



Pride and Passion

The 80s Era in the NBA

Michael Hamel

Also by
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Rising Above The Rim: Bill Russell and the Reinvention of Basketball



Acotes Hill Press

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Note: Acotes Hill Press was founded by the author in 2009 as a vehicle and brand name for self-publishing his works.

This book is dedicated to the teachers and mentors
who have inspired me to dream

Contents

<i>PART ONE</i>	<i>PREGAME</i>	<i>1</i>
Introduction	Red, White and Forum Blue	3
Chapter One	Flashback: 1974	12
Chapter Two	Agents of Change	19
<i>PART TWO</i>	<i>THE LEAGUE</i>	<i>28</i>
Chapter Three	The 80s Era in Review	30
Chapter Four	Name Game	96
<i>PART THREE</i>	<i>THE RIVALRIES</i>	<i>146</i>
Chapter Five	Building a Rivalry	148
Chapter Six	Sounds of the Game	174
Chapter Seven	Celtics vs. 76ers	185
Chapter Eight	76ers vs. Lakers	267
Chapter Nine	Lakers vs. Celtics	305
	Acknowledgements	351
	Notes	352
	Bibliography	392

Part One

Pregame



Introduction

Red, White and Forum Blue

Three teams dominated the NBA in the 1980's: the Los Angeles Lakers, Boston Celtics and Philadelphia 76ers. They combined to win nine championships and appeared in the NBA Finals sixteen times during the decade. Their power was at its peak during the first eight years of that period; the three franchises combined to win every championship, and with the exception of the Houston Rockets in 1981 and 1986, no other team reached the Finals. To me, these eight years form the "80s Era": beginning with the Lakers' selection of Magic Johnson in the June 1979 draft, and ending with their defeat of the Celtics in the 1987 Finals.

Inspiration for a book comes from many sources, and authors are not beyond "borrowing" a general concept from a book that is already on the shelves. In 1987 I bought *Forty-Eight Minutes* by Bob Ryan and Terry Pluto; it described a typical "night in the life of the NBA" by using a January 1987 game between the Celtics and the Cleveland Cavaliers as a backdrop. It was not until years later, after reading and enjoying the book several times, that I found a copy of Daniel Okrent's *Nine Innings*, published in 1985, which explained the "anatomy of baseball" by dissecting a June 1982 game between the Milwaukee Brewers and the Baltimore Orioles. Some ideas are worth emulating.

This book also has a high-profile forerunner. Roger Kahn's *The Era: 1947-1957, When the Yankees, the Giants, and the Dodgers Ruled the World*, is also the story of three teams and their dominance of a decade. Our perspectives are much different—Kahn was a New York sportswriter during his Era and thus has intimate knowledge of his subject, while I was a young Celtics fan in Rhode Island during my Era and have had to rely on my childhood memories and the writings of others—but our nostalgia for the events that took place and our interest in writing about them is similar. Kahn opened his book by remarking that the years 1947 to 1957 were "the most important and the most exciting years in the history of sport"; I would argue that the years 1979 to 1987 were the most exciting years in the history

of the NBA, and second in importance only to the Bill Russell Era which transformed the game from a floor-bound, white-dominated sport into the fast-paced, integrated NBA that laid the foundation for the game we still enjoy today. This is not to say that the 80s Era was perfect. The NBA endured some significant problems in this period, including: recreational drug use that ended the careers of many players prematurely, tape delayed television coverage, especially in the early years, and the shaky financial status of many franchises even after Larry Bird and Magic Johnson began suiting up. However, the NBA did set a league attendance record during the 1979-80 season, and CBS reported that ratings were up by fourteen percent—signs that the tide was turning.

One obvious distinction between the Eras is that 1950's baseball the spotlight was focused on three teams that all played in the same city, while in the 80s Era the three kingpins were spread from coast-to-coast. But the level of dominance was similar.

80s Era Lakers, Celtics and 76ers

Season	Champion	Lost in Finals	Lost C. Finals	Lost C. Finals
1979-80	Lakers	76ers	SuperSonics	Celtics
1980-81	Celtics	Rockets	76ers	Kings
1981-82	Lakers	76ers	Spurs	Celtics
1982-83	76ers	Lakers	Bucks	Spurs
1983-84	Celtics	Lakers	Bucks	Suns
1984-85	Lakers	Celtics	Nuggets	76ers
1985-86	Celtics	Rockets	Bucks	Lakers
1986-87	Lakers	Celtics	SuperSonics	Pistons

The Era Yankees, Giants and Dodgers

Season	Champion	Runner-up
1947	Yankees	Dodgers
1948	Indians	Braves
1949	Yankees	Dodgers
1950	Yankees	Phillies
1951	Yankees	Giants

1952	Yankees	Dodgers
1953	Yankees	Dodgers
1954	Giants	Indians
1955	Dodgers	Yankees
1956	Yankees	Dodgers
1957	Braves	Yankees

In the 80s Era, three teams combined to win eight of eight championships and fourteen out of sixteen possible appearances in the Finals. In the 1947-1957 Era, three teams collected nine of eleven championships and seventeen out of twenty-two World Series berths.

The rivalry between the Celtics and Lakers stretches back to 1959, when Boston and Minneapolis squared off in the Finals for the first playoff meeting between the two franchises. Bill Russell and the Celtics swept rookie Elgin Baylor and the Lakers in four games. It was a meeting of old and new dynasties. The Lakers had won an NBL title in 1948 and five NBA championships over the next six years in the pre-shot clock era with George Mikan at center. The Celtics had won their first championship in 1957, lost in the Finals the next year after Russell suffered an ankle injury, and in 1959 began a streak of eight titles in a row. From 1959 through 1969, the Celtics played the Lakers, who moved to Los Angeles in 1960, in the Finals seven times and won every series.

Boston's basketball rivalry with the city of Philadelphia also began in 1959, with the pro debut of Wilt Chamberlain that fall. The competition between Russell and Chamberlain was an instant sensation, and persevered as Wilt traveled between three different franchises. But in 1959 the 76ers did not yet exist. Chamberlain began his career with the Philadelphia *Warriors*, who lost to the Celtics in the Eastern Finals in both 1960 and 1962. The Warriors moved to San Francisco after the latter series, and a year later, Irv Kosloff and Ike Richman bought the Syracuse Nationals and moved them to Philadelphia, where they were rechristened as the 76ers. In January 1965, the 76ers traded for Chamberlain, who made a triumphant return to the city. With Wilt in the fold, Philadelphia reached the Eastern Finals four years in a row, and won the NBA championship in 1967. But Chamberlain wore out his welcome with Sixers management, and in July 1968 he was traded to the Lakers to join Baylor and Jerry West who had been defeated by the Celtics in the Finals the previous spring. The Lakers reached the Finals again that season but met the same fate, a loss to the Celtics, this time in seven games. Overall, the three teams faced each other in the playoffs nine times in the second half of the 1960's, and made the playoffs every year from 1964 through 1969.

1960's The Rivalry

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
Boston	<i>Champions</i>	<i>Champions</i>	<i>Champions</i>	East Finals	<i>Champions</i>	<i>Champions</i>
Los Angeles	First round	Finals	Finals	First round	Finals	Finals
Philadelphia	First round	East Finals	East Finals	<i>Champions</i>	East Finals	First round

Note: Table lists how far team advanced in playoffs; for example, the 1964 Lakers and 76ers both lost in the first round.

Season	BOS	LA	PHI	Playoff Results
1964-65	62-18	49-31	40-40	East Finals: Boston def. Philadelphia 4-3 Finals: Boston def. Los Angeles 4-1
1965-66	54-26	45-35	55-25	East Finals: Boston def. Philadelphia 4-1 Finals: Boston def. Los Angeles 4-3
1966-67	60-21	36-45	68-13	East Finals: Philadelphia def. Boston 4-1
1967-68	54-28	52-30	62-20	East Finals: Boston def. Philadelphia 4-3 Finals: Boston def. Los Angeles 4-2
1968-69	48-34	55-27	55-27	East Semifinals: Boston def. Philadelphia 4-1 Finals: Boston def. Los Angeles 4-3

Success came less frequently for the three franchises in the next decade. Expansion had reduced the odds of all three clubs being good at the same time; in 1965 the NBA was a nine-team circuit, but by 1975 the league had doubled in size to eighteen teams, and the merger with the ABA would then add four more clubs. Still, it is remarkable that during the 1970's all three teams made the playoffs in the same season only once, in 1977. That was also the only year that featured a playoff series between the rivals, as Philadelphia defeated Boston in the Eastern Conference Semifinals in seven games to end the Celtics one-year reign as champions.

1970's The Rivalry (?)

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
BOS			East Finals	East Finals	<i>Champ</i>	East Finals	<i>Champ</i>	Semi-finals		
LA	Finals	West Finals	<i>Champ</i>	Finals	First round			West Finals	First round	Semi-finals
PHI	First round	First round					First round	Finals	East Finals	Semi-finals

Note: Blank indicates team missed playoffs.

In the 80s Era these dormant rivalries re-emerged. By 1984 former players K.C. Jones, Billy Cunningham and Pat Riley were the head coaches, and throughout this period the men in charge of the front office of each team had had long-time associations with their respective

franchises (Red Auerbach, Jerry West/Bill Sharman, Pat Williams), which added some extra spice to their encounters. Not only did the three teams win all eight championships, they each made the playoffs every year, and faced each other in the playoffs ten times, all while playing in a 22- or 23-team league that had enacted new rules, such as free agency, and in 1983, a salary cap, that increasingly favored parity over continued success.

80s Era The Rivalry

Season	BOS	LA	PHI	Playoff Results
1979-80	61-21	60-22	59-23	East Finals: Philadelphia def. Boston 4-1 Finals: Los Angeles def. Philadelphia 4-2
1980-81	62-20	54-28	62-20	East Finals: Boston def. Philadelphia 4-3
1981-82	63-19	57-25	58-24	East Finals: Philadelphia def. Boston 4-3 Finals: Los Angeles def. Philadelphia 4-2
1982-83	56-26	58-24	65-17	Finals: Philadelphia def. Los Angeles 4-0
1983-84	62-20	54-28	52-30	Finals: Boston def. Los Angeles 4-3
1984-85	63-19	62-20	58-24	East Finals: Boston def. Philadelphia 4-1 Finals: Los Angeles def. Boston 4-2
1985-86	67-15	62-20	54-28	
1986-87	59-23	65-17	45-37	Finals: Los Angeles def. Boston 4-2

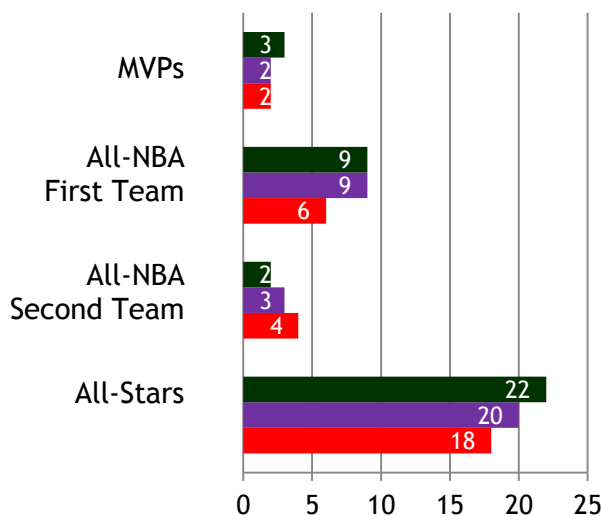
The level of concentration of dominance in the 80s Era was not entirely unprecedented, but consider that in the previous eight years, 1972 through 1979, *seven different teams* won championships, and only the Washington Bullets reached the Finals more than twice. You would have to go back to the Russell Era, when the Celtics won eight championships in a row, and defeated the Lakers five times and the Hawks twice (for a total of fifteen Finals appearances between these three teams), to find another such eight-year span—and that was in an eight- or nine-team league. But the Celtics, Lakers and 76ers did dominate in the 80s Era, and were regularly at the top of the regular season standings as well:

80s Era Regular Season Winning Percentages

Team	W	L	Pct.
Boston Celtics	641	244	.724
Los Angeles Lakers	634	248	.719
Philadelphia 76ers	552	289	.656
Milwaukee Bucks	512	310	.623
Portland Trail Blazers	417	360	.537

Atlanta Hawks	415	368	.530
Denver Nuggets	410	383	.517
Phoenix Suns	402	381	.513
Seattle SuperSonics	398	389	.506
Detroit Pistons	392	402	.494
San Antonio Spurs	382	397	.490
Dallas Mavericks	341	360	.486
Houston Rockets	393	415	.486
Washington Bullets	366	402	.477
Utah Jazz	344	435	.442
New York Knicks	331	431	.434
KC-Sacramento Kings	329	433	.432
Chicago Bulls	329	435	.431
New Jersey Nets	325	434	.428
Golden State Warriors	293	455	.392
Indiana Pacers	290	454	.390
Cleveland Cavaliers	272	475	.364
SD-Los Angeles Clippers	235	503	.318

The Celtics, Lakers and 76ers also dominated individual awards from 1980 through 1987:



Legend: **Boston** / **Los Angeles** / **Philadelphia**

The 80s Era also saw the NBA rise from a chaotic struggle with the ABA in the 1970's, as the subsequent merger and the dawn of (limited) free agency dramatically reshaped the process of building and maintaining a championship team. The arrival of Larry Bird and Magic Johnson, and their fortunate placement with two of the NBA's classic franchises was only one

factor. The growth of cable television, which brought increased coverage and millions of dollars in rights fees, was another. But the style of play, wide-open, fast-break basketball inspired by Magic and the Lakers, and complimented by the half-court, physically intense brand of basketball more commonly seen in the Eastern Conference and throughout the playoffs, created a game that was truly fun to watch. Bird and Magic were the centerpieces, seemingly able to do it all: score, rebound effectively, and ignite the fast break or find the open man in the half-court game with a sizzling pass. The rivalries between these three teams—Celtics, 76ers, Lakers; your favorite team was always listed first when you recited their names—raised the level of play even higher. The 76ers peaked in the first half of the 80s Era, playing the Celtics three years in a row in the Eastern Conference Finals, while the Lakers were dominant throughout, facing the 76ers in three bruising matchups in the Finals followed by three classics against the Celtics.

Bird and Magic also fit seamlessly into their surroundings, just as Julius Erving and Billy Cunningham, and later, the physically imposing Moses Malone, were tailor-made for the blood-red “Sixers” uniforms they wore on the road. The blue collar Bird, the country boy who shied away from publicity, and who focused on his game with a fierce determination befitting the decades of legends who had worn the Celtics simple green-and-white uniforms on the bruised and battered Boston Garden parquet inside a gritty, pre-Depression-era building. And the ever-ebullient Magic, whose name alone drew attention, just as hard-working as Bird (and from a similar blue collar background) but appearing to have a lot more fun, surrounded by movie stars, Laker Girls, and plenty of splashes of purple and gold. The Lakers didn’t just play in an arena, they took the court at the Forum, the *Fabulous* Forum, ringed by eighty Roman columns and filled with so many amenities by then-owner Jack Kent Cooke (who disliked the word “purple” so much that he decreed that the team’s colors were “Forum Blue and Gold”) that the building cost 33 percent more to construct than Philadelphia’s Spectrum, which also opened in 1967. The Garden was surrounded by other buildings, utilitarian train tracks, and elevated highway lanes. The Forum had trees and plentiful parking on a spacious twenty-nine-and-a-half acre site under the Inglewood, California sun. Bird and Magic’s first appearances on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* played off their respective images. In November 1977 Bird was photographed with two Indiana State cheerleaders holding a finger to their mouths making “Shhh!” gestures, quietly announcing that Bird was “College Basketball’s Secret Weapon”; a year later, Magic was shown on the cover making a reverse layup while wearing a large smile and a tuxedo, complete with top hat.

A central debate of the 80s Era was who was better, Bird or Magic? (The 80s equivalent of “Mickey, Willie or the Duke?”) Bird was better at his peak, and within the eight years of the 80s Era was the more decorated athlete, but Magic’s overall resume was better. Part of this can be explained by their age difference. Both entered the NBA in 1979, but Bird had essentially been in college for five years counting his brief stay at Indiana University, while

Magic left Michigan State after his sophomore season. However, Bird suffered from more injuries late in his career, and was never the same after missing most of the 1988-89 season due to double heel spur surgery, along with a congenital back condition that continued to deteriorate in the 1990's. Magic's career was cut short because he contracted HIV. It is ironic that for both players, their off-court lifestyle directly contributed to the demise of their basketball careers. Bird's back trouble began when he spent a day in the summer of 1985 shoveling gravel for drainage for the basketball court in his yard (when he certainly had the means to pay someone else to do it), and his tendency to get into trouble when he was drinking, such as a bar fight earlier that year in Chelsea, Massachusetts during the Eastern Conference Finals, did not help his career performance either. It was rumored that one reason that the Celtics were so willing to trade away Rick Robey was that he was Bird's buddy out on the town. But Robey had been traded in 1983, showing that Bird did not need his favorite running mate to find trouble. Magic found trouble of a more serious nature while enjoying the pleasures that the Los Angeles nightlife offered him.

Ultimately, Magic's five titles (the Lakers won again in 1988) rank him ahead of Bird in most observers' eyes, though this needs to be considered carefully. What if Cedric Maxwell did not tear up his knee in 1985 or Bird avoided injuring his shooting hand in that bar fight? The 1985 Finals could have been won by Boston which would even up the number of championships for Bird and Magic at four apiece. And perhaps that loss, which would have been the Lakers third Finals defeat in a row, would have persuaded Jerry West to break up the team (a year later, after losing to the Rockets, the Lakers explored swapping James Worthy and Byron Scott for Mark Aguirre and Roy Tarpley) which could have derailed Los Angeles's 1987 and 1988 title runs? But on the other hand, the Celtics needed a miracle steal by Gerald Henderson and two overtime victories to defeat the Lakers in 1984. Using championships as the only barometer can allow seemingly random events to become "determining" factors. That said, to me (a lifelong Celtic fan) Magic wins out due to his longevity, his ability on defense—Bird usually guarded the least productive frontcourt player on the opposing team—and the fact that he was much harder for opponents to shutdown than Bird was. Put a good defensive forward with decent quickness on Bird (e.g. Robert Reid, Michael Cooper, Bobby Jones) and you could hope to contain him. Guarding Magic was so much harder because his size (6'8") was unlike anything the league had seen in a true point guard. And perhaps that is the best measuring stick of all. Magic could play three or four different positions both offensively and defensively due to his unique skill set; Bird could not.

A comment about the selection of 1979 through 1987 as the focus of this book. Declaring that the 80s Era began with the arrival of Bird and Magic in the 1979-80 season is easy, but deciding when the 80s Era concluded is more difficult. 1987 fits best for three reasons. First, the Magic-led Lakers and the Bird-led Celtics played their last Finals series against each

other that season; the two franchises would not meet again for the championship until 2008. (It would be up to the Pistons to face the Lakers in 1988 and 1989.) Second, Michael Jordan won his first MVP award in 1988, an early turning point as the “Jordan Era” began to take precedence. Lastly, it is important to acknowledge the achievements of the 76ers in this period; too often the Celtics and Lakers take all of the attention away from the excellent teams in Philadelphia that gave both of them all they could handle. The 76ers faded after head coach Billy Cunningham resigned following their defeat in the Eastern Conference Finals in 1985, and two years later they were barely relevant in Julius Erving’s farewell season. In 1988 they missed the playoffs for the first time in thirteen years; ending the 80s Era with Erving’s retirement is a more fitting conclusion.

Many books have been written about aspects of the 80s Era. Rather than follow Kahn’s model of relating first-hand stories which would be impossible for me to replicate, I drew inspiration from several other books, including *The Football Abstract* by Bob Carroll, Pete Palmer and John Thorn (1989), *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract* (2003), *The Book of Basketball* by Bill Simmons (2009), and even the Rotisserie League Baseball annuals that Daniel Okrent used to edit in the 1980’s. My goal is to take a thematic approach while revisiting the 80s Era, focusing on the Celtics, Lakers and 76ers, while using enough tables and charts to present supplemental information in unique and thought-provoking ways without overwhelming the reader with pages of basic statistics that are already freely available online.

Enjoy.

Chapter One

Flashback: 1974

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar sat in front of his locker before Game 7 of the NBA Finals, preparing to play the Boston Celtics to settle the championship series. He would face an underrated opposing center, a superb all-around forward who could score, pass and rebound, and an opposing coach who had been a member of eight world championship teams as a player. But Abdul-Jabbar had a Hall of Fame point guard on his side, and along with much of his supporting cast, including the head coach, had won a championship before, which all provided an extra measure of confidence.

The year was 1974. Or was it 1984?

One of the great storylines in NBA history is how Kareem Abdul-Jabbar managed to be a dominant playoff center for two different teams over a decade apart. Since the NBA began awarding a Finals MVP award in 1969, several players have won multiple awards, including Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan, who both won their last trophy seven years after their first. But Abdul-Jabbar was the Finals MVP in 1971 and again in 1985, *fourteen* years later. He had forced his way from Milwaukee to Los Angeles by then, and had expanded his collection of regular season MVP awards, now evenly split between his time with the Bucks (1971, 1972 and 1974) and the Lakers (1976, 1977 and 1980). Just his longevity was a rarity: Abdul-Jabbar was one of only eleven players who played in the NBA or ABA in 1974 who was still in the NBA in 1985.

1974 serves as an interesting prologue for our story about the 80s Era because there are so many parallels with 1984 and many entertaining coincidences to consider.

In 1974, the Milwaukee Bucks were finishing up a dominant five year run in which they had averaged 60 wins a season. It was an incredible record for an expansion franchise that won just 27 games in 1968-69, their debut season. Larry Costello, a former six-time All-Star point guard whose playing career had abruptly ended in the fall of 1967 when he ruptured his left Achilles tendon while playing for the Philadelphia 76ers, had been the Bucks only head coach

in their history. Costello had the good fortune to be in position to draft Lew Alcindor in 1969 (he would not change his name until 1971) and the addition of the rookie center transformed the team into title contenders. The Bucks reached the Eastern Finals in 1970, and then, after acquiring Oscar Robertson from the Royals, Milwaukee won the championship in 1971. An additional round of expansion and realignment had placed the Bucks in the Western Conference, and 1971 was the first of four consecutive Midwest Division titles for Milwaukee. In the 1972 playoffs they lost to the eventual champion Lakers, who had won 69 games that season, but the following year they were upset by an inferior Golden State Warriors team in the first round after Robertson ruptured an Achilles tendon, providing extra motivation for the upcoming campaign.

The Boston Celtics had a similar hunger heading into the 1973-74 season. They had won 68 games the previous year, the most in their storied history, and were on the cusp of regaining their perch as NBA champions when John Havlicek suffered a hyperextended shoulder injury in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference Finals against the Knicks. Havlicek missed the next game, returned to score 18 points in Game 5, but struggled through the rest of the series as the Celtics were eliminated in seven games.

Both the Bucks and the Celtics cruised to the 1974 Finals. Milwaukee crushed Los Angeles in the first round, as Jerry West played in just one game (and scored just four points) due to an injury; Lakers backup guard Pat Riley would score 17 points in the finale as the Bucks won in five games. A four-game sweep of Chicago put Milwaukee in the Finals. Boston defeated the Buffalo Braves in a tougher-than-expected six game series, then got revenge on the Knicks with a 4-1 drubbing that included three wins by double-digit margins.

Ten years later, when the Celtics and Lakers met in the Finals, there were similar feelings of unfinished business on both sides. Each team had seen their 1982-83 season end in a disappointing playoff sweep: the Celtics lost to the Bucks in the Eastern Conference Semifinals, while the Lakers lost to the 76ers in the Finals. Boston and Los Angeles both reacted by making a significant trade in the offseason; the Celtics acquired former Finals MVP Dennis Johnson while the Lakers picked up rookie Byron Scott in a trade for former All-Star Norm Nixon. Just as the 1974 Finals matchup was attractive to fans as a battle of Abdul-Jabbar versus a resurgent Celtics team led by their (even younger) undersized center Dave Cowens and the veteran John Havlicek, the 1984 Finals were framed as a rematch of the 1979 NCAA Championship game: Magic vs. Bird.

Comparing the 1974 Celtics with the 1984 Celtics is slightly unfair, given that the 1984 team had won a title just three years earlier, but consider:

The Head Coaches

In 1974 Tom Heinsohn was in his fifth season as the Celtics head coach. Heinsohn had worked as a broadcaster for Celtics games on television after his retirement in 1965, while continuing to rise through the ranks as an insurance man. He was not Auerbach's first choice to replace Bill Russell as coach (Frank Ramsey turned down the position, as he had years earlier when Auerbach himself stepped down from coaching), but eventually accepted Heinsohn's argument that his managerial experience in business offset his lack of coaching experience. Heinsohn relentlessly pushed his fast-break style on his players, while also taking the time to break down films and provide individual instruction to players, all while serving as an advocate for the Celtics organization. But he was also known to pick fights with officials unnecessarily, indulge in over-analysis, and frustrate players with his substitution patterns and his tendency to always get the last word in conversations. Many of these qualities would serve Heinsohn well when he eventually returned to the broadcast booth; in 1984 he was preparing to serve as color commentator for his first NBA Finals for CBS.

K.C. Jones had a much different style and a very different pedigree, aside from the fact that he and Heinsohn had both won eight championship rings as Celtics players (Heinsohn 1957, 59-65; K.C. 1959-66). 1983-84 was his first season as head coach, inheriting a team that was tired of ex-Marine Bill Fitch's heavy-handed style that bordered on the militaristic. Unlike Heinsohn, K.C. Jones had paid his coaching dues: unofficial assistant coach for Bill Russell on the 1967 Celtics, head coach at Brandeis University for three years from 1968-1970, assistant coach at Harvard for one season, assistant to former teammate Bill Sharman with the champion Lakers in 1972, a year as head coach for the ABA's San Diego Conquistadors, then three years with the NBA's Bullets. In 1975 Jones's Bullets defeated Heinsohn's Celtics 4-2 in the Eastern Conference Finals to eliminate the defending champs. But critics charged that assistant Bernie Bickerstaff was the brains of the coaching staff, and Jones was let go a year later. He got back into the league during the 1976-77 season when Don Nelson (a member of the 1974 Celtics and a former teammate of Jones) was elevated by Milwaukee Bucks general manager Wayne Embry to replace Larry Costello as head coach. Nelson needed an assistant, so Jones was hired, but when the arrangement did not work out, Jones was again looking for a new job.

