5x All-Def) over Norm Nixon (2x AS, more assists)
11	Isiah Thomas	DET	6x AS, 5x All-NBA, top 5 assists 5x
12	John Stockton	UTA	Rookie in 1984-85
13	Larry Smith	GSW	Best of really mediocre group (Ray Williams, James Silas)
14	Dale Ellis	DAL	3x Top 10 3-point FG
15	Vinnie Johnson	DET	Runner-up: Brad Davis
16	Bob Lanier	MIL	Past his prime, but no other reasonable choice
17	Chris Mullin	GSW	Rookie in 1985-86
18	Dave Cowens	BOS	Still effective in final season (1979-80)... Derek Smith 2 nd choice
19	Cedric Maxwell	LAC	Only player to wear number 19, won 81 Finals MVP wearing #31
20	Micheal Ray Richardson	NJN	4x AS before derailed by drugs
21	Dominique Wilkins	ATL	2s AS, 3x All-NBA, led league PPG 1985-86
22	Rolando Blackman	DAL	3x AS, seriously considered Larry Nance and Andrew Toney
23	Michael Jordan	CHI	You were expecting T.R. Dunn?
24	Moses Malone	HOU	MVP in Houston 82, then wore #2 in Philadelphia and won title
25	Paul Pressey	MIL	3x All-Def... Bill Cartwright would be another reasonable choice
26	Coby Dietrick	CHI	Only player to wear number 26 for more than one season
27	John Johnson	SEA	Weak group, second choice was Caldwell Jones (see #39)
28	Quinn Buckner	BOS	3x All-Def in Milwaukee, better than Sam Smith
29	NONE		
30	Bernard King	NYK	3x AS, 3x All-NBA, unstoppable (32.9 PPG) before knee injury
31	Kurt Rambis	LAL	Already picked Cedric Maxwell for #19
32	Magic Johnson	LAL	There's no 80s Era without Magic
33	Larry Bird	BOS	Sorry Kareem... Bird was the better player during the 80s Era
34	Akeem Olajuwon	HOU	3x AS, 2x All-NBA, 2x All-Defensive
35	Darrell Griffith	UTA	By far the best of a mediocre group

#	Name	Main Tm	Comments (specific to 80s Era only)
36	Paul Silas	SEA	Changed number from 35 to 36 after reaching his 36 th birthday
37	NONE		
38	Dale Wilkinson	LAC	Only player to wear number 38
39	Caldwell Jones	CHI	Only player to wear number 39
40	Bill Laimbeer	DET	4x AS, led league in rebounds 2x, top 5 def rebounds 5x
41	LaSalle Thompson	KCK	Edges out Sam Perkins and Thurl Bailey
42	James Worthy	LAL	2x AS, just reaching peak as 80s Era ended
43	Jack Sikma	SEA	6x AS, 1x All-Defensive, led league def rebounds 2x
44	George Gervin	SAS	6x AS, 4x All-NBA, led league PPG 2x
45	Purvis Short	GSW	Adrian Dantley wore #45 in Detroit (87-89)
46	Jay Murphy	LAC	Only other player to wear 46 was Dale Wilkinson (see #38)
47	NONE		
48	NONE		
49	NONE		
50	Ralph Sampson	HOU	4x AS, 1x All-NBA
51	Reggie King	KCK	Best of poor group
52	Jamaal Wilkes	LAL	2x AS, the <i>other</i> star of Game 6 of 1980 Finals
53	Artis Gilmore	SAS	4x AS
54	Kent Benson	DET	Better player than Mark Landsberger
55	Kiki Vandeweghe	DEN	2x AS, top five PPG 3x

Next Time: The Los Angeles Lakers – How They Were Built

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Notes

¹ All charts were created by the author using data from <http://www.basketball-reference.com>. The nine new coaches for 1983-84 were a high-water mark for the 80s Era. Games “with 1983-84 team” are the number of games coached with the coach’s current team prior to the 1983-84 season; this omits any non-consecutive stints as the team’s head coach, including: Gene Shue’s stint with the Baltimore Bullets 1966-1973; Johnny Bach’s 21 games with the Warriors while head coach Al Attles was recovering from an Achilles tendon injury during the 1979-80 season; and Mike Fratello’s 3 games as interim coach for the Hawks at the end of 1980-81. Fratello and Morris McHone were former pro and college assistant coaches, but were never head coaches in college nor did they play pro basketball. Inspiration for the style of this page came from examples in Gomez-Palacio and Vit, *Graphic Design Referenced*, p37.

² Referenced by: <https://bleacherreport.com/articles/2483621-mitchell-ness-break-down-best-nba-players-by-uniform-number> in 2015 and http://www.espn.com/sportsnation/post/_/id/12992832/best-

[players-nba-history-wear-jersey-number](#). The original article from the Mitchell & Ness site is no longer available.