Jones returned to Boston when another former teammate, Satch Sanders, was tapped to replace Tom Heinsohn midway through the 1977-78 season. He stayed on as an assistant when Sanders was replaced a year later by Cowens in a player-coach role, and then endured a difficult relationship with Bill Fitch. Fitch largely ignored him, especially during the 1979-80 season when Fitch's long-time assistant Jimmy Rodgers remained behind in Cleveland as player personnel director for a year before rejoining Fitch in Boston.

Heinsohn had been known as a smart technician—though assistant coach John Killilea’s scouting reports were essential for game planning—while K.C. Jones would never be given credit for strategy, as Rodgers would generally be known as the “X-and-O man” during his time in Boston. Heinsohn’s public persona was outgoing and talkative; K.C. Jones was quiet and reserved, surprising people when he occasionally dropped into a local nightclub to sing with a jazz band. Heinsohn was more likely to draw technical fouls for berating officials, but K.C. Jones could be just as fiery off the court; when Fitch once complained that Jones had missed a pre-draft meeting to which he had never been invited, the ensuing argument escalated until Jones had to be physically restrained.

The Players

1974 Celtics in the Hall of Fame: Dave Cowens, John Havlicek

1984 Celtics in the Hall of Fame: Larry Bird, Dennis Johnson, Kevin McHale, Robert Parish

A comparison of the two rosters starts with these players, the greatest Celtics of the post-Russell Era. Cowens had won the 1973 MVP, finished a distant fourth in the 1974 voting behind Abdul-Jabbar (Havlicek was ninth) and had become surprisingly effective against him despite (at least) a five-inch height disadvantage. Red Auerbach later wrote that “Cowens became one of the great competitors of all time. He didn’t just play the game, he *attacked* it.” And he loved to attack Abdul-Jabbar, driving to the basket to take advantage of his speed or remaining outside and shooting jumpers as Abdul-Jabbar preferred to linger closer to the basket. Jabbar had torched the Celtics as a rookie the year before Cowens’s arrival, and over the next two seasons Jabbar frequently had the upper hand, scoring 40 or more points in eight of the ten games between the teams, including three 50-point efforts. But over the next two seasons Jabbar’s high against the Celtics was 37 points, despite posting season averages that were similar to the previous two years, and Cowens would even outscore him at times. In Game 7 of the 1974 Finals, Jabbar scored 26 points and added 13 rebounds; Cowens countered with 28 points and 14 rebounds.

John Havlicek and Larry Bird were both First Team All-NBA selections in their respective seasons, but Bird earned his first MVP award in 1984 after three consecutive second-place finishes, an award that Havlicek would never win. Havlicek would end his career as the Celtics all-time leading scorer, with a longer resume of high-caliber seasons, but in 1984 Bird was regularly discussed as the best player in the game and possibly one of the best of all time.

The supporting casts were superb, though the 1974 squad suffers in comparison due to having played in a period where the ABA was arguably at its strongest and had watered down the NBA by taking away several star players. In 1984 McHale came off the bench but played more minutes than starter Cedric Maxwell, while Parish was selected to his fourth straight

All-Star team that season. The backcourt of Johnson and Gerald Henderson was maligned for poor shooting on a team whose frontcourt averaged over seventy-three points a game, while their defense went largely unnoticed beyond Johnson's NBA All-Defensive Second Team nod. Similarly, while Jo Jo White ran the break and was the Celtics third-leading scorer in 1974, it was Don Chaney's defense and Paul Silas's rebounding that helped ignite the Boston offense. Both squads also featured fan favorites who played little but were nonetheless memorable. In 1974 it was Hank Finkel, a thin seven-foot center whose attempt to replace Bill Russell led to universal mocking by fans five years earlier, but now his hard work as a backup ennobled him, earning him ovations from the Garden crowd despite pedestrian statistics (fewer than three points and three rebounds a game). Ten years later, it was the towel-waving M.L. Carr, who could still play defense and inject energy (or annoyance, depending on your point of view) on the court, but whose career was on the downslide. Carr had been the Celtics sixth man in 1980, and a starter for part of the 1982 campaign, but was limited to a handful of minutes a night by the start of the 1984 playoffs.

The Finals

A few coincidences stand out: The 1974 and 1984 Finals both went seven games, both were tied after four games (with the road team winning games one and four), and both featured a pair of overtime games won by the same team (Bucks in 1974, Celtics in 1984). In each series, the Celtics played a team with an ex-Celtic in a prominent front-office role on the opposing side: Milwaukee general manager Wayne Embry and Los Angeles team president Bill Sharman. In 1974 the Celtics defeated the Bucks and Abdul-Jabbar in the Finals; in 1984 the Celtics also defeated the Bucks, and Abdul-Jabbar in the Finals, but in separate series, avenging their sweep at the hands of Milwaukee the year before by disposing of them in five games in the Eastern Conference Finals.

Television coverage of the two series was also quite similar. Both were broadcast live in their entirety by CBS, including three Sunday afternoon games and four weeknight games in prime time. The 1974 series earned a 13.5 rating, higher than the 12.1 posted in 1984, but nearly double the ratings in the late 1970's and early 1980's that prompted CBS to broadcast a significant number of Finals and playoffs games on tape delay. (The arrival of Bird and Magic did not initially reverse the tape delay trend. CBS continued the practice when the NBA decided to move up the start of the 1979-80 and 1980-81 seasons, which resulted in the Finals being played in early-to-mid-May, right in the middle of the May sweeps period that was critical for setting advertising rates based on network ratings. The NBA then changed course and pushed back their opening night; by 1984, the Finals were no longer shown on tape delay.)

But most of all, the two series were immediately considered classics and have remained highly ranked by basketball experts. Only once in either series did a team win back-to-back games (1984 Celtics, Games 4 and 5). In 1974, even with starting shooting guard Lucius Allen out due to a freak knee injury suffered in March when he slipped on a warmup jacket while chasing a ball that had gone out of bounds, the Bucks were slight favorites; the Lakers were favored in 1984. The most remembered play of the 1984 series is Kevin McHale's clothesline of Kurt Rambis in Los Angeles in Game 4, won by Boston to tie the series. The signature moment of the 1974 series was a sky hook by Abdul-Jabbar in double-overtime in Game 6, also on the road, at the Garden, with three seconds left to give Milwaukee a 102-101 lead; the Bucks held on to tie *that* series. Pat Summerall, calling the game for CBS, said on the air that it was the "greatest sporting event he had ever seen"; perhaps he was exaggerating in the heat of the moment, but since Summerall had *played* in the legendary 1958 NFL Championship game, he knew greatness when he saw it.

Both series were ultimately Boston victories: in 1984, the series ended with a 111-102 Celtics win at home, while in 1974, they won it on the road, 102-87. The 1974 championship was redemption for Red Auerbach, allowing him to remove the caveat "he hasn't won a title without Russell" from his resume, and in his words, served as a "turning point" in Celtics history. Celtics fans who had grown accustomed to winning the title nearly every year during the 1960's, only to see the team humbled in the early 1970's after Russell's retirement, now knew the pleasure of watching a rebuilt team grow and recapture the crown. A loss in the 1974 finals might have precipitated Auerbach's departure later in the 1970's as the Celtics unstable ownership situation led to one unreliable custodian of the franchise after another. But that title, along with the subsequent 1976 banner, would cement Auerbach's reputation as a winner. Auerbach was still with the Celtics in 1984, accepting another championship trophy, an accomplishment that was especially rewarding for K.C. Jones and yet another new ownership group that had bought the team the previous offseason.

As noted earlier, the NBA had a challenger to contend with in 1974 that was long gone by 1984. Two days before the Bucks met the Celtics in Milwaukee for Game 7 of the 1974 Finals, Julius Erving, the reigning ABA MVP, led the New York Nets to their first ABA championship with a 111-100 win over the Utah Stars, scoring 20 points and grabbing 16 rebounds. Unfortunately, not many fans across the country saw his exploits—he averaged 27.5 points per game in the series—because only Game 2 was nationally televised, and that Saturday contest was blacked out in New York. It was an example of one of the challenges that the ABA faced. Players, coaches and referees who jumped to the ABA knew they would be working in obscurity, but were lured by promises of higher pay, or, in the case of Kevin Loughery, the coach of the Nets, a better career opportunity. Loughery had suffered a major knee injury while playing for the 76ers during their wretched 9-73 season in 1972-73. When

owner Irv Kosloff fired head coach Roy Rubin after a 4-47 start, he asked Loughery to coach the team the rest of the season. Kosloff was interested in keeping Loughery on for the 1973-74 season, but as a player-coach. Loughery felt that coaching would be a full time job, and instead took the Nets offer.

A decade later, with the NBA-ABA merger in the past, limited free agency providing increased rights for players, and a single 23-team league that was gaining financial stability with new broadcast and cable television deals, the NBA was ready to become a true “major” league. And it was in this environment that the NBA would flourish in the 80s Era.

Chapter Two

Agents of Change

The NBA-ABA conflict of the 1970's allowed the NBA Players Association to gain power, and caused owners to lose their iron grip over the rights of players. Increased freedom for players meant that teams needed to be more creative to maintain a good team, but also provided more options for turning around a losing club. The career paths of the five greatest players of the 80s Era—Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Larry Bird, Julius Erving, Magic Johnson and Moses Malone—were all heavily influenced by the changing relationship between players and management.

On January 15, 1967 the Los Angeles Lakers visited Detroit and defeated the Pistons 127-116 in Cobo Arena, as Jerry West outscored rookie Dave Bing 39 to 31. With the victory, the Lakers moved into a third-place tie with the Pistons in the Western Division; the two teams shared unimpressive 18-27 records, ten-and-a-half games behind the first place San Francisco Warriors. For the Pistons this was actually an improvement over recent seasons, but for the Lakers, it represented a swift collapse. The previous spring, Los Angeles had pushed the Boston Celtics to seven games in the NBA Finals before succumbing. Now, after West and Elgin Baylor had both missed time earlier in the season with injuries, the Lakers continued weakness at center threatened to ruin this campaign.

In 1966 the Lakers had used Leroy Ellis, Darrall Imhoff and Gene Wiley at center. Ellis averaged nearly a double-double (12 points, 9 rebounds), but injuries limited Wiley to sixty-seven games in the regular season and just five minutes in the playoffs. Wiley retired after the season, and General Manager Lou Mohs and coach Fred Schaus decided to trade Ellis to Baltimore for Jim Barnes, a player with better statistics but already gaining a reputation as a habitual underachiever. Imhoff became the starter, but the game against the Pistons was an example of why the Lakers were in trouble at the center position. Despite facing a struggling Ray Scott (who scored just five points, the fourth time in five games he had been held to single

digits) and journeymen Joe Strawder and Reggie Harding, both Imhoff and Barnes had fouled out.

The next day, the Lakers believed they had found a solution by trading 6'7" forward Rudy LaRusso, who was just 29 years old but considered "only a couple of years away from retirement" by Schaus. It was a three-team deal: LaRusso was sent to the Baltimore Bullets, who then flipped him to the Pistons for Scott. Meanwhile, Baltimore sent seven-footer Mel Counts to the Lakers. Counts was not known as a tough defender, but the Lakers were happy to add some size.

However, LaRusso refused to accept the trade and retired, citing his family and business ties in Los Angeles. Lakers owner Jack Kent Cooke initially suspended LaRusso, and neither Counts nor Scott began to play for their new teams. Cooke then tried to rescind the trade, but during a five hour NBA Board of Governors' meeting on January 26, the league ruled that the trade was valid and that LaRusso was a Piston. LaRusso threatened to sue the NBA, but there was little he could do. The Pistons now owned his rights, and the league's option clause meant that Detroit owned those rights for at least another year. By March, the Board of Governors awarded the Pistons the Lakers first-round pick in the 1967 draft as compensation for LaRusso's refusal to report.

The LaRusso case showed the power that the NBA owners, and Commissioner Walter Kennedy, had over their players. There had always been exceptions, superstars like Wilt Chamberlain, who could force their way to new teams, but the average player had limited rights. Now this relationship was about to change. When *The Sporting News* reported on the LaRusso trade in February, they placed the story directly below a larger article entitled "New Pro Cage Loop Warms Up in 10 Cities" which heralded the birth of the American Basketball Association. In June, San Francisco Warriors star forward Rick Barry signed with the ABA's Oakland Oaks, and while a judge subsequently ruled that Barry had to sit out the 1967-68 season until his option clause with San Francisco expired, the Warriors still needed a new forward. In August, Franklin Mieuli found one: Rudy LaRusso, whom he purchased from the Pistons and signed to a new contract. LaRusso had sat out half a season, but he ended up playing in California like he wanted, winning an early victory for player's rights.

This incident was just a prelude to the chaos that was to come. From its inception, the ABA aggressively pursued the nation's top college prospects, with mixed results. 1969 was no different. In the spring, Commissioner George Mikan and New York Nets owner Arthur Brown made a hard push to sign UCLA's Lew Alcindor, the most highly discussed collegian in years. The league launched what they called "Operation Kingfish" and thoroughly investigated the young star. Mike Storen was later quoted in the book *Loose Balls* as saying: "We studied his activities at UCLA, talked to people from UCLA and people he knew from New York. We even hired a private detective to investigate him in California." It became clear that Alcindor was a

serious young man who would make a decision and stick to it; he and representatives were not interested in a bidding war. Alcindor, a native New Yorker, wanted to play in New York, and had just seen Jets quarterback Joe Namath win a title—and the hearts of millions of fans—for a team in an upstart league. The negotiation process would be simple. The Nets and the Milwaukee Bucks, who had the first pick in the NBA draft, would each submit one offer and Alcindor would make a decision. But Mikan and Brown stunned their ABA colleagues by declining to offer a \$1 million bonus that the league's owners had agreed to; Mikan and Brown wrongly assumed, despite the announced ground rules, that the bonus could be put forth as part of a second round of negotiations. Alcindor chose to accept the Bucks five-year, \$1.4 million contract offer instead.

The ABA was more successful in its pursuit of Spencer Haywood, who challenged the long-standing rules that prohibited college underclassmen from turning pro. Haywood had led the United States Olympic team to a Gold Medal in 1968 despite a boycott by several black stars, including Alcindor. Now, after a spectacular sophomore year (32 points, 22 rebounds per game) at the University of Detroit, the Denver Rockets signed him to a three-year, \$450,000 contract in 1969. To justify the move, the ABA invented a new term—"Hardship Case"—to describe players talented enough to play pro ball but too poor to wait for a pro contract. However, a year later, Haywood jumped to the NBA, signing with the Seattle SuperSonics. This triggered a lawsuit by the NBA against Seattle due to their violation of the so-called "four-year rule" which prohibited signing underclassmen. The rule was struck down in the courts in March 1971 just days before that year's draft. In a bizarre footnote, the Buffalo Braves then selected Haywood in the second round, despite the fact that Haywood had played for Seattle in 1970-71 and had a valid long-term contract. Ultimately, Haywood would remain with the SuperSonics.

The Haywood case was fresh in everyone's minds when Julius Erving completed his junior season at the University of Massachusetts in 1971. Erving was not as widely heralded, but had piqued the interest of agent Steve Arnold, who had been employed briefly by the ABA. The Nets Lou Carnesecca had turned down an earlier overture from Erving's camp, but Arnold found a willing employer in Virginia Squires' owner Earl Foreman, who had bought the Oakland Oaks two years earlier and moved the club to Washington, D.C., and then to Virginia as a "regional franchise" in search of fans and profits. On April 4, Arnold brokered a meeting in Philadelphia between the Squires, represented by Foreman, General Manager Johnny Kerr, and head coach Al Bianchi, and Erving, who was accompanied by agent Bob Woolf and his former high school coach Ray Wilson. Woolf's intention was to convince Erving to stay in school since he had agreed to attend the meeting at the urging of Massachusetts head coach Jack Leaman, and because Woolf believed in the four-year rule. As it became clear during the daylong negotiations that Erving wanted to sign with Virginia, Woolf arranged

phone calls to Erving's mother Callie and to NBA Commissioner Walter Kennedy. But Callie deferred to her son's wishes, and Kennedy's pitch—stay in school and an Alcindor-like bidding process between the two leagues would develop—failed to sway him. Woolf later wrote that “[a]t that time it was scandalous to be involved in any deal in which a young player jumped from his college team to the pros,” but once Erving had made up his mind, Woolf was determined to get him a good contract. The next morning, Erving signed a four-year deal worth \$500,000.

Erving averaged 27 points and 15 rebounds as a rookie, and then, knowing that the NBA would now consider him eligible since his college class had graduated, hired Irwin Wiener as his new agent and demanded a new contract with less deferred money. The result was a year of legal maneuvers which pitted Erving against the Squires, and the NBA against two of its own teams. The day before the 1972 NBA draft, the Atlanta Hawks signed Erving to a five-year contract that included a \$250,000 signing bonus up front (half of what the Squires' mostly back-loaded deal would eventually pay him). However, the Hawks did not have a first-round pick that year, while the Bucks had *two*; general manager Wayne Embry, who had played one-on-one games against Erving during a summer camp, eagerly spent his second choice, at number eleven, on him. While NBA observers salivated at the possibility of Erving joining Lew Alcindor in Milwaukee or Pete Maravich in Atlanta, Foreman and Erving battled in court.

Initially, a Georgia Superior court judge ruled in Erving's favor, agreeing with his dubious claim that Steve Arnold had negotiated his Squires' contract and that Arnold had a conflict of interest with the ABA. Foreman then appealed to Federal District Court. Meanwhile, the Bucks and Hawks fought over Erving's NBA rights. On September 20, 1972, the NBA Board of Governors awarded Erving to the Bucks, but Erving remained with the Hawks and played in two exhibition games against the ABA's Kentucky Colonels on September 23 and 24 while Atlanta's lawyers prepared an anti-trust suit against Kennedy and the NBA. Kennedy then fined the Hawks \$50,000 for illegally using Erving in the two exhibition games.

Federal District Court Judge Edward Neaher rejected Erving's claims against the Squires, and on October 19 Erving and Foreman announced that, despite an on-going appeal, Erving would return to the Squires the next night against the New York Nets after missing the team's first four games. They didn't have to wait long for a decision. On October 24, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals sided with Foreman; Erving was declared the property of the Squires and had to submit to arbitration over his contract. “I admired Julius's attitude,” Foreman later said. “In effect, he lost. But he was a man about it... Julius had a great second year for us while his case went to arbitration. The off-the-court stuff never bothered him. He was classy in every way.”

The arbitration case stretched into the summer of 1972, and when Bob Woolf testified that he, not Steve Arnold, had negotiated Erving's contact with the Squires, the case fell apart.

Foreman had won, but desperate for cash, he traded Erving to the Nets on August 1. Roy Boe agreed to give Foreman \$1 million plus George Carter in exchange for the ABA's most desirable player and Willie Sojourner. Boe then gave Erving a new five-year, \$2 million contract, and gave the Hawks the \$250,000 they needed to pay off Erving's signing bonus. Meanwhile, it took nearly three years to settle the dispute between the Hawks and the Bucks. On June 5, 1975, the NBA Board of Governors and new commissioner Larry O'Brien ordered the Hawks to trade two 1976 second-round picks to the Bucks, and pay \$400,000 in fines—\$250,000 to the league and \$150,000 to the Bucks. Milwaukee maintained Erving's NBA rights, but a year later, as part of the NBA-ABA merger, those rights transferred to the Nets.

As more underclassmen were signed by the ABA, it was natural that signing a high school player would be the next step. In 1974, the Utah Stars drafted Moses Malone, a 6'10" center from Petersburg, Virginia. Four months later, after extensive lobbying efforts by assistant coach Larry Creger, the Stars signed Malone to a \$3 million contract on the same week that he was scheduled to begin classes at the University of Maryland, and two days before the September 1 deadline established by the ABA to sign draftees. Had the deadline passed, the Stars would have been unable to sign Malone until after his freshman season in college. Malone's high school stats were eye-popping (39 points, 26 rebounds and 12 blocks a game), but many wondered if a skinny 19-year-old could play professional basketball. Malone responded by averaging 18 points and 14 rebounds as a rookie, but then broke his right foot during training camp the following October. Before he could recover, the Stars folded, and Malone was sold to the Spirits of St. Louis on December 2.

Meanwhile, the war between the NBA and ABA had reached a new level of insanity. The NBA was convinced that the ongoing "Oscar Robertson suit," which had been filed by the NBA Players Association to block a merger of the two leagues, would be settled soon and that a merger would follow. It was expected that the settlement would include the legalization of drafting underclassmen. So in December 1975, the NBA decided to hold a "supplemental draft" for the five underclassmen who were playing in the ABA but had not yet been drafted by the NBA. The draft was originally scheduled for December 9, but was delayed when the ABA Players Association filed a request for a temporary injunction. The ABAPA's rationale was that the draft would further destabilize the ABA by providing an incentive to the drafted players to switch leagues, and that those players deserved to be free agents if a merger agreement excluded their particular team. But a Manhattan Federal Court judge eventually sided with the NBA, and the draft was held on December 30. Each NBA team that selected a player would be required to surrender a draft pick in the corresponding round in the upcoming college draft.

1975 NBA Supplemental Draft

Round	Player	ABA Team	Drafted by NBA Team
1	Moses Malone	St. Louis	New Orleans
1	Mark Olberding	San Antonio	Los Angeles
2	Mel Bennett	Virginia	Philadelphia
3	Skip Wise	San Antonio	Golden State
4	Charlie Jordan	Indiana	Buffalo

The New Orleans Jazz selected Malone, surrendering their first round pick in the 1977 college draft, since they had already traded their 1976 first-rounder to Phoenix in a deal for Neal Walk back in September. With the young star still injured, Malone's attorney Lee Fentress began to negotiate with the Jazz, but by early January those talks ended unsuccessfully.

Meanwhile, Malone returned to the Spirits and had a solid season for St. Louis as the ABA staggered towards a merger with the NBA after the Oscar Robertson suit was settled in February 1976. Four months later, the merger became official during meetings in Hyannis, Massachusetts. While four ABA teams were accepted into the NBA, players from the rejected franchises in St. Louis, Virginia and Kentucky were dumped into a dispersal draft. The NBA teams would draft in the same order as in the college draft, and ABA players with guaranteed contracts would still get paid, either by their new NBA team, or by their former ABA clubs. But the Jazz had drafted Malone in the supplemental draft, and were still attempting to sign him. "If we can come to a dollar figure together, and we're not that far apart, I'm going to sign Moses," Sheldon Beychock of the Jazz said. "I don't think we are the only team that will sign players before the draft." But Commissioner Larry O'Brien abruptly ended those negotiations a few days later by saying that Malone was already in the dispersal draft pool as a result of the merger agreement, and restored the draft choice that the Jazz had surrendered.

The NBA then assigned price tags to the top players in the draft pool, such as Malone (\$350,000) and Artis Gilmore (\$1.1 million), to raise money for the league, partly to pay off the owners of the former Kentucky Colonels and Spirits of St. Louis who had been shutout of the merger. Gilmore went first, to the Bulls, followed by Maurice Lucas, Ron Boone and Marvin Barnes. Malone was selected fifth by the Portland Trail Blazers, but the Blazers already had Bill Walton and a handful of other talented inside players, including Lucas, who Portland had selected using a pick obtained from Atlanta for Geoff Petrie and Steve Hawes. Therefore, they were willing to trade Malone; as Blazers executive Harry Glickman told Barry McDermott of *Sports Illustrated* in August, "We're open for a deal. We'd be idiots if we weren't." During training camp that fall Blazers head coach Jack Ramsay decided that Malone would not fit into the team's running style and Glickman dealt him to Buffalo for their 1978 first-round pick and \$232,000 in cash. Portland went on to win the NBA title that year, led by Walton and Lucas, but their return from the trade was suspect from the beginning; six days

after acquiring him, the Braves sent Malone to the Houston Rockets for *two* first round picks, one in 1977 and one in 1978.

Trading of first-round picks used to be rare. The practice was originally against NBA rules, and just three picks were traded from 1950 through 1969. From 1970 through 1976, the usage of picks in trades accelerated and twenty-seven of them were dealt. Now, after the NBA-ABA merger, first-round picks became active commodities; in 1978 alone sixteen of the twenty-two picks changed hands, in twenty-three different transactions.

Year	Selections	Traded	Transactions
1977	22	11	16
1978	22	16	23
1979	22	15	21
1980	23	11	16
1981	23	11	17

This spike was partly due to a side effect of the settlement of the Robertson suit. The option clause was now dead (teams no longer had an automatic one-year option on a player after his contract expired) and limited free agency was instituted, but there was a big catch: in order to get the merger deal done, NBA Players Association head Jeff Mullins allowed the owners a four-year period where teams would be compensated if they lost a free agent. The compensation could be negotiated between the two teams or decided by the commissioner. Suddenly draft picks became important bargaining chips for free agents; thirteen of the selections traded from 1977 through 1980 were part of free agent compensation deals.

Four of those picks were exchanged as part of a fateful trade between the New Orleans Jazz and the Los Angeles Lakers in the summer of 1976. On July 19 the Jazz signed veteran Gail Goodrich from the Lakers. New Orleans, about to enter just their third year of existence, was improving on the basketball court (38-44 in 1975-76) but still suffering financially, despite having the sixth-best attendance in the league. Therefore, the Jazz refused to include any cash as compensation. Instead, they sent their 1977 and 1979 first-round picks and a 1980 second rounder to the Lakers; Los Angeles threw in a 1977 second-round pick and agreed to swap first rounders in 1978. Incredibly, the Lakers then offered the picks back to the Jazz for Sidney Wicks, which Utah declined to accept. Most of the selections ended up being forgettable, but two would help change basketball history.

The NBA was continuing to tweak their draft rules. For years, the league had permitted the drafting of players who were completing their junior year if their original college class was graduating; for example, the Minneapolis Lakers took future Celtics Hall-of-Famer Sam Jones in 1956 on that basis. But if the player went back to school, the team lost his rights, which is what happened with Jones (Boston would then select him in 1957).

In 1976, as part of the settlement of the Robertson suit, the rule was changed. A team that drafted a "junior-eligible" would now own the player's rights until the following year's draft, even if the player went back and played another year of college ball. In Boston, Red Auerbach and Jan Volk knew the rule, and knew who they wanted to select: Larry Bird, a junior at Indiana State. The Celtics were suffering through one of their worst seasons of Auerbach's tenure in Boston, just two years after winning their thirteenth championship. But in January, Auerbach pulled off a deal that significantly impacted the future of the franchise. Unhappy with Charlie Scott, Red shipped him off to the Lakers for Kermit Washington (recently suspended for nearly killing Houston's Rudy Tomjanovich with a vicious punch to the head during an on-court brawl), former Celtic Don Chaney, and the 1978 first-round pick that Los Angeles had acquired from the Jazz. When the season ended, the Celtics held both the sixth (their own) and eighth picks in the first round.

Bird was determined to return to Indiana State for his senior season and obtain a degree. Head coach Slick Leonard of the Indiana Pacers, who owned the first pick in the draft, did his best to change Bird's mind, but was unsuccessful. The Pacers then dealt their pick the day before the draft to the Portland Trail Blazers for the third selection (acquired in the Malone trade) and guard Johnny Davis. Portland general manager Stu Inman had already failed to convince Bird to leave school early, and the Trail Blazers, who had failed to repeat as champions in 1977-78 when Bill Walton played just 58 games due to foot injuries, were looking for immediate help. Portland also had the seventh pick as a result of a trade with the SuperSonics back in November that sent Wally Walker to Seattle in exchange for the Detroit Pistons first-round pick. The Blazers were prepared to use their later selection to take Bird. "The original thought process," Jan Volk later told *Boston Globe* reporter Peter May, "was to get the better available player at six and go for Larry at eight. But we began to get a real strong feeling that Portland would take Bird with the seventh pick..." Boston waited as five other picks came off the board, selected Bird, and took exactly one year to sign him. Even before the protracted negotiations with his agent, Bob Woolf, were completed on June 8, 1979, the NBA changed the junior-eligible rule again, effective for the 1980 draft, such that a player had to renounce his college eligibility in order to be eligible to be selected in the draft.

Seventeen days after Bird signed with the Celtics, the Lakers used one of the other picks they obtained from the Jazz to select Magic Johnson, who had left Michigan State after his sophomore year. Magic made his decision to leave college after speaking with several people, including Julius Erving, and there was little to no controversy about the selection or his "hardship" status. Jerry West and others in the Lakers hierarchy considered taking Sidney Moncrief, but incoming Lakers owner Dr. Jerry Buss wanted the Spartan playmaker who could make fantastic passes while flashing an electric smile, a player who was described in *Sports Illustrated* that fall as having an "exuberance that registers an 8.5 on the Richter scale." The Lakers, who had won the number one pick in a coin flip with the Chicago Bulls, signed

Magic to a contract in May and then officially selected him in the draft. Magic joined Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (formerly Lew Alcindor) in Los Angeles, as the former Bucks star had forced a trade in 1975 by declaring that he no longer wanted to live in Milwaukee, a maneuver that was reminiscent of Wilt Chamberlain's similar trade demands during the 1960's.

As the free agency rules were loosened, first in 1980 to a system of "Right of First Refusal" that allowed a team to match an offer instead of being awarded compensation, it was inevitable that a superstar would cash in. In 1982 Philadelphia 76ers owner Harold Katz and general manager Pat Williams worked out a six-year, \$13.2 million contract with reigning MVP Moses Malone. Malone had won that award as a member of the Houston Rockets, who had reached the NBA Finals in 1981 but then lost in the first round of the 1982 playoffs. Still, the Rockets planned to match the 76ers offer, but were prepared to negotiate a trade in exchange for not exercising their first refusal rights. While this sort of negotiation had been typical during the "free agent compensation" years, this was new ground, both in terms of the amount of money involved and the caliber of the player. Three days before the September 18 deadline to match the offer, the Rockets agreed to trade Malone to the 76ers for Caldwell Jones and a 1983 first-round pick that originally belonged to the Cleveland Cavaliers. Malone then played a major role in the 76ers first championship season since 1967, winning both the MVP and Finals MVP awards, defying critics who claimed that Malone and Erving and the rest of the 76ers could not learn to play together.

Part Two

The League



Chapter Three

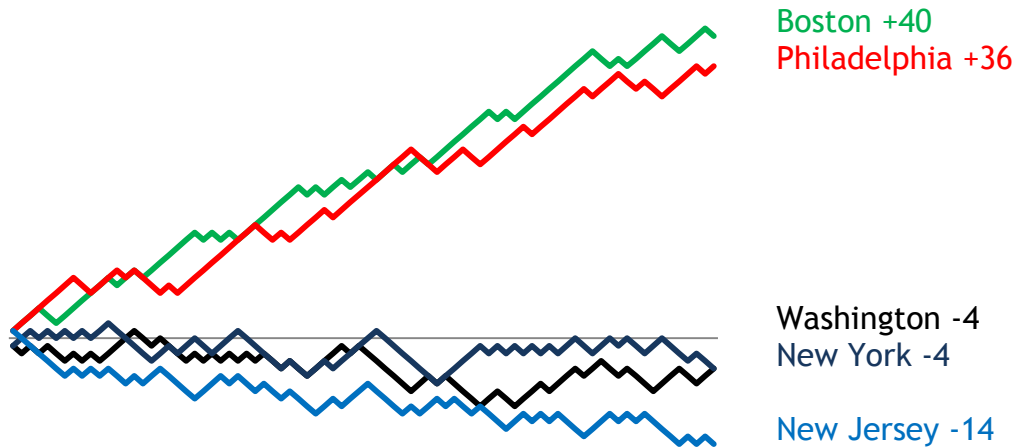
The 80s Era in Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of each season of the 80s Era and a discussion of some of the major issues and incidents that helped shape this period. For each season, two types of charts are presented. The first shows each team's record game-by-game throughout the season in terms of how many games above (or below) .500 the team was after each game, while the second provides a sparkline representation of the team's win-loss record, with the height of each bar showing whether the game was at home (taller) or on the road (shorter). The former illustrates the relative position of the teams throughout the season, while the latter is useful for visualizing winning and losing streaks by a specific team. There are separate charts for each division, which helps organize the data and makes it easier to follow division races. The dominant (non-white) team jersey color for the corresponding season is used throughout the charts to provide additional context.

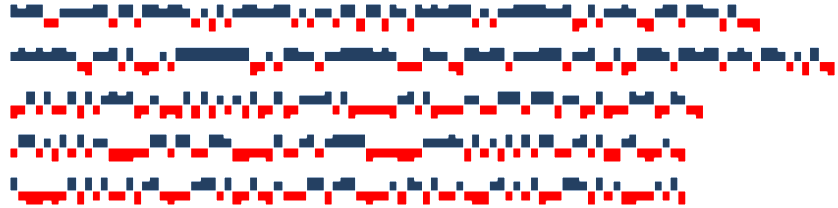
In between the yearly charts, additional topics are explored. Some of the pieces are long essays that include their own charts and tables, while others are much shorter. Each of these topics is specifically linked to the season being discussed, though in many cases, especially in the longer pieces, the topic is relevant to the entire 80s Era.

1979-80 At a Glance

1979-80 Atlantic Division



Boston	61-21
Philadelphia	59-23
Washington	39-43
New York	39-43
New Jersey	34-48



21-5

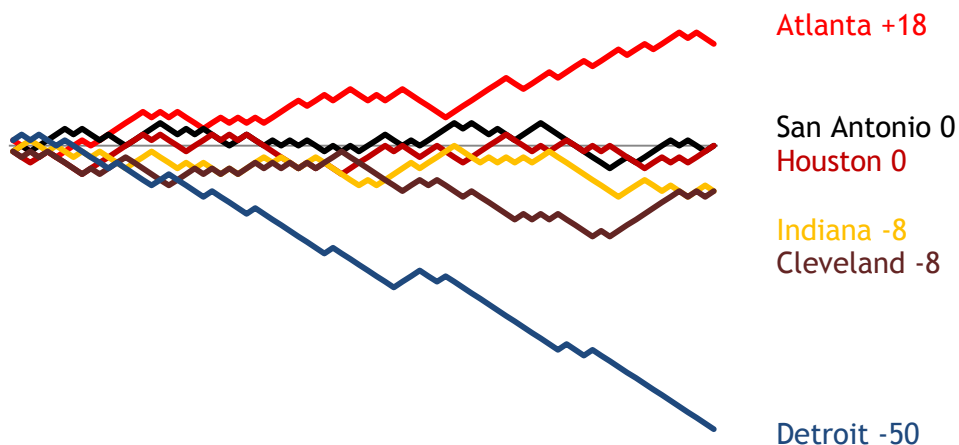
Philadelphia 76ers record in games settled by four points or less (the best winning percentage of 80s Era for a team with 20 or more such games in a season)

3-18

Golden State Warriors record in games settled by four points or less (the *worst* winning percentage of 80s Era, regardless of the number of such games in a season)

Oval Office Team: Kermit Washington, Alvan Adams, Earl Monroe, Phil Jackson, Terry Tyler, Brian Taylor

1979-80 Central Division

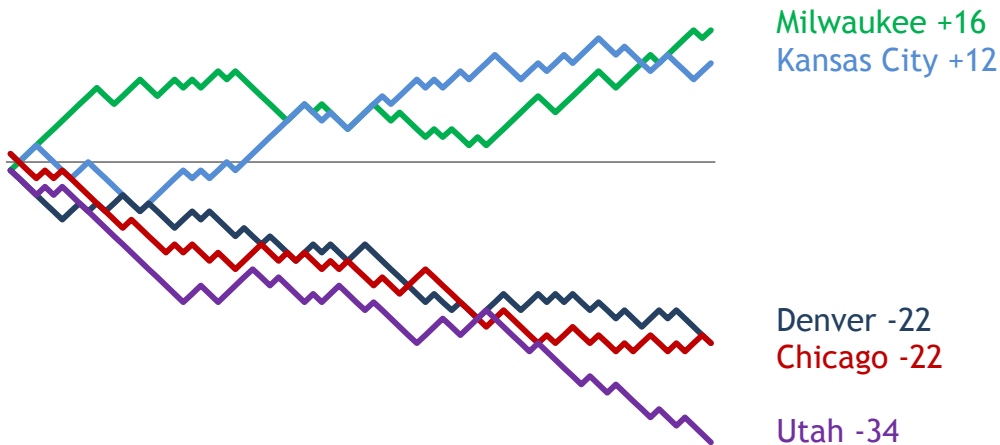


Atlanta	50-32	
Houston	41-41	
San Antonio	41-41	
Indiana	37-45	
Cleveland	37-45	
Detroit	16-66	

Off the Court

October	Pirates rally from 3-1 deficit to defeat Orioles in World Series
November	90 hostages are seized at the US Embassy in Tehran, <i>Nightline</i> debuts on ABC television to cover the events
December	<i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> premieres; USSR invades Afghanistan
February	US Olympic Hockey Team wins Gold at Lake Placid
March - May	Ronald Reagan wraps up Republican nomination for President, winning 15 of 19 primaries, defeating challengers George Bush and John Anderson
April	US announces boycott of Summer Olympics in USSR (see December)

1979-80 Midwest Division

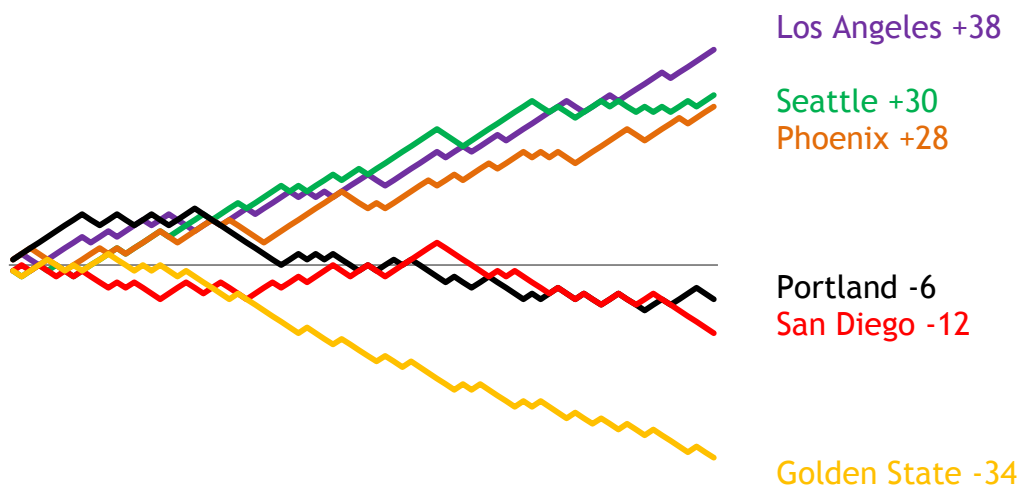


Milwaukee	49-33	
Kansas City	47-35	
Denver	30-52	
Chicago	30-52	
Utah	24-58	

Home Improvement

On June 4, 1979, a one-acre section of the roof of the Kemper Arena collapsed during a storm that dropped three inches of rain in less than an hour and brought 70 MPH winds that blew windows out of some nearby buildings. The facility had opened in November 1974 to replace the smaller Kansas City Municipal Auditorium as the home of the Kings, and the team's owners suggested that returning to that arena while Kemper was being repaired could cost them up to \$500,000 in lost ticket sales and concessions. But on June 29 the team turned down an offer from a Minneapolis-based group to buy the Kings and agreed to play in the Auditorium to start the 1979-80 season. The Kings returned to Kemper on February 20, 1980.

1979-80 Pacific Division



Los Angeles	60-22	
Seattle	56-26	
Phoenix	55-27	
Portland	38-44	
San Diego	35-47	
Golden State	24-58	

Opening Tip: Larry Bird, Bill Cartwright, Magic Johnson, Sidney Moncrief, Salt Lake City (as an NBA city), and the three-point shot (in the NBA)

Final Buzz: Rick Barry, Dave Cowens, Walt Frazier, Phil Jackson, and Pete Maravich

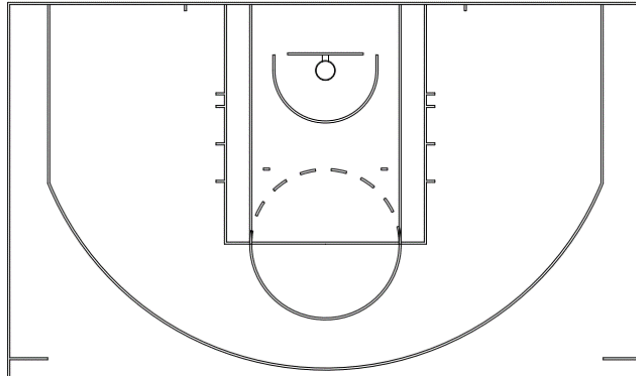
21,765

Seattle SuperSonics *average* home attendance (new league record)

21,972

Average attendance for Cavaliers, Jazz and Nets *combined* (three weakest drawing teams)

Three-Point Range



The 80s Era saw the introduction of the three-point shot to the NBA. The American Basketball League (ABL) had used the shot during the league's brief year-and-a-half existence from 1961 to 1962, and to good effect. Of all the field goals attempted during regular season ABL games, 8.74% were threes, at a success rate of .301; by comparison, the league's overall shooting percentage on two-pointers was .428, meaning that the three-point shot was arguably more efficient (.904 points per three-point attempt vs. .856 points for twos).

ABL 1961-1962 Regular Season Totals

Season	FGM	FGA	FG%	3FGM	3FGA	3FG%	3/FGA
1961-62	22792	54473	.418	1417	4664	.304	8.56%
1962	6012	14633	.411	403	1379	.292	9.42%
TOTALS	26984	63063	.417	1820	6043	.301	8.74%

Tony Jackson, a 6'4" swingman with the New York Tapers and Chicago Majors, led the league in most three-pointers made (182) and attempted (527). Over thirty-six percent of his attempted field goals were from three-point range, for good reason: he made them at a .345 clip, just 45 points lower than his two-point shooting percentage. Jackson led the Majors in scoring in his first season, then lost out to teammate Kelly Coleman the following year when the latter decided to shoot nearly as many threes as Jackson did. Barred from the NBA due to his involvement in a point shaving scandal while earning All-American honors at St. John's University, Jackson would later play two seasons in the American Basketball Association (ABA) and continued to frequently hoist up threes, though at a reduced rate (twenty-five percent of his shots) and with less accuracy (.275).

The ABA adopted the three-point shot at its inception in 1967, but used it less frequently than their free-wheeling forerunners, topping out at 6.53% of all field goals attempted. The NBA took even more time to warm up to the shot's potential. The established league was leery of anything that would remind fans of their erstwhile competitors from the ABA, but after experimenting with the shot in the 1978-79 preseason, the NBA adopted the rule for the 1979-80 season, and arena owners began drawing an arc on their floors 23'9" from the basket and 22' in the corners. The tables below show the league-wide usage of the three-point shot; note that these numbers reflect team averages, since the NBA had 22 or 23 teams during the 80s Era, while the ABA had only half that many teams at its peak.

ABA 1968-1976 Regular Season Team Averages

Season	FGM	FGA	FG%	3FGM	3FGA	3FG%	3/FGA	LL 3FG%	LL 3/FGA
1967-68	3177	7558	.420	111	390	.285	5.16%	.308	10.49%
1968-69	3321	7610	.436	138	460	.299	6.04%	.353	12.45%
1969-70	3617	8131	.445	155	531	.291	6.53%	.358	11.02%
1970-71	3824	8404	.455	154	516	.299	6.14%	.344	12.48%
1971-72	3690	8009	.461	131	442	.297	5.52%	.356	9.61%
1972-73	3610	7675	.470	91	316	.289	4.12%	.330	6.93%
1973-74	3606	7839	.460	100	351	.283	4.48%	.329	8.34%
1974-75	3713	7851	.473	91	311	.293	3.96%	.356	8.58%
1975-76	3062	6577	.466	78	266	.295	4.04%	.335	9.04%

NBA 1980-1988 Regular Season Team Averages

Season	FGM	FGA	FG%	3FGM	3FGA	3FG%	3/FGA	LL 3FG%	LL 3/FGA
1979-80	3579	7433	.481	64	227	.280	3.05%	.384	7.25%
1980-81	3523	7251	.486	41	166	.245	2.29%	.324	5.59%
1981-82	3554	7236	.491	49	187	.262	2.58%	.326	4.76%
1982-83	3569	7352	.485	44	185	.238	2.52%	.305	4.20%
1983-84	3566	7245	.492	49	195	.250	2.69%	.319	4.38%
1984-85	3588	7306	.491	73	257	.282	3.52%	.356	6.09%
1985-86	3542	7268	.487	77	274	.282	3.77%	.351	6.15%
1986-87	3497	7281	.480	117	388	.301	5.33%	.367	8.86%
1987-88	3455	7193	.480	130	410	.316	5.70%	.384	10.21%

The ABA used the shot less often as the years went on, and shooting percentages remained flat. In the NBA, overall three-point shooting percentages went up considerably as the 80s Era proceeded (1987-88 is included above to provide a ninth year for consistency with the ABA table) but it took until the 1987-88 season for a team, the Celtics, featuring Danny Ainge and Larry Bird, who both placed in the top four in attempts, to shoot ten percent of their field

goals from beyond the arc. One reason was that the players in the NBA during this period had not used the three-point shot in college or high school; the NCAA began experimenting with the shot in the 1980-81 season, allowing the Southern Conference to use it, but did not adopt it universally until 1986, and even then, their three-point line was located at 19'9" from the basket. American high schools adopted the same distance a year later. The NBA also employed few former ABA players experienced with using the shot under game conditions. Of the 49 former ABA players still in the NBA in the 1979-80 season, only 15 had made ten or more threes during their ABA careers, and just 10 of those players were proficient enough to make ten or more in the NBA. As a result, only three ex-ABA players would ever finish in the top five in NBA three-point shooting: John Roche (4) and Brian Taylor (5) in 1979-80; Taylor (1) again in 1980-81; and Don Buse (5) in 1981-82.

It was true that three-pointers were used more frequently in the playoffs, but not by much; the percentage of three-pointers taken was usually within 1 percent of the regular season mark:

80s Era Team Averages

Season	Regular Season				Playoffs			
	3FGM	3FGA	3FG%	3/FGA	3FGM	3FGA	3FG%	3/FGA
1979-80	64	227	.280	3.05%	8	29	.256	4.11%
1980-81	41	166	.245	2.29%	4	19	.220	2.55%
1981-82	49	187	.262	2.58%	4	18	.239	2.59%
1982-83	44	185	.238	2.52%	5	19	.252	2.94%
1983-84	49	195	.250	2.69%	10	35	.279	4.12%
1984-85	73	257	.282	3.52%	10	35	.273	4.55%
1985-86	77	274	.282	3.77%	12	37	.319	4.92%
1986-87	117	388	.301	5.33%	15	49	.307	6.38%

Three-point proficiency was hardly a predictor of championship success during the first half of the 80s Era. Not only did the 1982 Los Angeles Lakers finish last in the league in three-point attempts and percentage, but their .138 percentage still stands as the third-worst in league history, behind only the 1981 Hawks (.122) and the 1983 Lakers, who reached the Finals while shooting a paltry .104 from behind the arc and nearly made more threes in the playoffs (7) than they did in the entire regular season (10). It is easy to understand why Los Angeles initially shunned the three: why shoot three-pointers when the Lakers fast break offense was so effective at creating layups and easy midrange jumpers?

But in 1983-84 their philosophy changed. "[In 1983], I detested the three-point shot," head coach Pat Riley later said. "Our first options were to go to Kareem (Abdul-Jabbar) and James (Worthy) down low—we never looked for the three. But Coop and Byron (Scott) and

80s Era Three-Point Shot usage by Championship Teams

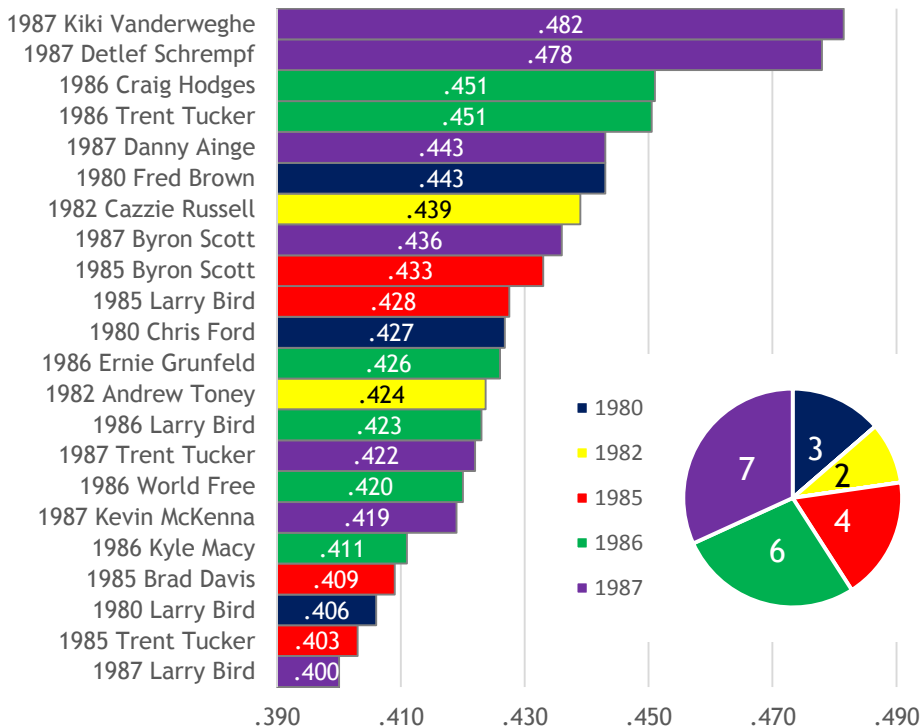
Season	Champ	Regular Season						Playoffs			
		3FGM	3FGA	3FG%	Rank	3/FGA	Rank	3FGM	3FGA	3FG%	3/FGA
1979-80	Lakers	20	100	.200	19	1.36%	21	3	18	.167	1.22%
1980-81	Celtics	65	241	.270	7	3.39%	2	10	45	.222	3.09%
1981-82	Lakers	13	94	.138	23	1.24%	23	2	12	.167	0.94%
1982-83	76ers	25	109	.229	14	1.51%	22	1	10	.100	0.91%
1983-84	Celtics	55	229	.240	13	3.17%	8	21	62	.339	3.08%
1984-85	Lakers	90	295	.305	8	4.07%	8	29	78	.372	4.44%
1985-86	Celtics	138	393	.351	1	5.37%	5	45	115	.391	7.37%
1986-87	Lakers	164	447	.367	1	6.17%	6	43	119	.361	7.70%

Magic (Johnson) started practicing on their own. They'd shoot three-pointers for something like a dollar in practice. They did it for 15 minutes a day, then they started dropping them in games." The Lakers had made just 60 three-pointers over the first four seasons of the three-pointer, but hit 58 in 1983-84, including 38 by Michael Cooper alone. His 121 attempts were more than any Lakers *team* had ever tried during a season. To grasp just how slowly the Lakers adopted the shot, consider this: in the 1979-80 season the San Diego Clippers made a league-high 177 three-pointers; it took the Lakers until February 26, 1985, when Cooper made a three-pointer in a game against the Rockets, for the Lakers to accumulate 177 regular season three-pointers *in their history*. The presence of the three-point adverse Lakers (and 76ers) in the Finals created some statistics that would be unbelievable today. From 1980 through 1983 just fifteen three-pointers were made in the Finals, a span of twenty-two games. By the end of the 80s Era the Lakers and Celtics would combine for thirty successful three-pointers in the 1987 Finals alone, but even that pales in comparison with the 2013 Finals (which concluded a season in which over 24 percent of field goal attempts were from behind the arc), where the Heat and Spurs combined to make *one hundred twenty-five*.

It is undeniably true that the 1982-83 season was the nadir for the three-point shot. Only four players made the 25 shots required to qualify for the league lead, and only four others made more than 20. It was the worst season for average three-point shooting percentage, and not coincidentally, the worst for percentage of three-point attempts, during the 80s Era. Missed three-pointers frequently translated into long rebounds that led to fast breaks for the other team, so they needed to be used with care. The Spurs led the league in every three-point-related category that year, making 94 of 308 as Mike Dunleavy shot a league-best 67 for 194 (.345, the worst-ever leading mark) while his teammates were barely making 24 percent of their attempts. San Antonio won 53 games, lost to Los Angeles in the Western Conference Finals—during which Dunleavy made 4 of the Spurs 12 threes while the Lakers hit just 3 as a team—and let Dunleavy leave after the season as a free agent. The next year, the Spurs still finished in the top five in all three-point categories, but collapsed to 37 wins. It was hardly a ringing endorsement of the three-point shot.

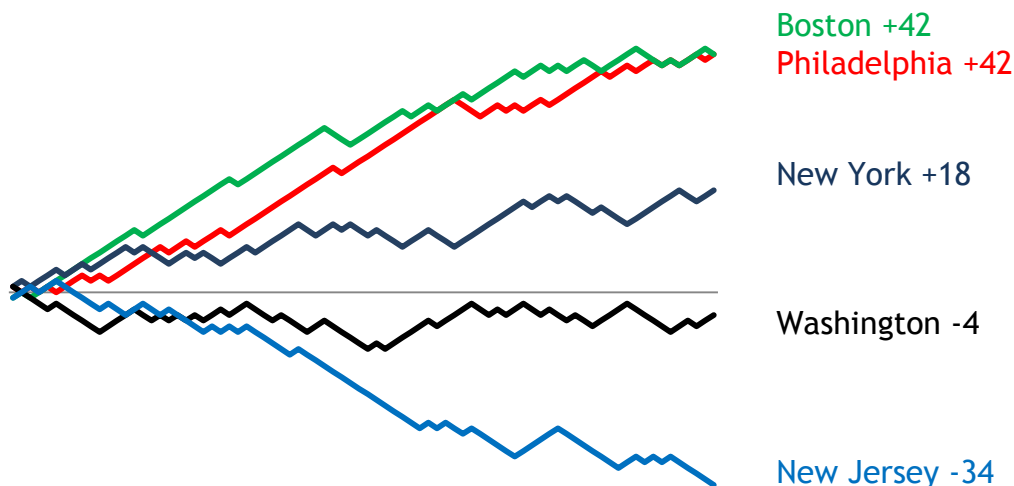
However, league-wide three-point shooting percentages continued to climb, and when the Celtics and Lakers, especially Larry Bird, turned the three-pointer into a psychological weapon, the shot gained more acceptance around the league. Bird later wrote in his autobiography *Drive* that timing was everything when choosing to take a three. “You’re the road team, you’ve got maybe a five-point lead with a couple of minutes to go and you’re wide open. That’s when I love to crank that thing up there because if you make it you simply *destroy* a team at that point.” The NBA acknowledged its growing popularity by including a three-point shooting contest as part of the 1986 All-Star Weekend festivities. By 1987, even the formerly skeptical Pat Riley was convinced of the shot’s value; after Michael Cooper set an NBA record with six three-pointers in Game 2 of the NBA Finals, Riley told reporters, “I think it’s the second-biggest psychological advantage—after the offensive rebound—in the game.”

80s Era .400+ Three-Point Shooting Percentage



1980-81 At a Glance

1980-81 Atlantic Division



Boston	62-20	
Philadelphia	62-20	
New York	50-32	
Washington	39-43	
New Jersey	24-58	

32-2

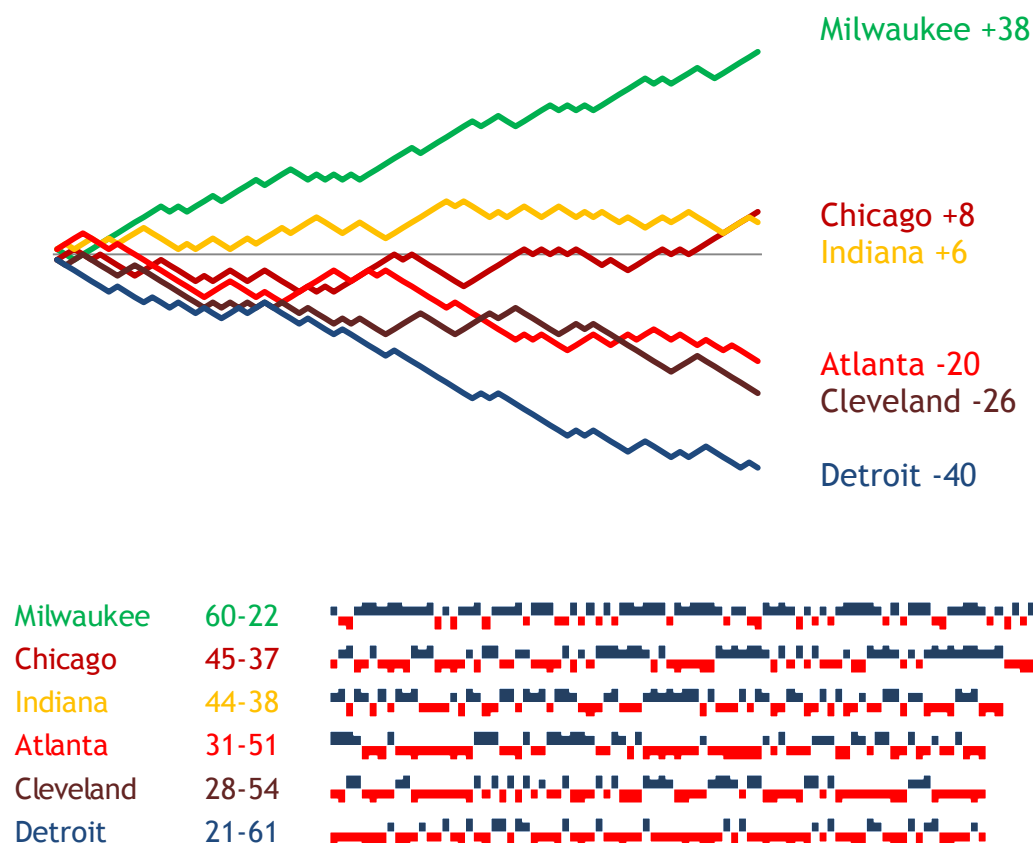
Philadelphia's record from 10/15/1980 through 12/26/1980, which included a 12 game winning streak and a pair of 10 game streaks

4-32

The record of the expansion Dallas Mavericks during the same time period

Feathered Friends Team: Larry Bird, Otis Birdsong, Tree Rollins, Rory Sparrow

1980-81 Central Division

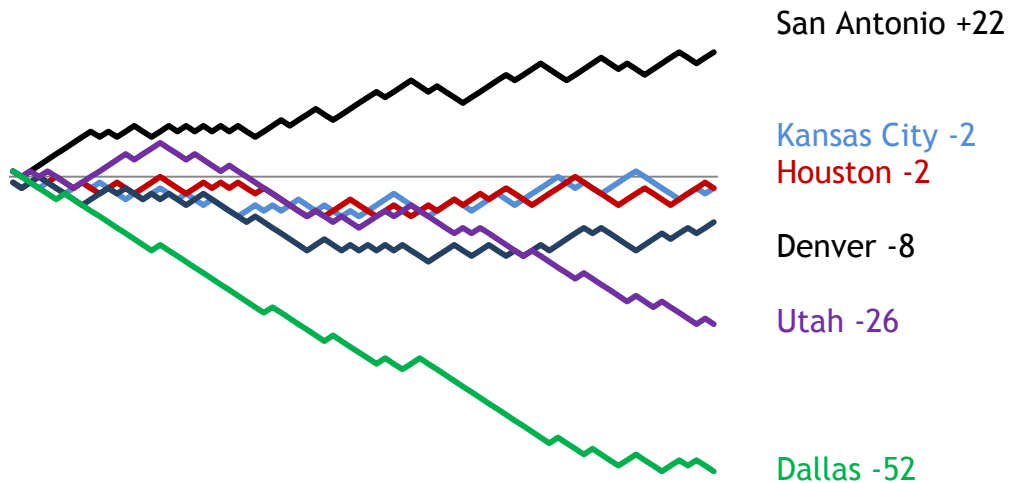


Best of the Rest

The Bucks became the only team during the 80s Era to fail to reach the Conference Finals after winning 60 games in the regular season, losing to the 62-win 76ers in the semifinals. Seven other teams with 55 or more wins would also fall short:

1979-80	Phoenix Suns	55-27	Lost to Los Angeles (60 wins) in semifinals
1980-81	Phoenix Suns	57-25	Lost to Kansas City (40) in semifinals
1981-82	Milwaukee Bucks	55-27	Lost to Philadelphia (58) in semifinals
1982-83	Boston Celtics	56-26	Lost to Milwaukee (51) in semifinals
1984-85	Milwaukee Bucks	59-23	Lost to Philadelphia (58) in semifinals
1986-87	Atlanta Hawks	57-25	Lost to Detroit (52) in semifinals
1986-87	Dallas Mavericks	55-27	Lost to Seattle (39) in first round

1980-81 Midwest Division

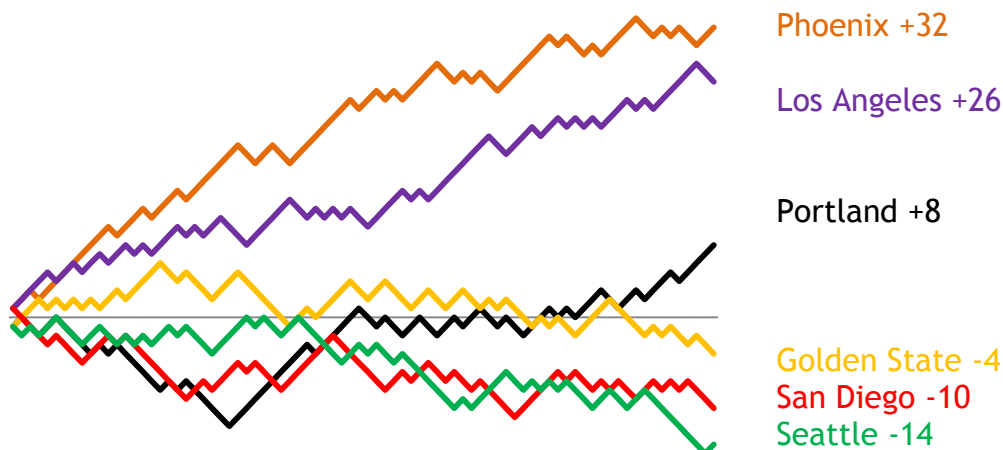


San Antonio	52-30	
Kansas City	40-42	
Houston	40-42	
Denver	37-45	
Utah	28-54	
Dallas	15-67	

Off the Court

November	Ronald Reagan defeats incumbent President Jimmy Carter
December	John Lennon murdered in New York City
January	Lech Walesa visits Pope John Paul II at the Vatican; Iran Hostage Crisis ends with release of all 52 remaining hostages after Reagan takes oath of office
March	Reagan shot by John Hinckley in assassination attempt
April	First launch of US Space Shuttle program (Columbia)
May	Pope John Paul II nearly assassinated in St. Peter's Square

1980-81 Pacific Division



Phoenix	57-25	
Los Angeles	54-28	
Portland	45-37	
Golden State	39-43	
San Diego	36-46	
Seattle	34-48	

Opening Tip: Bill Laimbeer, Kevin McHale, Andrew Toney, and the Dallas Mavericks

Final Buzzer: Henry Bibby, Doug Collins, Gar Heard, Wes Unseld, and the Nuggets
“Maxie the Miner” logo

14-5

Lakers record on November 18 when Magic Johnson suffers knee injury versus Kings

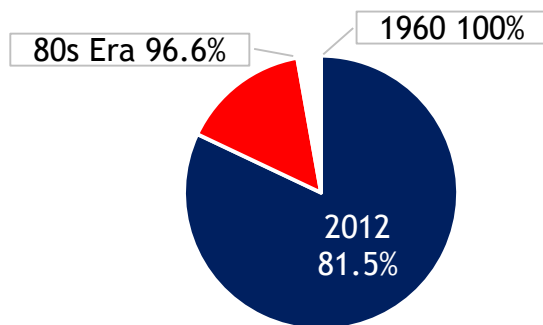
43-22

Lakers record on February 27 when Magic returns to play against the Nets (29-17 in his absence)

80s Era Demographics

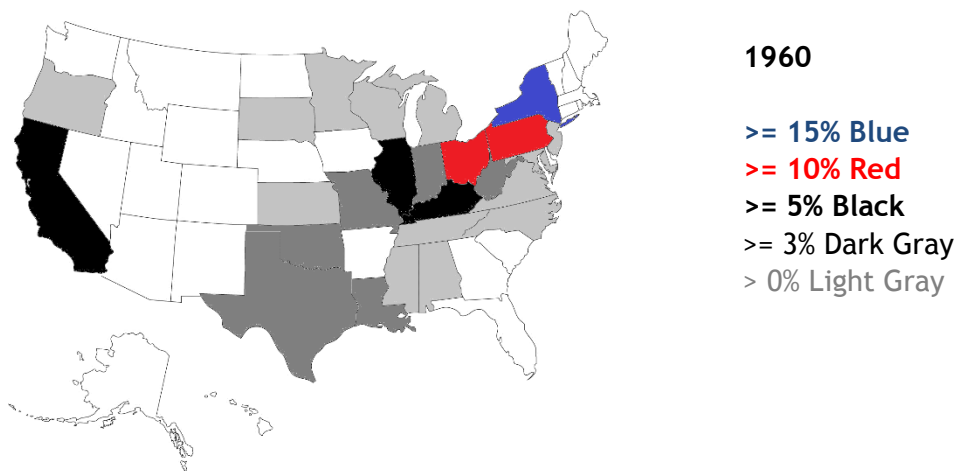
The NBA of the 80s Era was still a mostly American game, with relatively few International players compared with the 21st century NBA.

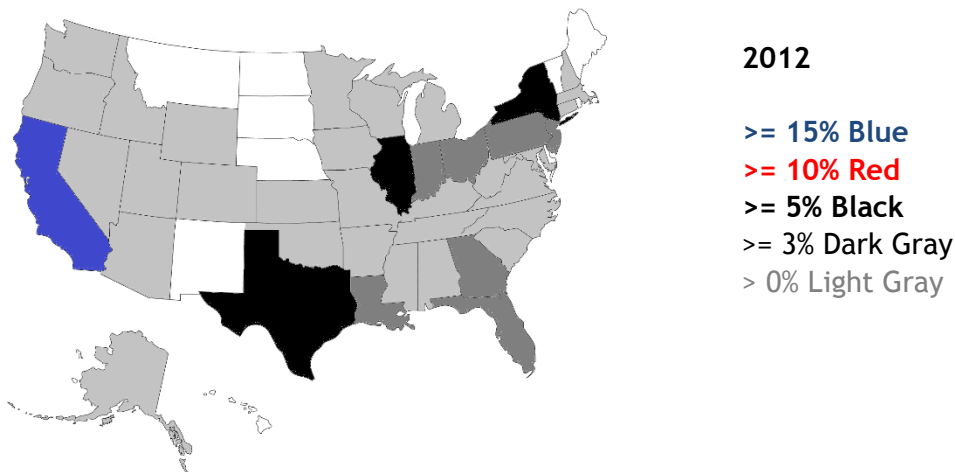
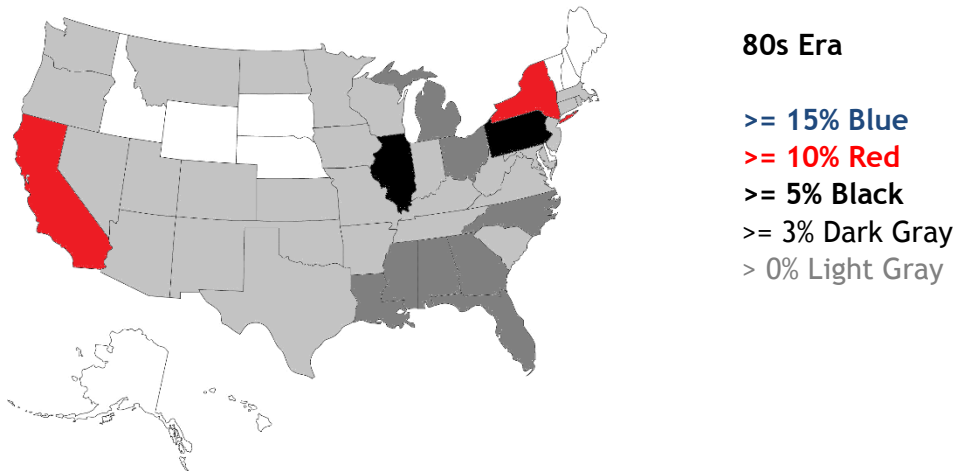
Percentage of American-born Players



However, the demographics of the NBA had changed quite a bit since the 1960's, when the majority of players came from the Northeast and Midwestern United States. By the 80s Era there had been a surge of players from California, which had moved from sixth place to first as a producer of NBA players, and a rise in the number of the players from the Southeastern United States, reflecting increased integration and general population shifts.

Percentage of NBA Players by Native State





As the table below shows, Illinois has been a remarkably consistent producer of NBA talent, while New York has seen its influence drop as the influx of talent from California, Texas and Florida has risen.

Top 5 Native States for NBA Players

Rank	1960	%	80s Era	%	2012	%
1	New York	18.2	California	11.2	California	15.7
2	Pennsylvania	12.1	New York	10.3	New York	7.7
3	Ohio	11.1	Illinois	7.4	Texas	7.7
4	Kentucky	8.1	Pennsylvania	5.6	Illinois	7.2
5	Illinois	7.1	Michigan	4.5	Florida	4.9

A more significant change between 1960 and the 80s Era was the racial composition of the league, which had undergone nearly a 180 degree reversal in a generation. A milestone in that transition occurred just as the 80s Era was getting underway, when the New York Knicks and Detroit Pistons met at the Pontiac Silverdome on October 18, 1979. Neither team had a white player on their roster, the first time that had ever happened in NBA history. The Pistons later traded Bob Lanier for Kent Benson in February and signed Steve Malovic in March, but the Knicks roster would remain all-black for two seasons. No other team during the 80s Era would do the same.

Racial Composition of the NBA

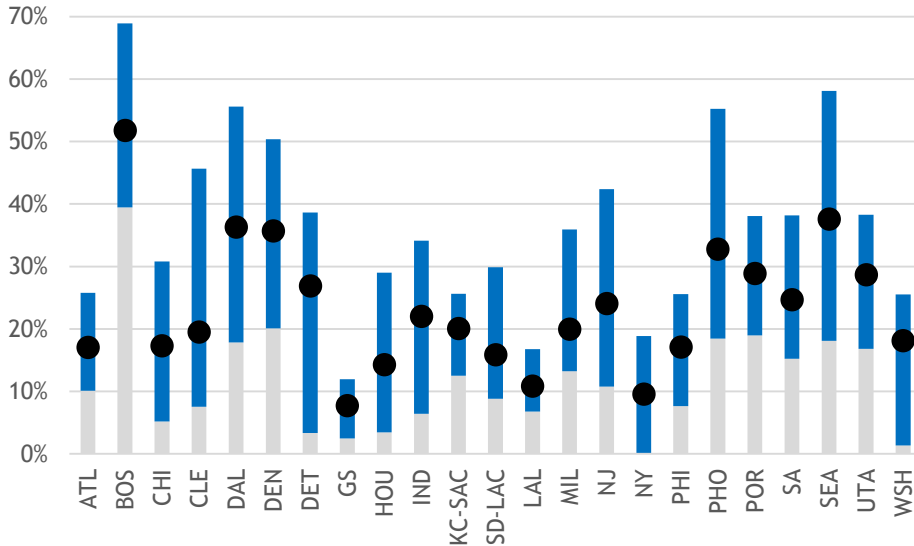
Year	Black %	White %
1960	24.24	75.76
1980-87	72.75	27.25
2012	80.88	18.70

One of the ongoing topics of conversation in the 80s Era centered on the Boston Celtics' use of white players in a much greater proportion than the rest of the league. Statistics certainly back up this contention. An examination of the years 1980 through 1987 shows that, on average, white players played 20 to 26 percent of the total minutes each season.

Season	% of Minutes (Whites)
1979-80	25.11
1980-81	26.09
1981-82	24.70
1982-83	23.75
1983-84	22.63
1984-85	21.46
1985-86	21.72
1986-87	20.89

The Celtics average for these eight seasons was 51.49%, much higher than the league average, and fifteen points higher than the Dallas Mavericks, who come in second. In fact, the Celtics low water mark for the percentage of minutes played by whites, 39.45% in 1982-83, would have represented the *high water mark* for sixteen other NBA teams. In contrast, the Lakers and 76ers both used white players much less frequently.

Note: Blue bars illustrate the spread between the maximum and minimum % of a team's minutes played by white



players in a single season during the 80s Era. Black dot indicates team average for the eight seasons.

Boston also claims four of the top nine spots in a table of individual teams in the 80s Era with the highest percentage of minutes played by white players:

Season	Team	% of Minutes
1985-86	Boston Celtics	68.92
1986-87	Boston Celtics	63.98
1984-85	Seattle SuperSonics	58.09
1980-81	Dallas Mavericks	55.60
1979-80	Phoenix Suns	55.22
1979-80	Boston Celtics	53.79
1983-84	Seattle SuperSonics	52.71
1984-85	Boston Celtics	51.30
1982-83	Denver Nuggets	50.38

However, these figures need to be placed in the proper context. Under Red Auerbach's leadership, the Celtics broke many barriers that stood against full integration of the NBA: they

drafted the first black player (Chuck Cooper in 1950), fielded the first all-black starting five (in December 1964), and hired the first black coach (Bill Russell in 1966). The Celtics were also coached by K.C. Jones for the latter half of the 80s Era (coincidentally, the 1984 and 1985 SuperSonics were coached by Lenny Wilkens), and five of their seven first-round selections during that period were African-Americans. While Boston was still overcoming the city's reputation as being openly hostile to blacks, Auerbach had not shied away from drafting Cedric Maxwell in 1977, or trading for Robert Parish in 1980, or shipping fan favorite Rick Robey (who was white) to Phoenix in 1983 for Dennis Johnson, who was viewed as a locker room malcontent that might have trouble "fitting in" in Boston, despite his obvious talent. It is true that the Celtics have had a long history of white stars, but in many cases they "bought low": Auerbach bypassed Bob Cousy in the 1950 draft and was "stuck" with him when owner Walter Brown pulled his name out of a hat during an impromptu dispersal draft; John Havlicek was considered a role player when he was coming out of Ohio State in 1963, but he was actually a very conscientious player who had accepted a lesser role on an extremely talented college team; and Dave Cowens's Florida State team was on probation in 1970 when he was selected fourth overall, one pick ahead of fellow center Sam Lacey, who was black, but had a much less productive NBA career. And in 1978, Auerbach was willing to wait a year for Larry Bird to finish college while five other teams passed on him. Kevin McHale was an exemption—he was widely heralded as a prospective top choice in 1980—but Danny Ainge fell into the second round a year later because of his baseball contract with the Blue Jays; Auerbach figured he could talk the kid into playing basketball again.

By the spring of 1985, with Cedric Maxwell sidelined with knee trouble, and Bird, McHale and Ainge all starting (and soon playing marathon minutes) the Celtics became predominately a white team. The trade of Maxwell for Bill Walton that summer, an exchange of damaged goods, tipped the scales further. The 1985-86 Celtics featured Scott Wedman, Walton and Jerry Sichting as their top three bench players, with Rick Carlisle, another white player, as the fourth. A year later, injuries brought the Celtics roster slightly more in balance, and if Len Bias would have lived, there would have been an even more dramatic shift (aside: the fact that the utterly non-athletic-looking—and white—Fred Roberts took the spot on the roster that should have belonged to the dynamic Bias made the latter's death even more painful for Celtics fans).

Also, since basketball teams play just five players at a time, one starter can make a big difference from a statistical point of view. If you analyze the Celtics rosters again, and, for the sake of argument consider Larry Bird as a "black" player, their eight-year average percentage of minutes played by white players drops to just over 36 percent. This still ranks high, but would place Boston right in line with Dallas, Denver, Phoenix and Seattle.

The Celtics lack of black players was made even more noticeable by the dearth of white faces on the benches of their main rivals. Only the Knicks and Warriors played fewer whites

than the Lakers, but Los Angeles had signed Mitch Kupchak in 1981 with the intent of making him a major piece of their lineup, in spite of considerable cost: the Lakers surrendered forward Jim Chones along with Brad Holland and a first and second round draft pick to the Bullets as compensation. But Kupchak suffered a significant knee injury after just 26 games and never played a full season in Los Angeles. Kupchak's minutes were filled by a combination of Bob McAdoo and Kurt Rambis, who became the most significant white contributor on the team after the departure of Mark Landsberger. The 76ers heavily used Bobby Jones as a sixth man and an occasional starter, and then, after trading Darryl Dawkins in 1982, acquired Marc Iavaroni to start at power forward on their championship team.

Ultimately, the fact that the Celtics drafted two white Hall of Famers (Bird and McHale) who grew to be coveted by most of the rest of the NBA should not be used as "evidence" to claim that the team was racist.



Money Ball

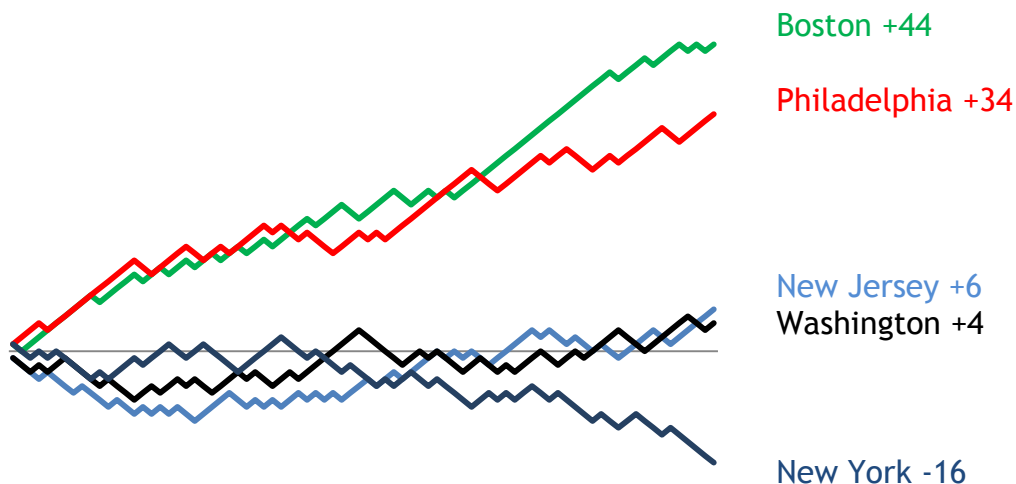
Official salary figures are difficult to obtain in the pre-Salary Cap years, and fully guaranteed contracts were not yet the norm (reportedly, only \$1 mil of Cartwright's six-year, \$2.55 mil contract was guaranteed). Here are a few examples of salaries from the 1981-82 season, which show how the dawn of free agency was distorting the pay scale.

Pos	Player	Team	Salary (\$)	\$ per PT+REB+AST
C	Moses Malone	Houston	1,050,000	273
C	Kareem Abdul-Jabbar	Los Angeles	1,000,000	370
G	<i>Otis Birdsong</i>	<i>New Jersey</i>	<i>1,000,000</i>	<i>1342</i>
F	Julius Erving	Philadelphia	900,000	316
C	<i>James Edwards</i>	<i>Cleveland</i>	<i>800,000</i>	<i>402</i>
G	David Thompson	Denver	800,000	683
G	George Gervin	San Antonio	650,000	208
F	Larry Bird	Boston	600,000	197
C	Marvin Webster	New York	600,000	548
C	Artis Gilmore	Chicago	500,000	201
G	Magic Johnson	Los Angeles	500,000	170
C	Bob Lanier	Milwaukee	450,000	281
F	George McGinnis	Indiana	450,000	471
F	Buck Williams	New Jersey	450,000	189
C	Bill Cartwright	New York	400,000	259
G	Dennis Johnson	Phoenix	400,000	171
F	Adrian Dantley	Utah	350,000	106

Note: Newly signed contracts for 1981-82 in italics.

1981-82 at a Glance

1981-82 Atlantic Division



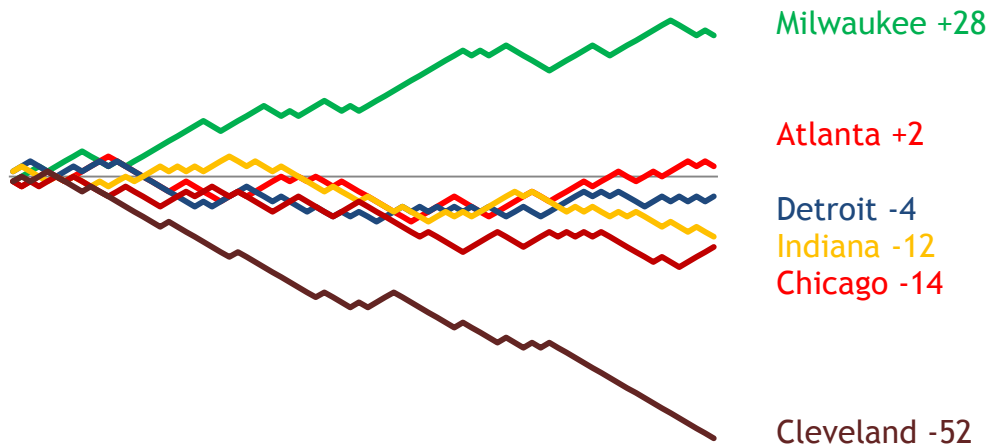
Streaking

The six longest winning streaks of the 80s Era belonged to the Celtics and 76ers, who were both adept at stopping each other's streaks:

Team	Start	End	Games	Stopped by
Boston	2/24/1982	3/26/1982	18	vs Philadelphia
Philadelphia	12/21/1982	1/21/1983	14	at Milwaukee
Boston	3/11/1986	4/4/1986	14	at Philadelphia
Boston	1/4/1981	1/28/1981	13	at Chicago
Philadelphia	12/22/1984	1/16/1985	13	at Boston
Boston	1/8/1986	2/5/1986	13	at Sacramento

The Lakers longest winning streak was 11, 3/26/1987 to 4/16/1987.

1981-82 Central Division

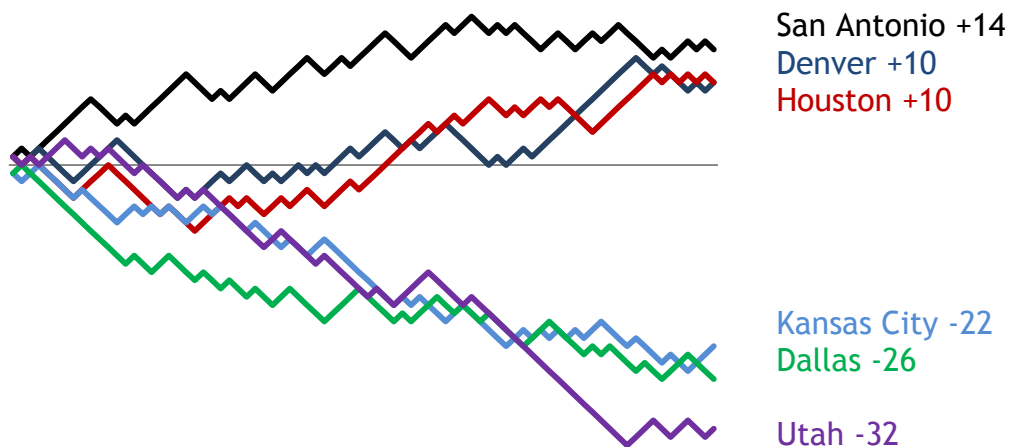


Milwaukee	55-27	
Atlanta	42-40	
Detroit	39-43	
Indiana	35-47	
Chicago	34-48	
Cleveland	15-67	

A Change Will Do You Good?

The Cleveland Cavaliers went through four coaches, a single-season record for the 80s Era, and the Chicago Bulls used three. Neither made the playoffs. Of the nineteen other teams to switch coaches in mid-season during the 80s Era, just five made the playoffs, and only two, the 1980 and 1982 Lakers, won the title (but they also had Magic and Kareem on the roster). This practice became less prevalent later in the decade; the 1981-82 season was the third straight year in which four teams switched coaches in mid-stream, but over the next five years, just nine teams did the same.

Off-Season Jobs Team: Jim Brewer, Darwin Cook, Michael Cooper, Julius Erving (Dr. J), Kevin Porter

1981-82 Midwest Division

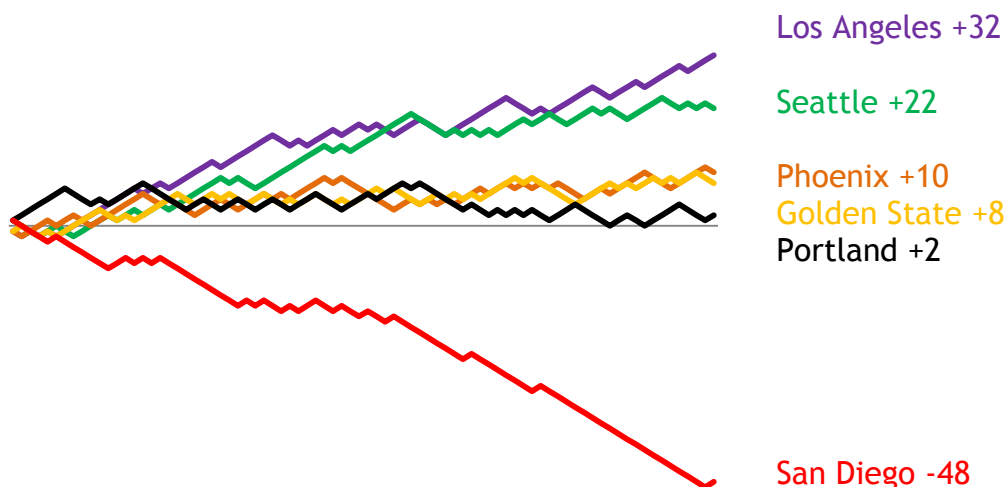
San Antonio	48-34	
Denver	46-36	
Houston	46-36	
Kansas City	30-52	
Dallas	28-54	
Utah	25-57	

Keeping it Close

For the second straight year, 39% of the Rockets' games were decided by four points or less. Just six other teams during the 80s Era played a similar number of close games.

Season	Team	Overall	Decided by ≤4 points	W-L	Pct
1980-81	Denver	37-45	33	15-18	.455
1981-82	Houston	46-36	32	20-12	.625
1980-81	Houston	40-42	32	16-16	.500
1981-82	Washington	43-39	32	16-16	.500
1980-81	Atlanta	31-51	32	10-22	.313
1981-82	New York	33-49	31	13-18	.419
1983-84	Golden State	37-45	30	18-12	.600
1983-84	New Jersey	45-37	30	18-12	.600

1981-82 Pacific Division



Los Angeles	57-25	
Seattle	52-30	
Phoenix	46-36	
Golden State	45-37	
Portland	42-40	
San Diego	17-65	

Opening Tip: Danny Ainge, Rolando Blackman, Larry Nance, Kurt Rambis, Pat Riley (as head coach), and Isiah Thomas

Final Buzzer: Jim Chones, Chris Ford

Off the Court

December	Muhammad Ali loses last fight by unanimous decision, to Trevor Berbick
January	Commodore 64 computer announced, Joe Montana wins his first Super Bowl MVP, AT&T agrees to breakup deal
March	Ground-breaking for Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.
April	US officially hands over Panama Canal to Panama
May	Cal Ripken, Jr. begins streak of 2,632 consecutive games played

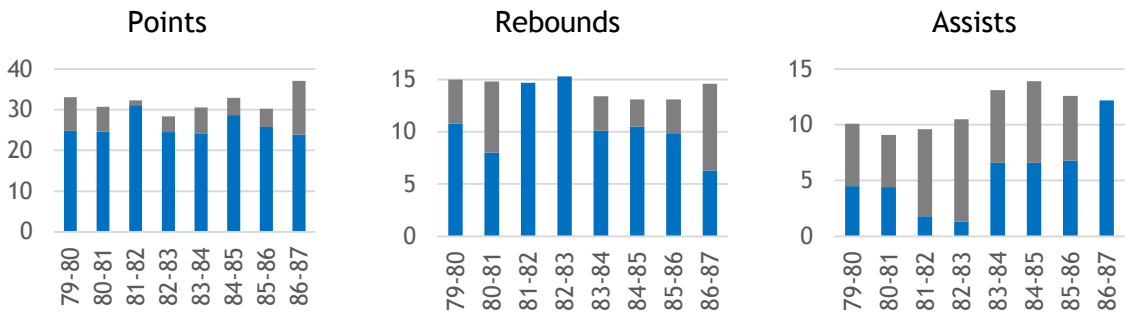
Most Valuable Players

80s Era

MVPs from
Bos + LA + Phi

7 (of 8)

Comparison of **MVP** and **League Leaders** per game, 1980-1987



Highest percentage of MVP vote

98.1 (Bird 1986)

New NBA record for assists by an MVP

(Magic 1987) 12.2

Other than Moses Malone in 1982, the rest of the MVPs of the 80s Era tended to play on the team with the best regular season record, or very close:

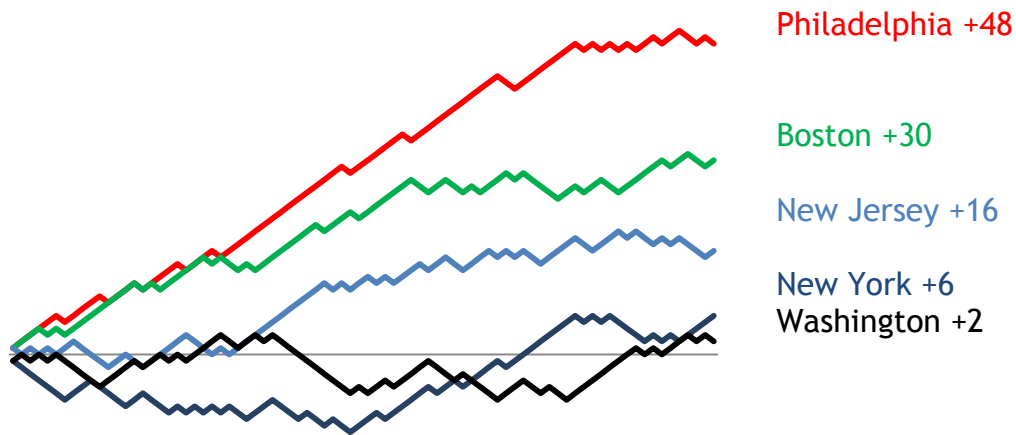
Season	MVP	Team	Record	Best Record
1979-80	Kareem Abdul-Jabbar	Los Angeles	60-22	61-21
1980-81	Julius Erving	Philadelphia	62-20	62-20
1981-82	Moses Malone	Houston	46-36	63-19
1982-83	Moses Malone	Philadelphia	65-17	65-17
1983-84	Larry Bird	Boston	62-20	62-20
1984-85	Larry Bird	Boston	63-19	63-19
1985-86	Larry Bird	Boston	67-15	67-15
1986-87	Magic Johnson	Los Angeles	65-17	65-17

31 Points separating Julius Erving and Larry Bird in 1981 MVP voting (smallest margin in 80s Era)

30 Points inexplicably earned by Adrian Dantley, Phil Ford and Kelvin Ransey for *first-place MVP* votes in 1981

1982-83 At a Glance

1982-83 Atlantic Division



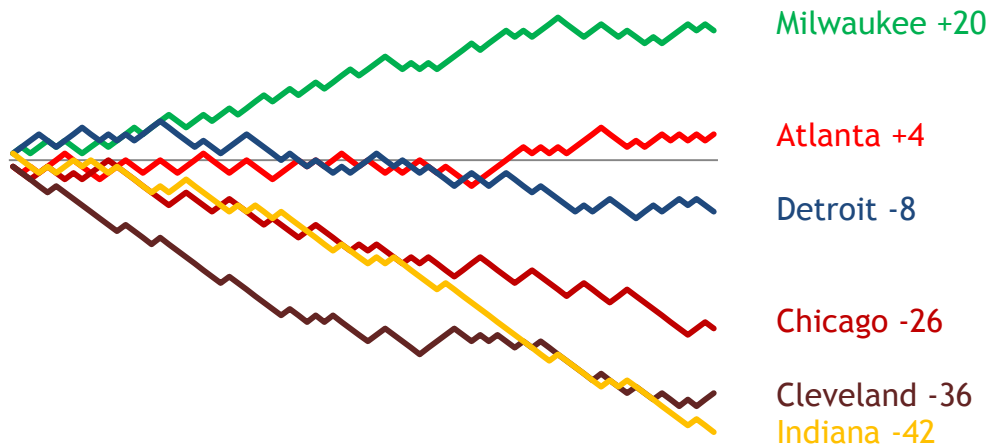
Philadelphia	65-17	
Boston	56-26	
New Jersey	49-33	
New York	44-38	
Washington	42-40	

Opening Tip: James Worthy, Terry Cummings, and Dominique Wilkins

Final Buzzer: Dave Cowens (again), Spencer Haywood, Steve Mix, Brian Winters, and 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.

1982-83 Central Division

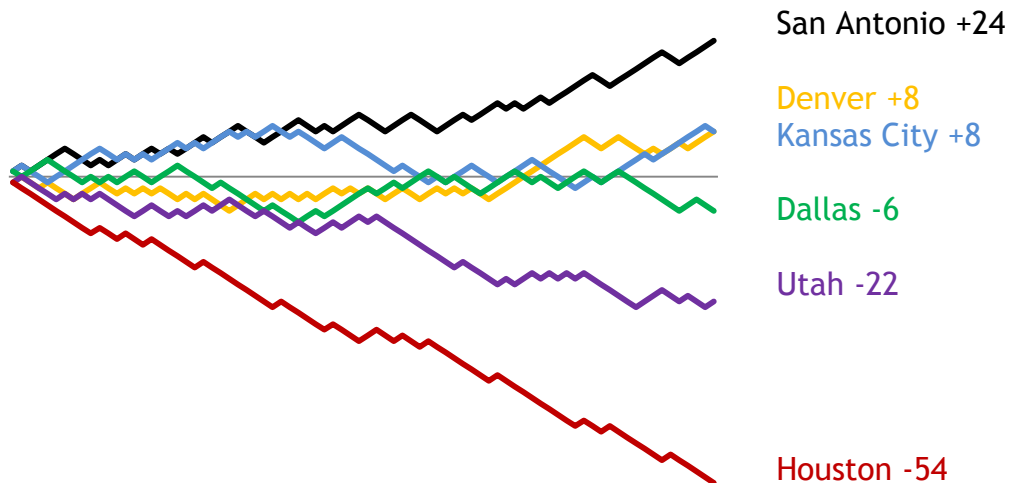
Milwaukee	51-31	
Atlanta	43-39	
Detroit	37-45	
Chicago	28-54	
Cleveland	23-59	
Indiana	20-62	

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"
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

All-Environmental Team: Michael Brooks, Bruce Flowers, Armond Hill, Ed Rains, Brian Winters

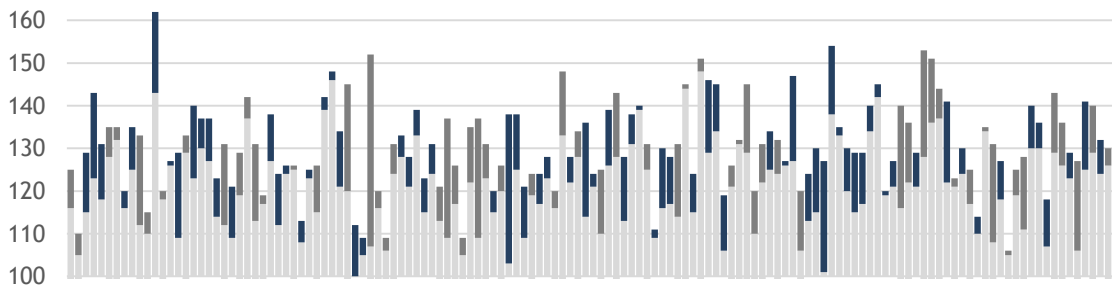
1982-83 Midwest Division



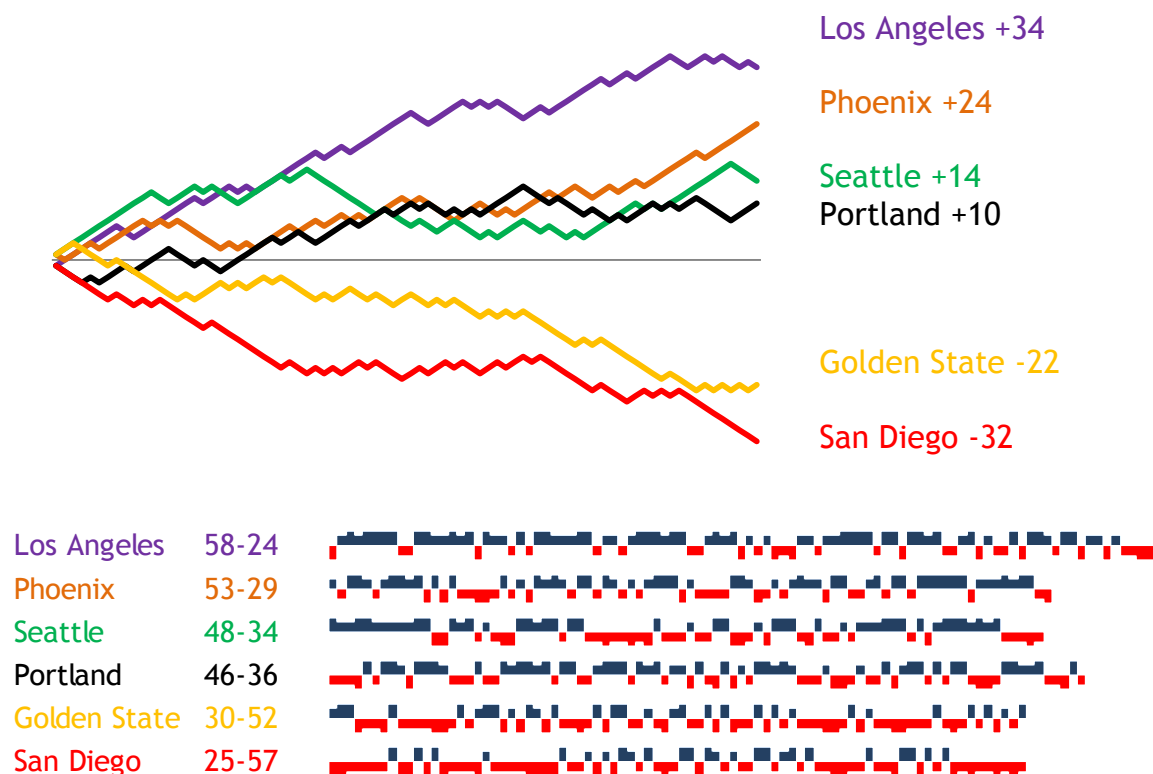
San Antonio	53-29	
Denver	45-37	
Kansas City	45-37	
Dallas	38-44	
Utah	30-52	
Houston	14-68	

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 stands as of 2013.



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 two others came close. 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.

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

135 Days and 3 Seconds

On November 30, 1982 the Los Angeles Lakers were in San Antonio for their first meeting of the season with the Spurs. The defending champion Lakers were 12-3, a game-and-a-half behind the Seattle SuperSonics in the Pacific Division; the Spurs, who had been swept by the Lakers in the Western Conference Finals the previous season, were 11-6, a half-game behind the Kansas City Kings. Los Angeles had won five in a row, but fell behind by nineteen points in the second quarter. The Lakers slowly clawed back into the game, but never took 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. 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 the Lakers if Moore made both shots; accordingly, Nixon was fouled with three seconds remaining. 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. 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. Due to the violation, 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 Abdul-Jabbar scored six of the Lakers last eight points as they 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 playoff spots. The Lakers were 57-21 and had locked up the number one seed in the West and were three games ahead of the Celtics in the loss column in the battle for the second-best record in the NBA behind the 76ers. San Antonio's record stood at 49-29 and they had wrapped up the Midwest Division crown. 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.

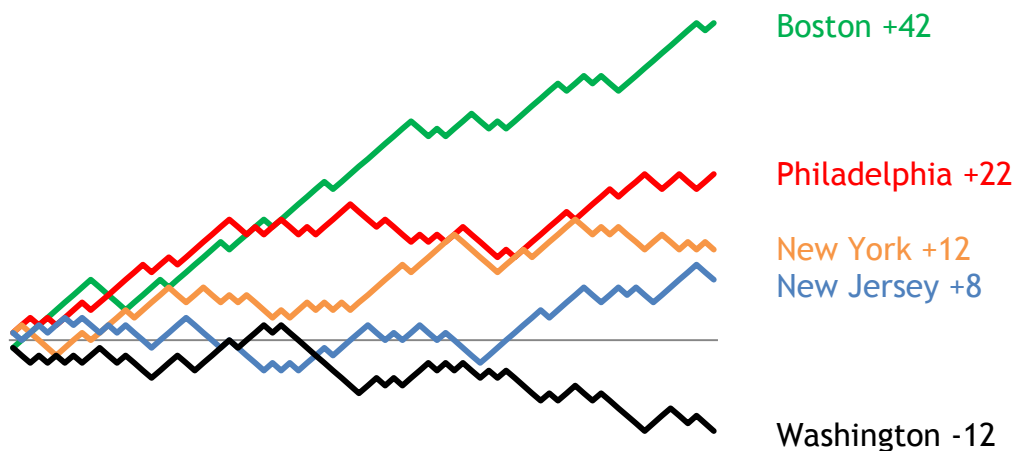
	Original Box Score					Official Box Score				
	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	PTS	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	PTS
LOS ANGELES										
Landsberger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilkes	10	18	3	3	23	8	15	1	1	17
Abdul-Jabbar	11	26	5	5	27	8	21	5	5	21
Nixon	11	23	3	3	25	10	21	3	4	23
E. Johnson	9	14	6	9	24	6	11	5	6	17
Cooper	1	5	1	2	3	1	5	1	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)				

	1	2	3	4	OT	OT2	F
LA	26	32	28	30	8	13	137
SAS	34	35	25	22	8	8	132

	1	2	3	4	F
LA	26	32	28	28	114
SAS	34	35	25	23	117

1983-84 At a Glance

1983-84 Atlantic Division



Boston	62-20	
Philadelphia	52-30	
New York	47-35	
New Jersey	45-37	
Washington	35-47	

10,014,543

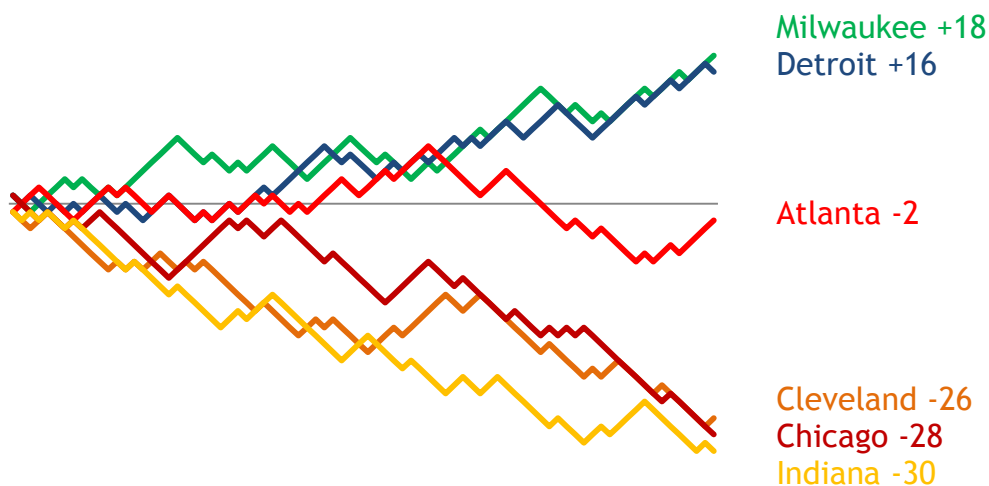
NBA Total Attendance
(exceeds 10 million for the first time)

10,620

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

Oval Office Team:
(Part II)

Ricky Pierce, Dennis Johnson, Elvin Hayes, T.R. Dunn, Michael Wilson, Magic Johnson, Norm Nixon, Phil Ford, Butch Carter

1983-84 Central Division

Milwaukee	50-32	
Detroit	49-33	
Atlanta	40-42	
Cleveland	28-54	
Chicago	27-55	
Indiana	26-56	

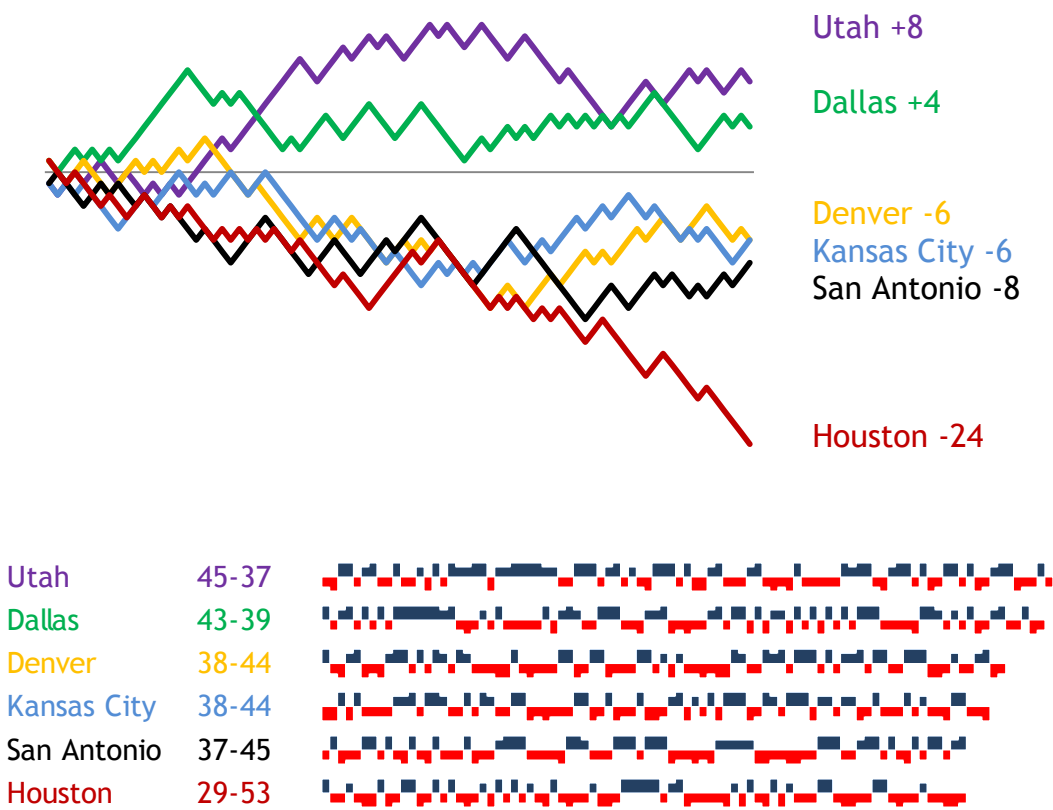
Opening Tip: Clyde Drexler, Ralph Sampson, and Byron Scott

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

Stuck in the mud

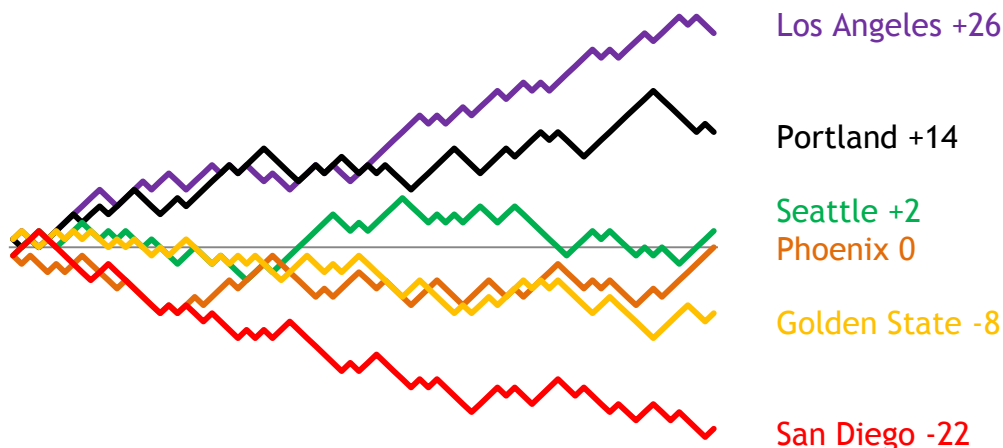
For the third straight season, the Bulls, Cavaliers, and Pacers finished at the bottom of the Central standings. Cleveland did not win more than two games in a row until February, when they finished 9-5 for the month. Chicago started 5-6, then lost eight in a row before a season-high seven-game winning 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



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

Los Angeles	54-28	
Portland	48-34	
Seattle	42-40	
Phoenix	41-41	
Golden State	37-45	
San Diego	30-52	

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

1983-84

New coaches at
start of season

9 (39%)

Former
Pro
Players

9

Former
College
Head
Coaches

14

Both

2

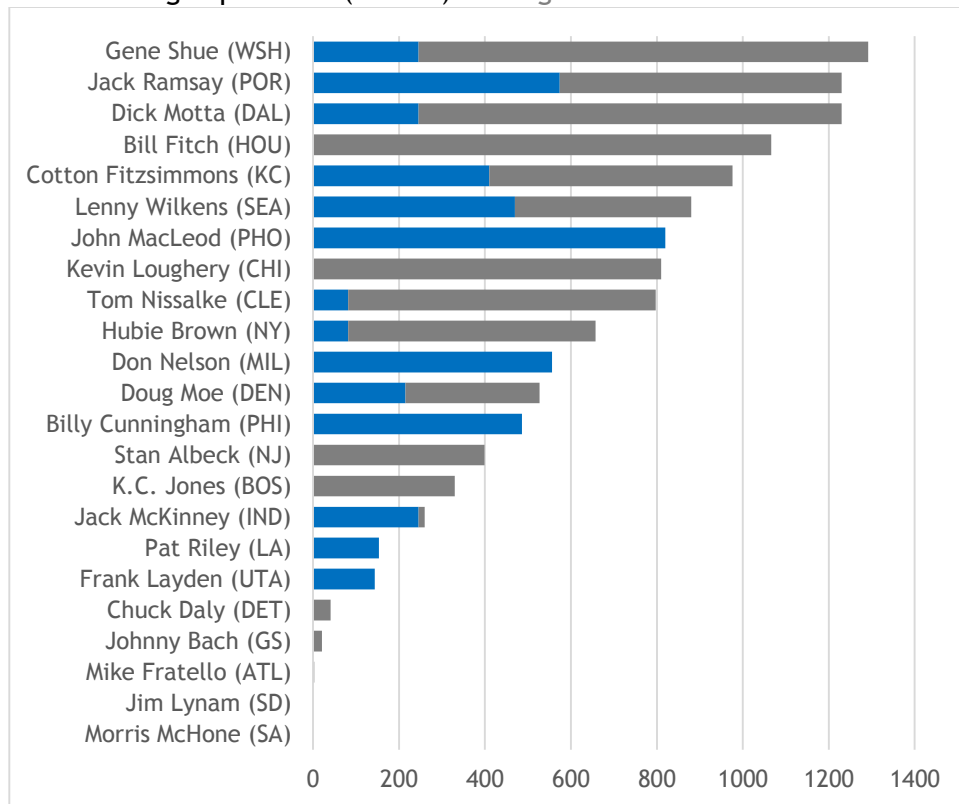
(Bach,
Jones)

Fired Mid-
Season

1

(McHone)

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



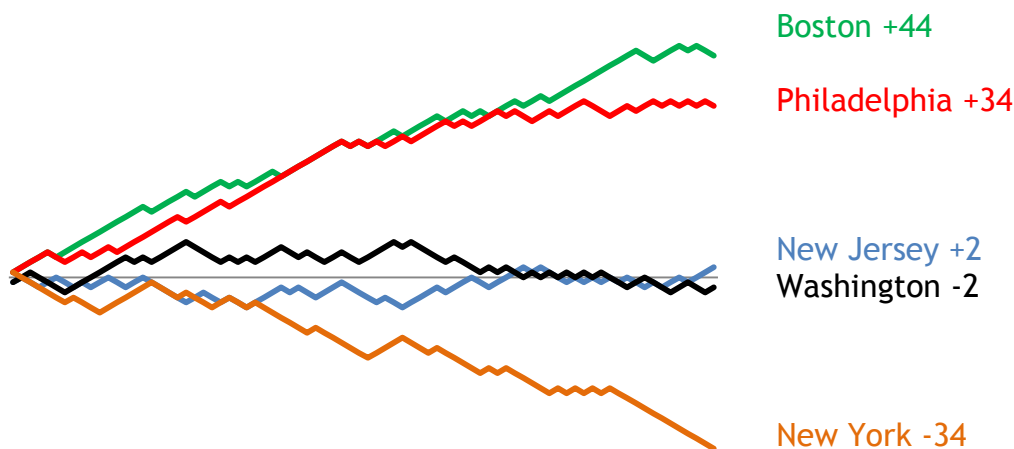
New Head Coaches
by the Numbers

		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 records

1984-85 At a Glance

1984-85 Atlantic Division

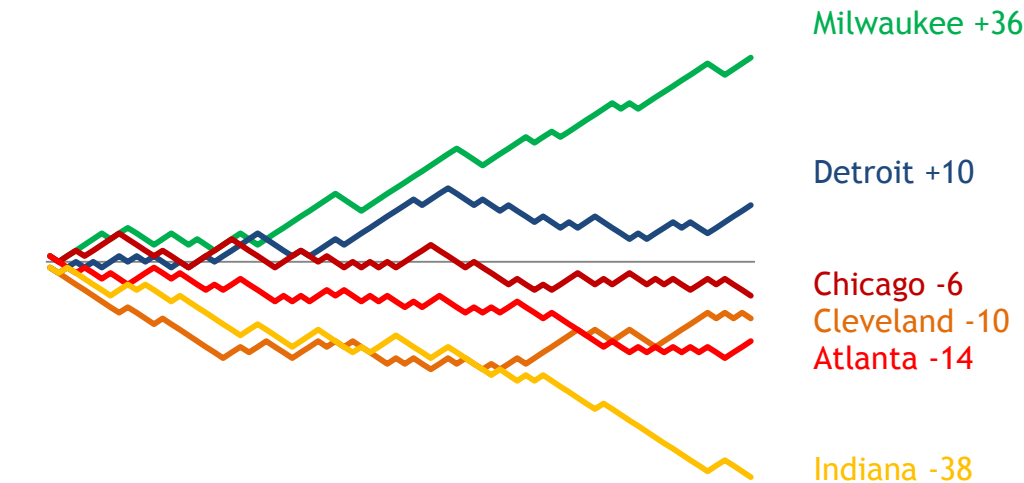


Boston	63-19	
Philadelphia	58-24	
New Jersey	42-40	
Washington	40-42	
New York	24-58	

Shooting for the Moon

Scoring during the 80s Era peaked in 1984-85, as the 23 teams averaged 110.8 points per game, the twelfth-highest average in NBA history and the most since 1963-64 (111.0). Another indication of increased scoring is this piece of trivia: During the first four seasons of the 80s Era, there were 32 occasions where a team played three or more consecutive games in which both teams scored fewer than 100 points. (The longest such streak was seven, by the Bullets from December 1982 to January 1983.) But from 1983-84 through 1986-87 there were only 9 such streaks, each exactly three games long, and during the 1984-85 season there were none. The last time that had happened was in 1978-79, which was the fourteenth-highest-scoring season in NBA history (110.3), and had been, until 1984-85, the highest scoring season since 1970-71.

1984-85 Central Division



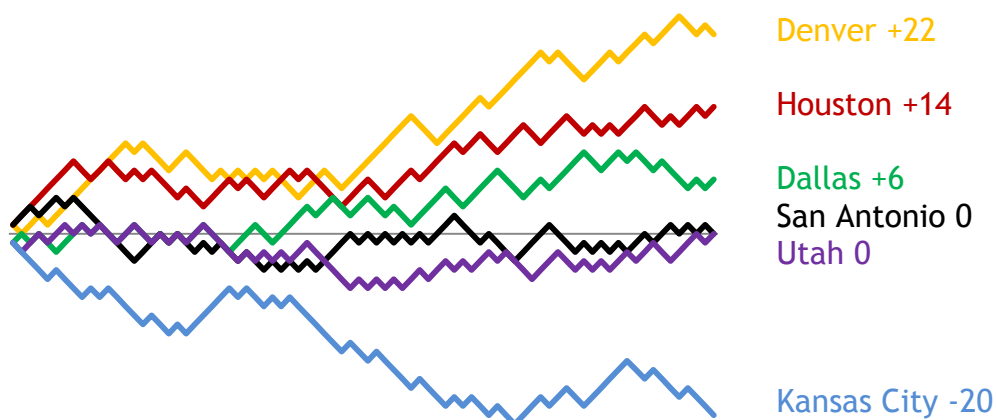
Milwaukee	59-23	<div></div>
Detroit	46-36	<div></div>
Chicago	38-44	<div></div>
Cleveland	36-46	<div></div>
Atlanta	34-48	<div></div>
Indiana	22-60	<div></div>

Off the Court

November	Ronald Reagan re-elected as President with 525 out of a possible 538 electoral votes, defeating Walter Mondale
December	A methyl isocyanate leak at a Union Carbide pesticide facility in Bhopal, India kills over 10,000 people and injures over 500,000
January	Cable network VH1 debuts; Joe Montana and the San Francisco 49ers defeat Dan Marino and the Miami Dolphins 38-16 in Super Bowl XIX
March	US FDA approves a blood test for AIDS and begins testing all blood donations
April	Coca-Cola launches a new formula

All-Concessions Team: Randy Breuer, Jeff Cook, Bill Laimbeer, Tim McCormick, Granville Waiters, Herb Williams

1984-85 Midwest Division



Denver	52-30	
Houston	48-34	
Dallas	44-38	
San Antonio	41-41	
Utah	41-41	
Kansas City	31-51	

Opening Tip: Charles Barkley, Michael Jordan, Akeem Olajuwon, and John Stockton

Final Buzzer: M.L. Carr, Billy Cunningham, Lionel Hollins, Dan Issel, and Kansas City

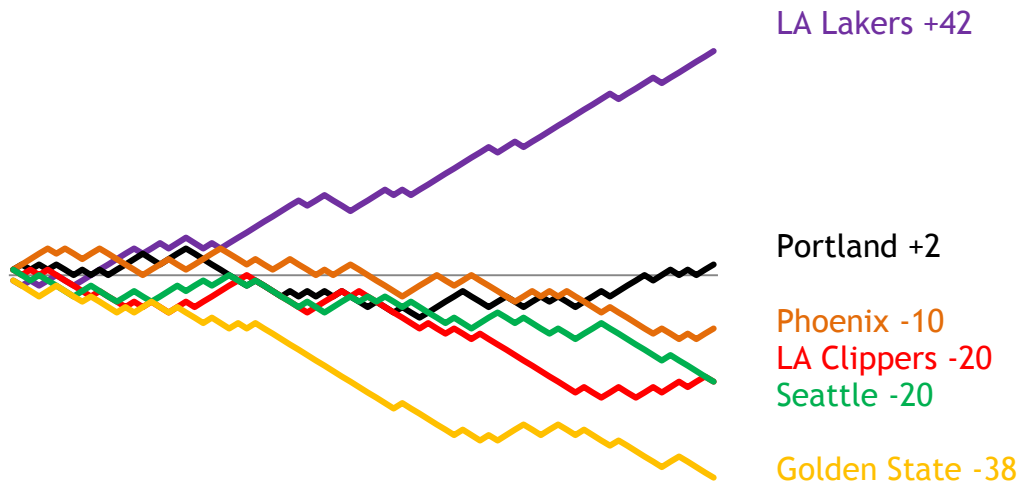
6,410

Kings average attendance in their last season in Kansas City (lowest since 1972-73, their *first* season in Kansas City)

11,371

Number of fans who attended Kansas City's last home game, a 122-116 loss to the Los Angeles Lakers

1984-85 Pacific Division



LA Lakers	62-20	
Portland	42-40	
Phoenix	36-46	
LA Clippers	31-51	
Seattle	31-51	
Golden State	22-60	

Running Away

The Lakers 20 game advantage over the Trail Blazers set an NBA record for the largest division lead at the end of a season, breaking the mark of 19 set by the Bullets in 1974-75. Los Angeles clinched the division title in their 66th game of the season with a 115-114 win over San Antonio on March 15 while Phoenix was losing to Chicago. At the time, the Suns and Trail Blazers were tied for second place, and for the last two playoff spots in the West, at 31-36, but Portland finished strong to move up to the fifth seed. The Trail Blazers then defeated the Mavericks in four games before falling to the Lakers in the conference semifinals.

Feeling a Draft

The 1985 draft was the first to utilize a draft lottery, which was introduced in response to the Houston Rockets tanking two consecutive seasons in order to earn a shot at the top pick. Prior to the lottery, the only safeguard was a coin flip used to determine whether the worst team in the East or the West would get the top pick; the Rockets were the first to win the flip in back-to-back years, but several teams had participated in consecutive years (including the Pistons, Bullets, Trail Blazers, 76ers and Kings). As it turned out, the Rockets ended up batting .500 with their selections, as Ralph Sampson's career was cut short by injuries, while Akeem Olajuwon became a 12-time All-Star who won an MVP and two Finals MVPs.

There are several ways to analyze the NBA college draft, and it is much easier to do so thirty years afterwards, once all of the player's careers are over and can be examined in detail. The unmistakable conclusion is that the future performance of young athletes is difficult to predict. Win Shares are a popular way of comparing players, although the algorithm is not perfect; any scale that places Karl Malone ahead of Michael Jordan needs to be taken with a few grains of salt. When you rank all of the draftees from 1977 (the first true post-merger draft) through 1986, nine of the top twenty-five players based on career Win Shares were taken outside of the top 10 selections and six of them were selected at pick 20 or lower.

Year	Pick	Team	Player	G	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG	Win Shares
1985	13	UTA	Karl Malone	1476	37.2	25.0	10.1	3.6	234.6
1984	3	CHI	Michael Jordan	1072	38.3	30.1	6.2	5.3	214.0
1984	16	UTA	John Stockton	1504	31.8	13.1	2.7	10.5	207.7
1984	5	PHI	Charles Barkley	1073	36.7	22.1	11.7	3.9	177.2
1984	1	HOU	Akeem Olajuwon	1238	35.7	21.8	11.1	2.5	162.8
1979	1	LAL	Magic Johnson	906	36.7	19.5	7.2	11.2	155.8
1978	6	BOS	Larry Bird	897	38.4	24.3	10.0	6.3	145.8
1983	14	POR	Clyde Drexler	1086	34.6	20.4	6.1	5.6	135.6
1985	1	NYK	Patrick Ewing	1183	34.3	21.0	9.8	1.9	126.4
1981	3	NJN	Buck Williams	1307	32.5	12.8	10.0	1.3	120.1
1982	3	UTA	Dominique Wilkins	1074	35.5	24.8	6.7	2.5	117.5
1980	3	BOS	Kevin McHale	971	31.0	17.9	7.3	1.7	113.0
1977	8	SEA	Jack Sikma	1107	33.4	15.6	9.8	3.2	112.5
1985	24	POR	Terry Porter	1274	27.8	12.2	3.0	5.6	110.4
1981	20	PHO	Larry Nance	920	33.4	17.1	8.0	2.6	109.6
1985	8	DAL	Detlef Schrempf	1136	29.6	13.9	6.2	3.4	109.5
1986	46	PHO	Jeff Hornacek	1077	31.5	14.5	3.4	4.9	108.9
1984	9	KCK	Otis Thorpe	1257	31.7	14.0	8.2	2.2	106.4
1979	65	CLE	Bill Laimbeer	1068	31.8	12.9	9.7	2.0	105.6
1984	4	DAL	Sam Perkins	1286	28.5	11.9	6.0	1.5	105.4
1978	36	PHI	Maurice Cheeks	1101	31.6	11.1	2.8	6.7	103.5
1985	23	LAL	A.C. Green	1278	28.6	9.6	7.4	1.1	99.5
1985	7	GSW	Chris Mullin	986	32.6	18.2	4.1	3.5	93.1
1982	2	SDC	Terry Cummings	1183	28.7	16.4	7.3	1.9	91.1
1979	5	MIL	Sidney Moncrief	767	30.2	15.6	4.7	3.6	90.3

The following table compares the awards won by the first twenty-five players selected in each year's draft. The number of first-round picks varied each year, as a result of the NBA awarding extra draft picks to the Cleveland Cavaliers and the debut of the Dallas Mavericks in 1980, so using twenty-five as the cutoff captures all of the first round selections plus a player or two at the top of the second round. After a pair of excellent draft classes in 1984 and 1985, the players taken at the top of the 1986 draft were mostly washouts; all of the awards shown below for the class of 1986 were won by two players, Brad Daugherty (#1 overall) and Mark Price (#25 overall).

Year	MVP	First Team	All-NBA Second Team	Third Team	All-Star	All-Defensive First Team	Second Team
1977	0	3	6	1	29	1	2
1978	3	9	2	0	19	2	3
1979	3	10	6	0	21	4	2
1980	0	1	0	0	13	3	4
1981	0	3	5	0	32	3	5
1982	0	1	6	5	22	2	2
1983	0	1	3	3	17	1	3
1984	7	23	16	8	53	16	13
1985	2	13	11	5	44	8	7
1986	0	1	0	4	9	0	0

One statistical method for determining the relative value obtained from an individual draft pick is to compare the number of career Win Shares for a player against the average number of Win Shares for a player taken at that slot over a given period of time. This has the effect of penalizing players selected in the same slot as a Hall of Famer, and rewards a mediocre selection in a slot otherwise filled with busts, but since the goal of this analysis is *not* to compare players, but to compare value obtained at a given draft position, these imperfections are acceptable.

First, here are the average Win Shares earned for each of the first twenty-five selections over the same ten year period beginning in 1977:

Pick	Avg. Win Shares	Pick	Avg. Win Shares	Pick	Avg. Win Shares
1	80.76	9	50.17	17	5.88
2	46.08	10	18.75	18	31.52
3	82.11	11	42.96	19	7.33
4	40.92	12	31.04	20	29.62
5	51.00	13	41.29	21	9.41
6	33.21	14	36.62	22	14.85
7	44.90	15	21.32	23	22.69
8	52.12	16	33.46	24	24.01
				25	11.86

If you then classify each drafted player in terms of a percentage of Win Shares earned above or below those ten-year averages, and group them into rough buckets (by 25% percentile in this example), and assign a color to each bucket, it is possible to create a graphical view of each year's draft.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Blue (+50%)	8	3	4	4	7	3	6	10	10	5
Dark Blue (+25%)	2	1	2	1	2	2	0	0	0	2
Black (Average)	4	4	5	3	5	6	5	2	3	4
Dark Red (-25%)	1	3	1	2	2	2	5	3	4	2
Red (-50%)	10	14	13	15	9	12	9	10	8	12
Total Win Shares (Top 25 picks)	907	608	723	585	925	753	823	1385	1253	551

For the lack of a better term, we will refer to this categorization using the (admittedly unimaginative) phrase “Blue/Red” draft analysis. For example, here is the 1984 draft, widely heralded as one of the best drafts of the 80s Era.

84 Pick	Team	Player	G	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG	Win Shares
1	HOU	Hakeem Olajuwon	1238	35.7	21.8	11.1	2.5	162.8
2	POR	Sam Bowie	511	27.6	10.9	7.5	2.1	26.9
3	CHI	Michael Jordan	1072	38.3	30.1	6.2	5.3	214.0
4	DAL	Sam Perkins	1286	28.5	11.9	6.0	1.5	105.4
5	PHI	Charles Barkley	1073	36.7	22.1	11.7	3.9	177.2
6	WSB	Melvin Turpin	361	19.0	8.5	4.6	0.5	13.7
7	SAS	Alvin Robertson	779	31.7	14.0	5.2	5.0	52.1
8	LAC	Lancaster Gordon	201	12.8	5.6	1.3	1.5	-2.7
9	KCK	Otis Thorpe	1257	31.7	14.0	8.2	2.2	106.4
10	PHI	Leon Wood	274	16.5	6.4	1.2	3.2	6.7
11	ATL	Kevin Willis	1424	26.9	12.1	8.4	0.9	81.8
12	CLE	Tim McCormick	483	21.5	8.3	4.9	1.0	21.5
13	PHO	Jay Humphries	788	29.3	11.1	2.5	5.5	45.0
14	LAC	Michael Cage	1140	26.1	7.3	7.6	0.9	74.4
15	DAL	Terence Stansbury	192	15.5	6.3	1.4	2.0	2.4
16	UTA	John Stockton	1504	31.8	13.1	2.7	10.5	207.7
17	NJN	Jeff Turner	612	18.4	6.0	3.3	1.0	8.9
18	IND	Vern Fleming	893	27.7	11.3	3.4	4.8	52.0
19	POR	Bernard Thompson	204	14.4	5.3	1.7	1.3	3.4
20	DET	Tony Campbell	690	22.0	11.6	3.1	1.5	20.7
21	MIL	Kenny Fields	184	14.6	6.2	2.5	1.0	4.2
22	PHI	Tom Sewell	21	4.1	1.0	0.2	0.3	-0.4
23	LAL	Earl Jones	14	3.6	0.9	0.7	0.3	-0.1
24	BOS	Michael Young	49	9.6	4.6	1.8	0.5	1.1
25	IND	Devin Durrant	63	12.8	5.0	2.1	1.3	-0.2

The obvious depth at the top of the first round (featuring future MVP's Olajuwon, Jordan and Barkley) is obvious, but the "Blue/Red" color coding also shows the advantages and drawbacks of using Win Shares to compare the value of draft picks. Alvin Robertson was a four-time All-Star and made four NBA All-Defensive teams, but was an average #7 selection in a period that also featured Bernard King (1977), Mike Gminski (1980) and Chris Mullin (1985) who all earned more career Win Shares. Jeff Turner seems an odd choice to be 50% better than the average #17 pick, but that slot had the *lowest* average Win Shares (5.88) of any of the top 25 slots in this ten year period, with Turner placing third behind Larry Drew (1980, 24.4) and Harold Pressley (1986, 10.0). Still, it is clear that the 1984 draft was a solid draft class. By comparison, 1986, especially the top half of the first round, was a train wreck:











86 Pick	Team	Player	G	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG	Win Shares
1	CLE	Brad Daugherty	548	36.5	19.0	9.5	3.7	65.2
2	BOS	Len Bias	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3	GSW	Chris Washburn	72	9.0	3.1	2.4	0.3	-0.6
4	IND	Chuck Person	943	30.7	14.7	5.1	2.8	38.9
5	NYK	Kenny Walker	448	20.2	7.0	4.0	0.7	17.9
6	PHO	William Bedford	238	10.6	4.1	2.4	0.5	0.9
7	DAL	Roy Tarpley	280	26.7	12.6	10.0	1.0	19.8
8	CLE	Ron Harper	1009	30.9	13.8	4.3	3.9	65.8
9	CHI	Brad Sellers	398	18.0	6.3	2.7	1.1	9.8
10	SAS	Johnny Dawkins	541	27.5	11.1	2.5	5.5	21.8
11	DET	John Salley	748	22.1	7.0	4.5	1.2	41.5
12	WSB	John Williams	435	25.2	10.1	5.1	2.9	19.9
13	NJN	Pearl Washington	194	20.8	8.6	1.9	3.8	1.9
14	POR	Walter Berry	205	23.7	14.1	4.7	1.4	8.2
15	UTA	Dell Curry	1083	21.7	11.7	2.4	1.8	41.5
16	DEN	Maurice Martin	69	6.1	3.0	0.9	0.7	-0.3
17	SAC	Harold Pressley	299	22.7	9.0	4.5	2.1	10.0
18	DEN	Mark Alarie	325	16.9	7.5	3.4	1.1	8.4
19	ATL	Billy Thompson	300	22.3	8.6	5.4	1.7	9.6
20	HOU	Buck Johnson	505	23.5	9.1	3.5	1.7	20.8
21	WSB	Anthony Jones	164	10.4	3.6	1.3	0.7	0.8
22	MIL	Scott Skiles	600	28.0	11.1	2.5	6.5	30.4
23	LAL	Ken Barlow	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
24	POR	Arydas Sabonis	470	24.2	12.0	7.3	2.1	47.3
25	DAL	Mark Price	722	29.9	15.2	2.6	6.7	71.1

1986 stands out as the only draft other than 1980 in which only one player in the top 10 selections earned at least 25% more Win Shares than the 1977-1986 average for their draft position. In 1980 that player was future Hall of Famer Kevin McHale; in 1986 it was Ron Harper, who had a credible NBA career but never won a title, made an All-Star team, or earned any other significant individual award. Not surprisingly, 1980 and 1986 were the two worst drafts of the period in terms of overall Win Shares earned by the top 25 players. In 1986, the

top three Win Share totals among draftees would turn out to be second-rounders Jeff Hornacek (108.9), Dennis Rodman (89.8) and Mark Price (71.1); selections 26-50 would earn a total of 374 Win Shares, about two-thirds as many as the top 25 picks, an extremely high percentage. In 1980, selections 26-50 earned just 116 Win Shares, and the total of 701 for the top 50 players is the lowest of this ten year period.

The 1986 draft also includes two players who never played a game in the NBA (Bias, death by cocaine intoxication; Barlow, traded to Atlanta and then signed with a pro team in Italy). Prior to 1986, the last top 25 picks not to play in an NBA game were Larry Knight and Tico Brown, selected at #20 and #23 by the Utah Jazz in 1979. (Philadelphia's second first-rounder in 1980, Monti Davis, came close, playing just two games.)

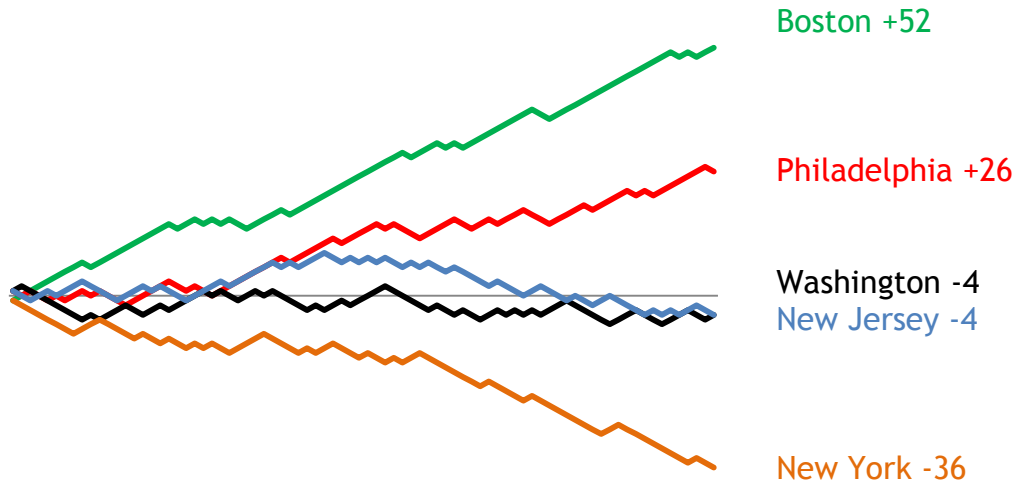
Finally, using the color code mentioned above, you can compare the relative value of several draft classes at a glance in a simple sparkline graphic that highlights the best (and worst) selections.

Draft	Blue/Red Analysis of Top 25 Picks	Total Win Shares
1977		907
1978		608
1979		723
1980		585
1981		925
1982		753
1983		823
1984		1385
1985		1253
1986		551

Note: Blue, Dark Blue (half-height), Dark Red (half-height) and Red bars correspond to the Blue/Red rating system described earlier in this section. A thin black line denotes an average player, who earned within +/- 25% of the average number of Win Shares for that position in the draft from 1977 to 1986.

1985-86 At a Glance

1985-86 Atlantic Division



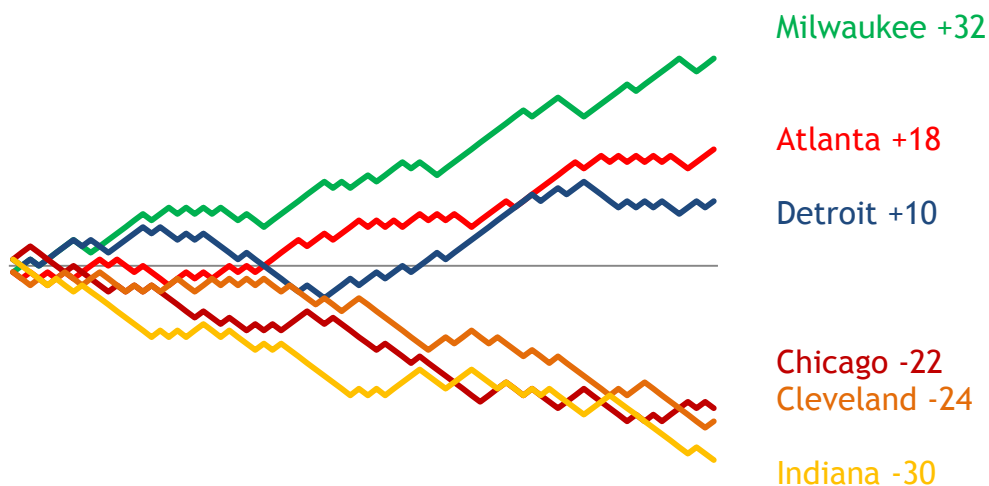
Boston	67-15	
Philadelphia	54-28	
Washington	39-43	
New Jersey	39-43	
New York	23-59	

Well-Traveled

On January 31, 1986 Bob McAdoo made his debut for the Philadelphia 76ers, his seventh, and last, NBA team. He became just the second player to be a member of the Celtics (1979), Lakers (1982-1985), and 76ers. The first was center Mel Counts, who did it in the same order as McAdoo: Celtics 1964-1966, Lakers 1967-1970, and 76ers 1972.

Home Sweet Home

The Celtics finished 40-1 at home during the regular season, and in the midst of the NBA Finals Robert Reid of the Rockets offered a unique explanation: "There's always some guy in the front row yelling 'Youse guys suck.' And instead of playing to win the game, you play to shut that guy up." Reid's attempt at a Boston accent needed some work...

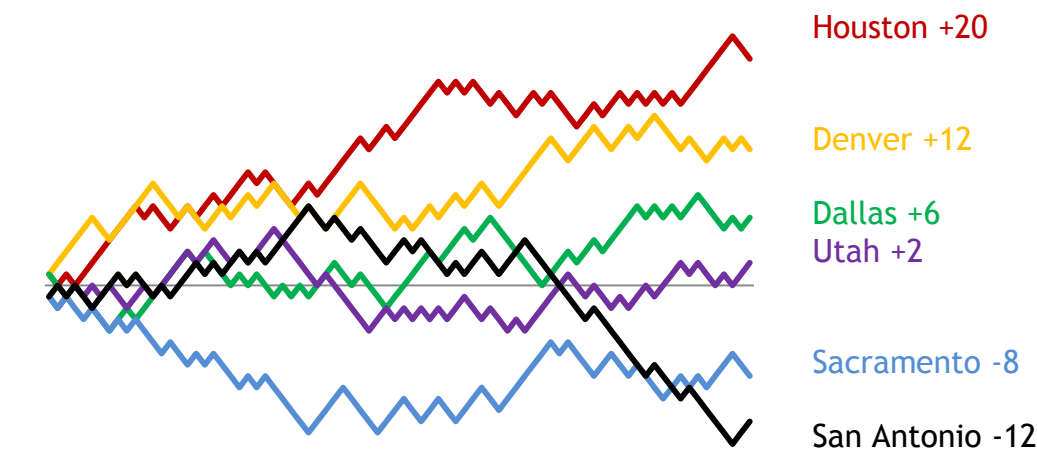
1985-86 Central Division

Milwaukee	57-25	
Atlanta	50-32	
Detroit	46-36	
Chicago	30-52	
Cleveland	29-53	
Indiana	26-56	

A Change Will Do You Good? (Part II)

On March 17 the Cleveland Cavaliers hired Gene Little as their eighth head coach since 1979-80 (if you count Don Delaney and Bill Musselman once each; they both served two stints on the bench). The three flagship franchises of the 80s Era employed just seven head coaches *combined* from 1980 through 1987; Matt Guokas became number seven at the start of the 1985-86 season. And Cleveland would replace Little with Lenny Wilkens after the season, making Wilkens the Cavs ninth head man of the period.

1985-86 Midwest Division

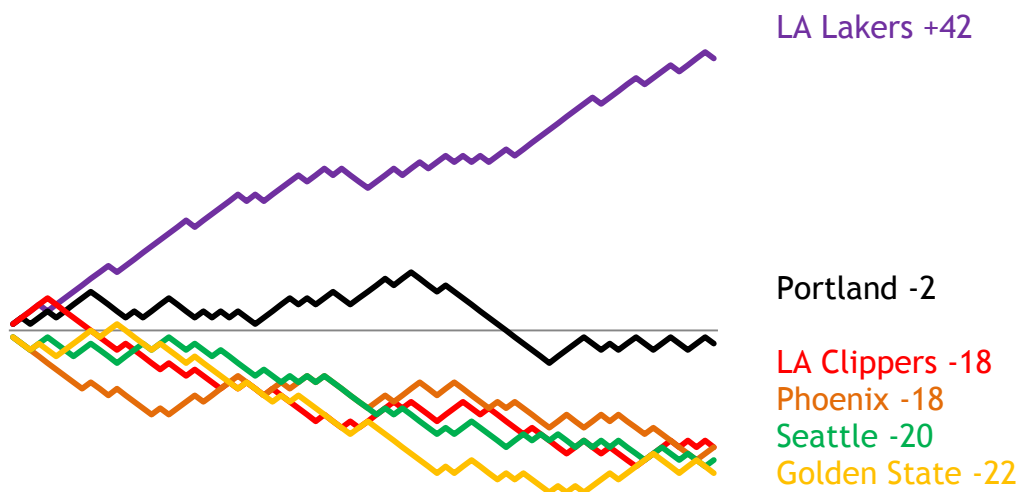


Houston	51-31	<div></div>
Denver	47-35	<div></div>
Dallas	44-38	<div></div>
Utah	42-40	<div></div>
Sacramento	37-45	<div></div>
San Antonio	35-47	<div></div>

Off the Court

November	Comic strip Calvin and Hobbes debuts; first summit meeting between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev; Microsoft releases Windows 1.0
January	Space Shuttle Challenger explodes 73 seconds after launch, killing all 7 astronauts aboard
February	Halley's Comet makes its first trip through our solar system since 1910
April	Accident during a test at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine eventually forces relocation of 350,000 people; Roger Clemens sets major league baseball record with 20 strikeouts; Jack Nicklaus wins Masters for his 18 th career major golf championship

All-Environmental Team: David Greenwood, Kenny Fields, Perry Moss, Doc Rivers, Leon Wood

1985-86 Pacific Division

LA Lakers	62-20	
Portland	40-42	
LA Clippers	32-50	
Phoenix	32-50	
Seattle	31-51	
Golden State	30-52	

Opening Tip: Joe Dumars, Patrick Ewing, A.C. Green, Karl Malone, and Sacramento

Final Buzzer: Quinn Buckner, George Gervin, Bob McAdoo, Rick Robey, and Jamaal Wilkes

Running Away (Again)

The Lakers won the division by 22 games to break their own record which they had set just a year earlier. This season they clinched in their 64th game of the season, a 108-106 victory in Seattle on March 9.

Who's The Best?

Trying to determine the best team in NBA history is like choosing a favorite painting; you can compare and analyze countless details but in the end, rationality is likely to go out the window. Style becomes as important as substance. Personal preference for “how” a team played (or an artist painted) overshadows statistics, and the changing face of the NBA over time makes it difficult to compare teams from different eras, no matter how much care you take to “normalize” statistics. Many books and articles have been written over the years labeling the 1985-86 Boston Celtics as the best team in NBA history, and just as many it seems, have trumpeted the 1995-96 Bulls, or 1966-67 76ers, or some of the great Lakers teams, as more fitting holders of that mantle. Personally, I would take any of the top teams from the 80s Era over that Bulls team, since I prefer the style of play in the 80s Era. The 1995-96 Bulls led the NBA by scoring an average of 105.2 points per game; in 1985-86, that would have placed them *twentieth* in scoring. A rational analyst would then proceed to look at the Bulls defensive statistics, where you would find that they held opponents to 92.9 points a game, third-best in the NBA; in contrast, the 1986 Celtics were also ranked third defensively, but allowed 104.7 per contest. But sports arguments are not rational. I prefer fast breaks to free throw shooting contests, and crisp passes to aggressive defense, so my opinion is unlikely to change. However, sports arguments can also be entertaining and occasionally enlightening, so in this section I indulge in a brief “best team of the 80s Era” debate.

Within the 80s Era, the pantheon is relatively easy to determine, though selecting the single best team is more difficult. Every champion other than the 1982 Lakers won at least 60 games, and three won 65 or more: the 1983 76ers (65-17), the 1986 Celtics (67-15) and the 1987 Lakers (65-17). The 76ers did it primarily with defense, and took advantage of their rivals misfortunes (Celtics tuning out coach Bill Fitch, Lakers losing Worthy and McAdoo, and eventually Nixon, to injuries) to win their only championship of the 80s Era. Midway through the 1983 Finals, Nixon admitted that the Lakers were “shocked by their physicalness and their overall aggressiveness” and the 76ers went on to overwhelm them in a sweep. Harvey Pollack, the 76ers P.R. director and yearbook editor, noted that during the playoffs every member of the 76ers had a positive plus-minus ratio (points scored while on court minus points allowed while on court). After he retired, Kevin McHale claimed that the 1986 Celtics “were better and deeper” up front than any of the Laker teams of the 80s, but also said that “the only team that might have given us trouble was that ‘83 Philly team.” Still, detractors point to the 76ers collapse in the 1984 playoffs as a sign that the team was overrated.

The other two teams in the pantheon also have a claim on being called the best. Bill Fitch later called the 1986 Celtics “the best team I ever coached against,” and he had faced the 1983 Sixers and their predecessors while in Boston. Magic Johnson called the 1987 Lakers championship team “our greatest, because of what we did in the regular season, and what the

expectations were. This team had everything a team can have . . . We can shoot, play defense and rebound. I've never played on a team that had everything before."

Here are a few relevant statistics:

Team	Home Record	Point Diff.	OT record	Close Games	Win Quality	Loss Quality
1983 76ers	35-6	+7.7	5-0	10-4	38.62	45.47
1986 Celtics	40-1	+9.4	3-3	9-7	39.43	38.60
1987 Lakers	37-4	+9.3	2-0	9-2	36.95	45.35

All three teams had outstanding positive point differentials, a key indicator/measurement of dominance, though, as we will see in a later section, the 1986 Celtics and 1987 Lakers had the two best point differentials of the entire 80s Era. They were all were good at home, through the Celtics get the prize for earning the most home wins in NBA history (the 1996 Bulls were 39-2 at the United Center). But in overtime and close games (games settled by four or fewer points) Boston was pedestrian. The Celtics Danny Ainge, while looking back at the 1986 team, once said, "You think about all the games we blew. We could have won 70. Maybe more." Fittingly, all three overtime losses were to below-.500 teams (New Jersey in the season opener, the infamous loss to New York on Christmas Day after blowing a 25 point lead, and at Washington in March). Overall, ten of Boston's fifteen losses were against teams with losing records. The 1983 76ers lost just two games to teams with losing records; the 1987 Lakers, four games.

This accounts for the significant difference in "Loss Quality" shown in the chart above. A method for retroactively applying strength of schedule, by multiplying each victory or defeat by the total number of wins earned by the opponent during the season, and then dividing by the number of victories or defeats, Win Quality and Loss Quality provide some insight into whether a team exceedingly cleaned up upon weak foes or feasted on them. One drawback of this method is that a team which plays in a weak division or conference, and therefore played more games against weaker teams, is more likely to lose to lesser teams (and, obviously, a team with a very good record cannot lose to themselves). It also does not measure how well the two teams were playing at the time they took the court, and lacks the ability to account for injuries or the effects of scheduling quirks such as back-to-back games and road trips, but many of those factors cancel each other out over an 82-game season. In fact, over the entire 80s Era, 89% of teams earned a Loss Quality between 42 and 47. But the 1986 Celtics not only had the lowest Loss Quality among the three 65 win teams, they had the lowest Loss Quality *of the entire eight year period*—and by a significant margin.

80s Era Lowest Loss Quality

Season	Team	Record	Loss Quality
1985-86	Boston	67-15	38.60
1983-84	LA Lakers	54-28	40.04
1985-86	Denver	47-35	40.46
1985-86	LA Lakers	62-20	40.50
1983-84	Seattle	42-40	41.70
1981-82	San Antonio	48-34	41.82
1984-85	LA Lakers	62-20	41.90
1983-84	Utah	45-37	41.97
1985-86	Seattle	31-51	41.98

In general, these teams tended to lose to weaker teams, on average, than the rest of the league did. It is interesting to note how this statistic highlights a team like the 1985-86 SuperSonics. Despite their poor overall record, the SuperSonics finished 9-12 combined against the Lakers, Rockets, Mavericks and Nuggets, who were the top four seeds in the Western Conference playoffs that season. Not surprisingly, this also results in the 1985-86 SuperSonics appearing on the list of teams with the highest Win Quality during the 80s Era:

80s Era Highest Win Quality

Season	Team	Record	Win Quality
1983-84	Chicago	27-55	40.30
1985-86	Denver	47-35	40.28
1982-83	Indiana	20-62	40.25
1984-85	Indiana	22-60	40.18
1983-84	Washington	35-47	40.14
1983-84	Philadelphia	52-30	40.04
1983-84	San Diego	30-52	40.00
1985-86	Seattle	31-51	39.84
1982-83	Boston	56-26	39.82
1980-81	Dallas	15-67	39.73

Win Quality numbers for the 80s Era range from 33 to just over 40; these figures are lower than the corresponding Loss Quality numbers because good teams (with more wins) generally defeat bad teams (with fewer wins, resulting in smaller cumulative opponent win totals). The predominance of below .500 teams on the top ten list is due to the simple mathematical truth that for a team with fewer wins (such as Dallas, who managed a win apiece against division champions San Antonio and Phoenix in 1981), a single victory over a

very good team has a greater influence on their average Win Quality than the same result would have for a team with more overall victories.

On the other hand, the appearance of the 1982-83 Celtics on this list suggests a better use for this data. The Celtics swept their season series against the three 50+ win teams in the West (Lakers, Spurs and Suns) and were 3-3 against both the 76ers and Bucks in the East. But the 76ers were a game better against the same common foes, including the Celtics (13-5 vs. 12-6 for Boston). Boston gets the edge in Win Quality because they get more credit for wins against the 65-win 76ers than Philadelphia earns for their wins against the 56-win Celtics, but what about the season as a whole? A list of the top ten Win Quality seasons of the 80s Era, limited to teams that won 50 or more games, is more interesting to consider:

80s Era Highest Win Quality (teams with 50 or more wins)

Season	Team	Record	Win Quality
1983-84	Philadelphia	52-30	40.04
1982-83	Boston	56-26	39.82
1983-84	LA Lakers	54-28	39.61
1980-81	Boston	62-20	39.44
1985-86	Boston	67-15	39.43
1986-87	Boston	59-23	38.85
1984-85	Philadelphia	58-24	38.72
1983-84	Boston	62-20	38.65
1982-83	Philadelphia	65-17	38.62
1984-85	Milwaukee	59-23	38.61

The 1983 76ers fare pretty well, and the appearance of three straight Philadelphia squads on this list suggests that the veteran team was mentally conditioned to play well against quality opponents. Since the overall number of wins for these ten teams is relatively similar, the table above is a more accurate comparison than the preceding table.

That 76ers club was also similar to the 1986 Celtics and 1987 Lakers in that their best players either matched, or exceeded, their regular season averages when playing against the best teams in the league: those who won 50 or more games. Certainly, better players tend to play more minutes against better opponents, while resting against weaker foes, and more time on the court provides the opportunity to post more impressive statistics, but the data is worth examining. Each of these three squads also featured the NBA's Regular Season MVP, who in each case also took home the Finals MVP, and their statistics are highlighted in the tables that follow.

1983 76ers Player Averages

Name	vs. 50-win teams					Regular Season			
	G	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG
J.J. Anderson	2	3.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	1.3	0.9	0.1
Maurice Cheeks	17	32.6	11.4	2.1	6.4	31.2	12.5	2.6	6.9
Earl Cureton	14	12.9	2.4	3.1	0.2	13.5	3.4	3.7	0.6
Franklin Edwards	17	14.1	6.2	0.6	2.2	15.6	6.7	1.0	2.7
Julius Erving	14	36.2	23.2	7.3	3.5	33.6	21.4	6.8	3.7
Marc Iavaroni	18	20.3	5.0	4.2	1.4	20.2	5.1	4.1	1.0
Clemon Johnson	7	22.0	5.7	6.3	0.4	21.8	6.8	6.4	0.8
Reggie Johnson	7	20.9	7.0	4.1	1.1	18.9	5.5	3.1	0.8
Bobby Jones	15	25.9	8.9	4.1	2.4	23.6	9.0	4.6	1.9
Moses Malone (MVP)	17	41.1	26.2	15.4	1.2	37.5	24.5	15.3	1.3
Mark McNamara	3	9.7	2.3	1.7	0.7	5.1	2.2	2.1	0.2
Clint Richardson	17	24.8	8.7	3.4	1.8	22.8	7.6	3.2	2.2
Russ Schoene	9	18.3	7.3	4.8	0.9	15.3	5.1	3.3	0.7
Andrew Toney	17	33.3	22.1	3.1	5.1	30.5	19.7	2.8	4.5

Andrew Toney's averages were higher across the board against the cream of the league, and Moses Malone, in the absence of a quality backup center, played a lot of minutes against the better teams, a trend that continued in the playoffs (40.3 mpg). Malone's trademark was consistency and an ability to wear down the opposition as the game progressed; he grabbed ten or more rebounds in 57 of his first 58 games as a 76er, and the one exception was an efficient 24 point, 9 rebound effort in just 28 minutes as Philadelphia dispatched Cleveland 120-102 to drop the Cavaliers record to 1-12. After falling short of a double-double in four other games down the stretch with the Sixers playing out the string, Malone had twelve or more rebounds in each of the 76ers playoff games en route to the title.

1986 Celtics Player Averages

Name	vs. 50-win teams					Regular Season			
	G	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG
Danny Ainge	21	29.7	9.8	3.4	5.0	30.1	10.7	2.9	5.1
Larry Bird (MVP)	21	39.3	25.8	9.5	6.7	38.0	25.8	9.8	6.8
Rick Carlisle	20	9.0	3.0	0.9	1.1	9.9	2.6	1.0	1.4
Dennis Johnson	19	36.2	17.1	3.5	6.3	35.0	15.6	3.4	5.8
Greg Kite	14	4.9	0.4	0.9	0.1	7.3	1.3	2.0	0.3
Kevin McHale	19	35.9	21.2	8.6	2.3	35.3	21.3	8.1	2.7
Robert Parish	21	31.8	14.7	8.0	2.0	31.7	16.1	9.5	1.8
Jerry Sichting	21	20.3	5.3	1.6	2.4	19.5	6.5	1.3	2.3
David Thirdkill	8	9.5	2.1	1.1	0.3	7.9	3.3	1.4	0.3
Sam Vincent	12	7.1	2.5	0.3	0.8	7.6	3.2	0.8	1.2
Bill Walton	21	19.8	8.7	6.6	2.5	19.3	7.6	6.8	2.1
Scott Wedman	21	15.0	7.4	2.1	1.3	17.7	8.0	2.4	1.1
Sly Williams	2	6.0	1.5	1.5	0.5	9.0	2.8	2.5	0.3

The numbers for Bird and McHale are eerily similar regardless of the opposition, while Dennis Johnson surpasses Robert Parish as the Celtics third-best scorer against quality opponents. Another indication of D.J.'s ability to rise to the occasion is this simple statistic: over his career, not only did he average more points during the playoffs (17.3) than during the regular season (14.1), but D.J. was three points better a game in playoffs *with each of his three teams* throughout all phases of his career, in Seattle, Phoenix and then Boston. Bird and Parish did not do that, and neither did Julius Erving or Magic, whose regular season and playoff averages are essentially same. McHale narrowly averaged more points during the playoffs (18.8 vs. 17.9) but the differential is far less than D.J.'s. One player who does deserve mention alongside Dennis Johnson is James Worthy, who inspired his "Big Game James" nickname by averaging 21.1 in the postseason versus 17.6 in the regular season. Predictably, Worthy's regular season numbers in 1987 were also a few ticks higher against the best in the league, although the weak Western Conference provided just one 50-win opponent, the Dallas Mavericks, resulting in a smaller sample size than the 1983 76ers or 1986 Celtics.

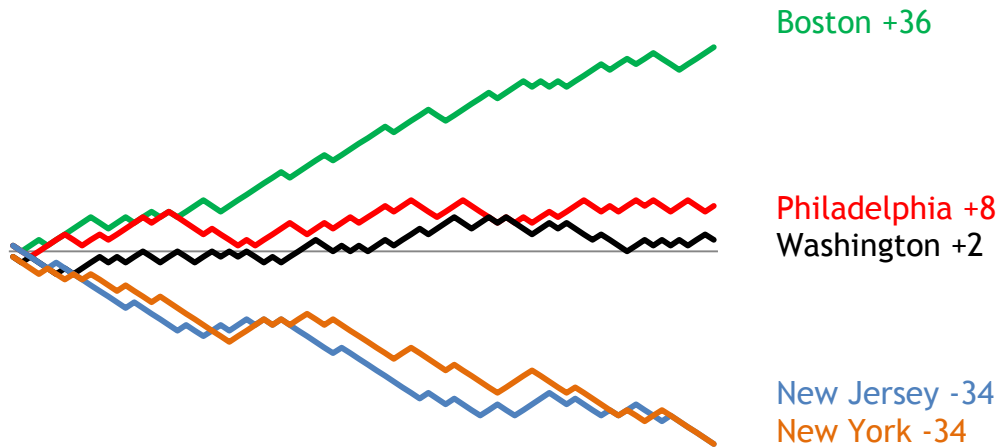
1987 Lakers Player Averages

Name	vs. 50-win teams					Regular Season			
	G	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG	MPG	PPG	RPG	APG
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar	12	35.1	18.8	6.8	4.5	31.3	17.5	6.7	2.6
Adrian Branch	2	3.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	6.8	4.3	1.7	0.5
Frank Brickowski	5	8.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	10.9	3.9	2.6	0.3
Michael Cooper	13	29.4	11.0	3.5	4.5	27.5	10.5	3.1	4.5
A.C. Green	12	28.2	10.0	7.6	0.8	28.4	10.8	7.8	1.1
Magic Johnson (MVP)	13	38.8	25.4	5.9	9.8	36.3	23.9	6.3	12.2
Wes Matthews	8	10.3	5.3	0.5	1.4	10.6	4.2	0.9	2.0
Kurt Rambis	12	19.8	4.3	5.6	0.6	19.4	5.7	5.8	0.8
Byron Scott	13	35.2	15.9	4.4	4.2	33.3	17.0	3.5	3.4
Mike Smrek	6	7.7	2.2	0.5	0.2	6.7	2.2	1.1	0.1
Billy Thompson	7	8.7	3.1	1.6	0.6	12.9	5.6	2.9	1.0
Mychal Thompson	2	23.5	9.0	4.5	0.5	20.6	10.1	4.1	0.8
James Worthy	13	37.1	21.2	6.1	2.7	34.4	19.4	5.7	2.8

The 1987 Lakers were a very talented team, but (as a biased Celtics fan) I believe that the 1986 Celtics were the best team of the 80s Era. Unfortunately, that team did not get to face the 76ers in their prime or even the Lakers in the Finals, so detractors can point out their easier-than-usual road in the playoffs. Even so, the Celtics biggest challenge that year was boredom and a tendency to play down to the level of their competition. Against quality teams, Boston excelled.

1986-87 At a Glance

1986-87 Atlantic Division

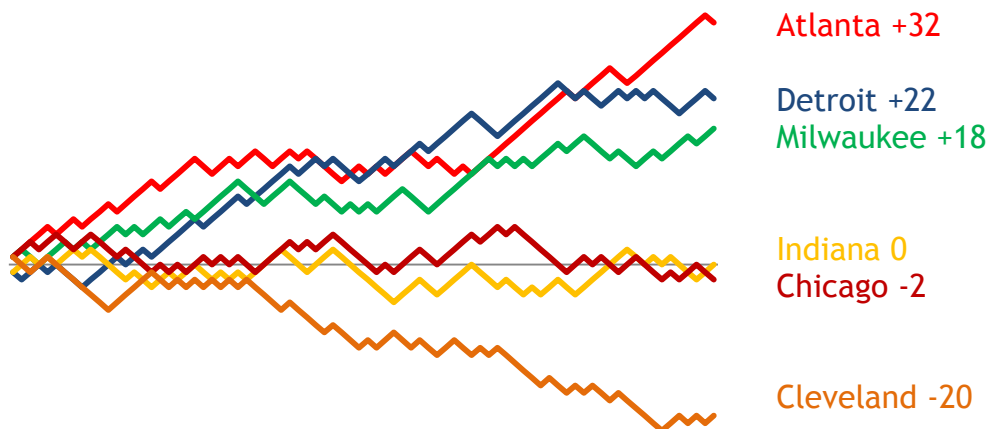


Boston	59-23	
Philadelphia	45-37	
Washington	42-40	
New Jersey	24-58	
New York	24-58	

Lonely at the Top

The 76ers managed to pull back ahead of the Bullets down the stretch (finishing 12-9 vs. 10-13 for Washington) after trailing them by a percentage point on March 7. As a result, the Celtics and 76ers resided in the top two spots in the division for the eighth straight year. Philadelphia had finished first or second for twelve straight seasons, the longest such streak since Boston's thirteen year dominance from 1955-56 through 1967-68. The 76ers then finished fourth in 1987-88, leaving the Celtics mark intact; the Spurs would break the record in 2010-11.

1986-87 Central Division



Atlanta	57-25	
Detroit	52-30	
Milwaukee	50-32	
Indiana	41-41	
Chicago	40-42	
Cleveland	31-51	

Opening Tip: Brad Daugherty, Ron Harper, Johnny Newman, and Mark Price

Final Buzzer: Junior Bridgeman, Julius Erving, Clint Richardson, and Scott Wedman

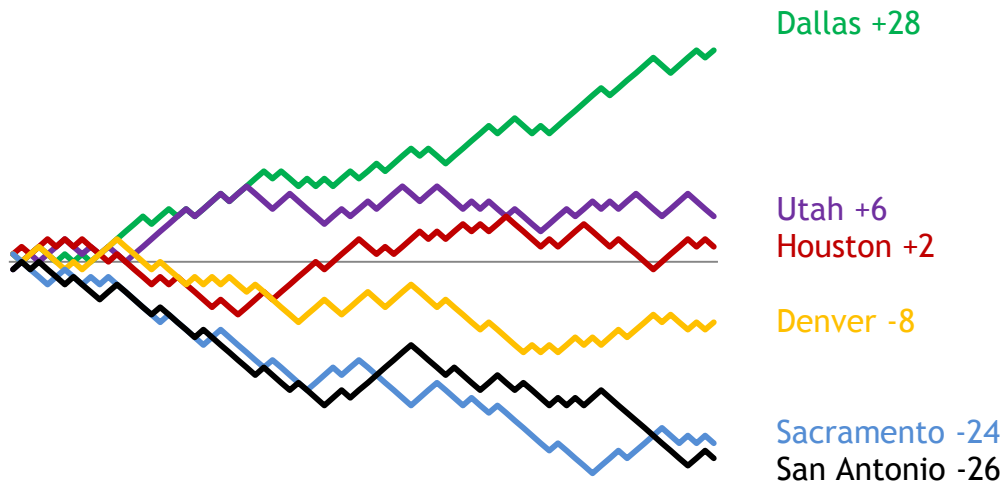
8

Most playoff appearances by a head coach in 80s Era
(Don Nelson, Milwaukee)

13

Number of head coaches in 80s Era who failed to make the playoffs even once

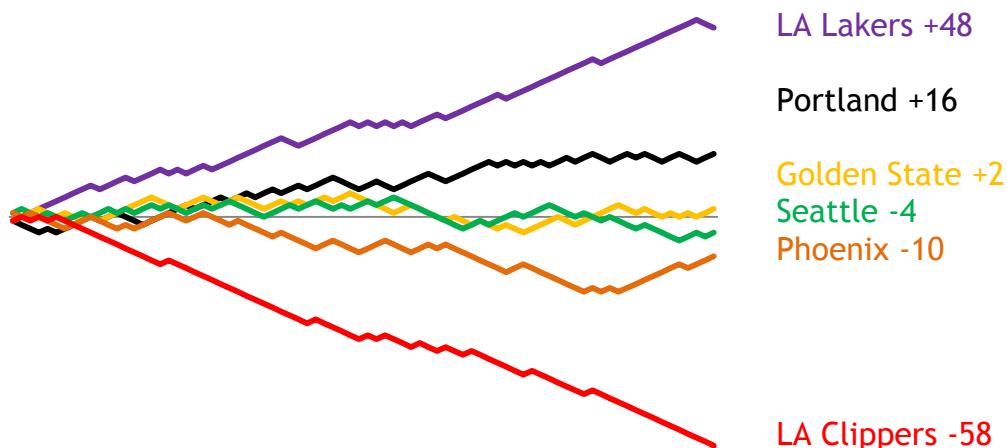
1986-87 Midwest Division



Dallas	55-27	
Utah	44-38	
Houston	42-40	
Denver	37-45	
Sacramento	29-53	
San Antonio	28-54	

Windfall

On April 3, 1987, the NBA's Expansion Committee announced their recommendation to grow the NBA to 26 teams by adding franchises in Charlotte (1988) and Minneapolis and either Orlando or Miami (1989). But nineteen days later, the Board of Governors approved all four cities, with Miami to also join the league in 1988, since, as Commissioner David Stern said, "The two Florida applications were in such excellent shape that the board just couldn't say no, and we saw great civic support from the business community and the fans in both Charlotte and Minneapolis." The decision also gave each of the 23 vested owners an extra \$1.4 million in their pockets; the entrance fee for each expansion team had been fixed at \$32.5 million, so adding a 27th member boosted the overall take from expansion by 33 percent.

1986-87 Pacific Division

LA Lakers	65-17	
Portland	49-33	
Golden State	42-40	
Seattle	39-43	
Phoenix	36-46	
LA Clippers	12-70	

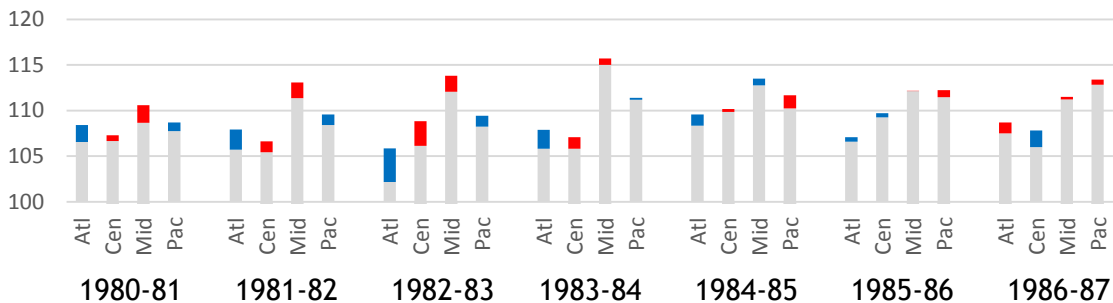
Off the Court

November	Iran-Contra scandal becomes public
March	General Motors purchases the American Motors Corporation; U2 releases <i>The Joshua Tree</i> , which becomes their best-selling album
May	47-year-old Al Unser becomes the oldest Indy 500 winner and claims a record-tying fourth victory
June	Ronald Reagan urges Mikhail Gorbachev to “tear down this wall” during a speech at the Berlin Wall

All-Wall Street Team: Gene Banks, World B. Free, Sidney Green, Mark Price, Buck Williams

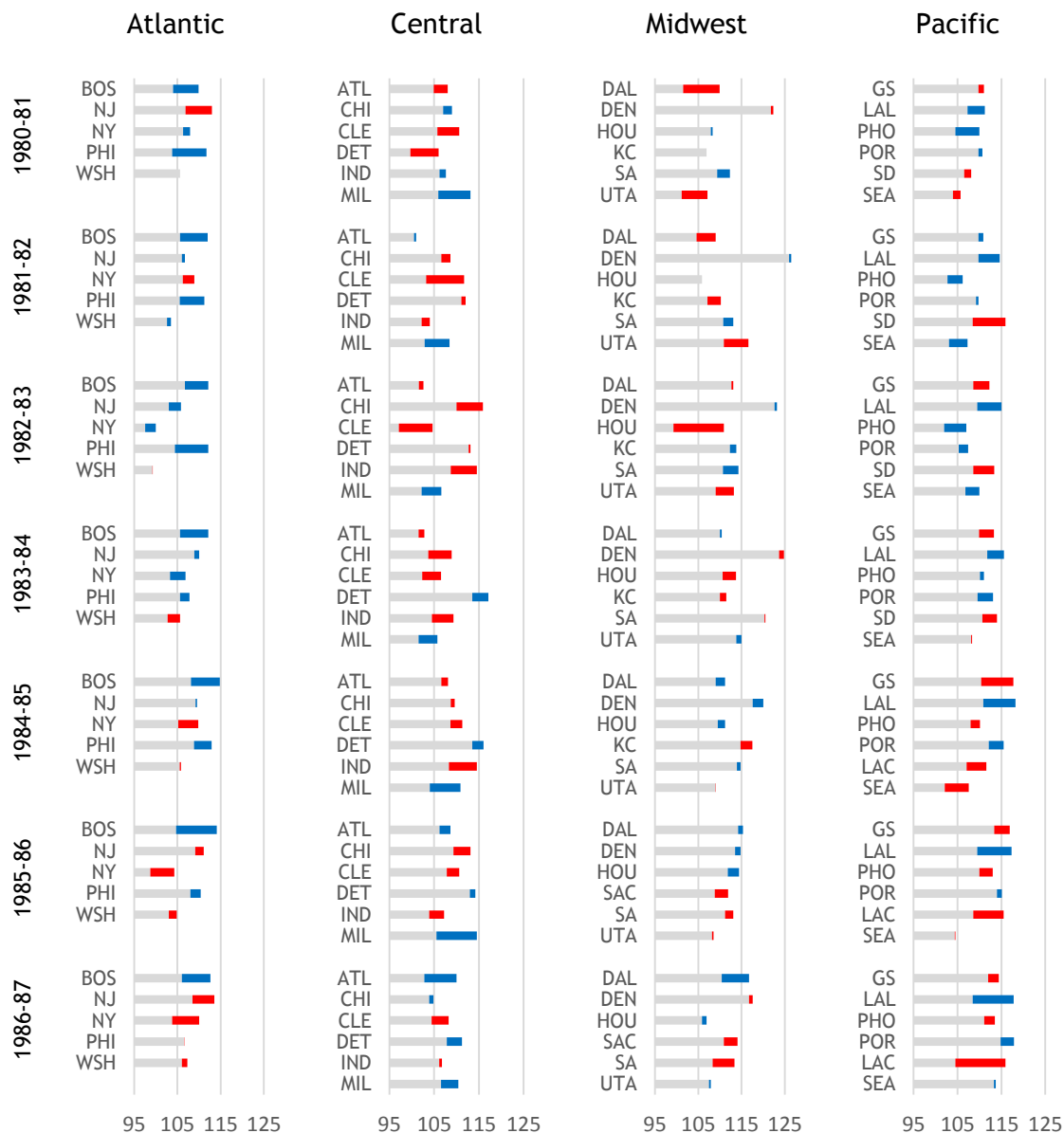
East vs. West

During the 80s Era, the Western Conference earned a reputation as the home of a higher-scoring, more wide-open game than the physical, defensive-minded game played in the East. The Celtics-76ers matchups in the Eastern Conference Finals, and later, the Lakers-Celtics battles in the Finals, helped cement that belief, which was justified, as the tables below show. The NBA's decision to realign their divisions in 1980 also played a role. With the arrival of the Dallas Mavericks, the league considered placing them in the Central Division and moving the Cleveland Cavaliers to the Midwest, a geographically dishonest, yet understandable plan. But instead, the league opted to shift the Houston Rockets and San Antonio Spurs to the Midwest and locate the Mavericks in that division (under either scheme, all three Texas-based teams would have resided in the same division). The Milwaukee Bucks and Chicago Bulls were relocated to the Central, creating a division that was centered in the blue collar upper Midwestern states, with the exception of the Atlanta Hawks. Over the next seven seasons, the teams in the Midwest and Pacific divisions consistently averaged more points per game than their Eastern counterparts, and the Spurs fast paced offense helped to tip the scales:



Note: Bars represent points scored and allowed. **Blue highlight** indicates that on average, the teams scored more points than they allowed; **red highlight** indicates the opposite. Size of the colored bar represents the delta.

But scoring more points does not translate into more wins unless your defense can keep pace, and many Western teams surrendered points faster than they could score. The chart on the next page shows each team's contribution to the figure above. Reading the chart horizontally provides a comparison of divisions within a single season; each column highlights how the divisions changed over time, between seasons. In some cases there is a season that stands out, such as the 1982-83 Chicago Bulls, which coincided with the one year tenure of the offensive-minded Paul Westhead as head coach.



Bars represent points scored and allowed. **Blue highlight** indicates that the team scored more points than they allowed; **red highlight** indicates the opposite. For example, the 1986-87 champion Lakers scored 117.8 ppg and gave up 108.5 ppg; the Clippers scored 104.5 ppg and surrendered 115.9 ppg while winning just 12 games.

However, there are some unmistakable trends. In each of these seven seasons, the Celtics, Lakers and 76ers each scored more points than they allowed, with the exception of Philadelphia's 1986-87 campaign. The top twelve scoring teams of these seven years all resided in the Western Conference, as did eighteen of the top twenty; the Pistons were the only Eastern team to crack the list. These teams were talented enough offensively to "outscore" their defense, or come within a point or so of doing it over an entire season.

Season	Team	PPG	OPPG	DIFF	W-L
1981-82	Denver Nuggets	126.5	126.0	0.5	46-36
1983-84	Denver Nuggets	123.7	124.8	-1.1	38-44
1982-83	Denver Nuggets	123.2	122.6	0.6	45-37
1980-81	Denver Nuggets	121.8	122.3	-0.5	37-45
1983-84	San Antonio Spurs	120.3	120.5	-0.2	37-45
1984-85	Denver Nuggets	120.0	117.6	2.4	52-30
1984-85	Los Angeles Lakers	118.2	110.9	7.3	62-20
1986-87	Portland Trail Blazers	117.9	114.8	3.1	49-33
1986-87	Los Angeles Lakers	117.8	108.5	9.3	65-17
1985-86	Los Angeles Lakers	117.3	109.5	7.8	62-20
1983-84	Detroit Pistons	117.1	113.5	3.6	49-33
1986-87	Denver Nuggets	116.7	117.6	-0.9	37-45
1986-87	Dallas Mavericks	116.7	110.4	6.3	55-27
1984-85	Detroit Pistons	116.0	113.5	2.5	46-36
1983-84	Los Angeles Lakers	115.6	111.8	3.8	54-28
1984-85	Portland Trail Blazers	115.5	112.1	3.4	42-40
1985-86	Dallas Mavericks	115.3	114.2	1.1	44-38
1985-86	Portland Trail Blazers	115.1	114.0	1.1	40-42
1982-83	Los Angeles Lakers	115.0	109.5	5.5	58-24
1983-84	Utah Jazz	115.0	113.8	1.2	45-37

But some of their colleagues were less fortunate, as the following table of the top 20 highest scoring averages allowed shows:

Season	Team	PPG	OPPG	DIFF	W-L
1981-82	Denver Nuggets	126.5	126.0	0.5	46-36
1983-84	Denver Nuggets	123.7	124.8	-1.1	38-44
1982-83	Denver Nuggets	123.2	122.6	0.6	45-37
1980-81	Denver Nuggets	121.8	122.3	-0.5	37-45
1983-84	San Antonio Spurs	120.3	120.5	-0.2	37-45
1984-85	Golden State Warriors	110.4	117.7	-7.3	22-60
1984-85	Denver Nuggets	120.0	117.6	2.4	52-30
1986-87	Denver Nuggets	116.7	117.6	-0.9	37-45
1984-85	Kansas City Kings	114.8	117.5	-2.7	31-51
1985-86	Golden State Warriors	113.4	116.9	-3.5	30-52
1981-82	Utah Jazz	110.9	116.6	-5.7	25-57
1982-83	Chicago Bulls	111.0	115.9	-4.9	28-54
1986-87	Los Angeles Clippers	104.5	115.9	-11.4	12-70
1981-82	San Diego Clippers	108.5	115.9	-7.4	17-65

1985-86	Los Angeles Clippers	108.6	115.5	-6.9	32-50
1986-87	Portland Trail Blazers	117.9	114.8	3.1	49-33
1982-83	Indiana Pacers	108.7	114.5	-5.8	20-62
1984-85	Indiana Pacers	108.3	114.5	-6.2	22-60
1986-87	Golden State Warriors	112.0	114.4	-2.4	42-40
1985-86	Dallas Mavericks	115.3	114.2	1.1	44-38

Seventeen of the teams on this list are from the West, and while it includes some of the worst teams of the decade (1987 Clippers, 1982 Clippers, 1983 Pacers, 1985 Pacers, 1982 Jazz) from *both* conferences—and Westhead's Bulls—this table is another indicator of how the Western Conference game was typically higher-scoring than the games in the East. It is also worth noting a franchise that is missing from this chart: the Los Angeles Lakers, who held five of the top twenty spots in the previous table. This illustrates how point *differential* is a much more positive indicator of failure than points scored or points allowed. Here's the list of the twenty *worst* teams in terms of point differential from 1981 through 1987:

Season	Team	PPG	OPPG	DIFF	W-L
1982-83	Houston Rockets	99.3	110.9	-11.6	14-68
1986-87	Los Angeles Clippers	104.5	115.9	-11.4	12-70
1981-82	Cleveland Cavaliers	103.2	111.7	-8.5	15-67
1980-81	Dallas Mavericks	101.5	109.9	-8.4	15-67
1982-83	Cleveland Cavaliers	97.1	104.6	-7.5	23-59
1981-82	San Diego Clippers	108.5	115.9	-7.4	17-65
1984-85	Golden State Warriors	110.4	117.7	-7.3	22-60
1985-86	Los Angeles Clippers	108.6	115.5	-6.9	32-50
1980-81	Detroit Pistons	99.7	106.0	-6.3	21-61
1986-87	New York Knicks	103.8	110.0	-6.2	24-58
1984-85	Indiana Pacers	108.3	114.5	-6.2	22-60
1980-81	New Jersey Nets	106.9	113.0	-6.1	24-58
1980-81	Utah Jazz	101.2	107.1	-5.9	28-54
1982-83	Indiana Pacers	108.7	114.5	-5.8	20-62
1981-82	Utah Jazz	110.9	116.6	-5.7	25-57
1985-86	New York Knicks	98.7	104.3	-5.6	23-59
1984-85	Seattle SuperSonics	102.1	107.6	-5.5	31-51
1983-84	Chicago Bulls	103.7	108.9	-5.2	27-55
1986-87	San Antonio Spurs	108.3	113.4	-5.1	28-54
1986-87	New Jersey Nets	108.5	113.5	-5.0	24-58

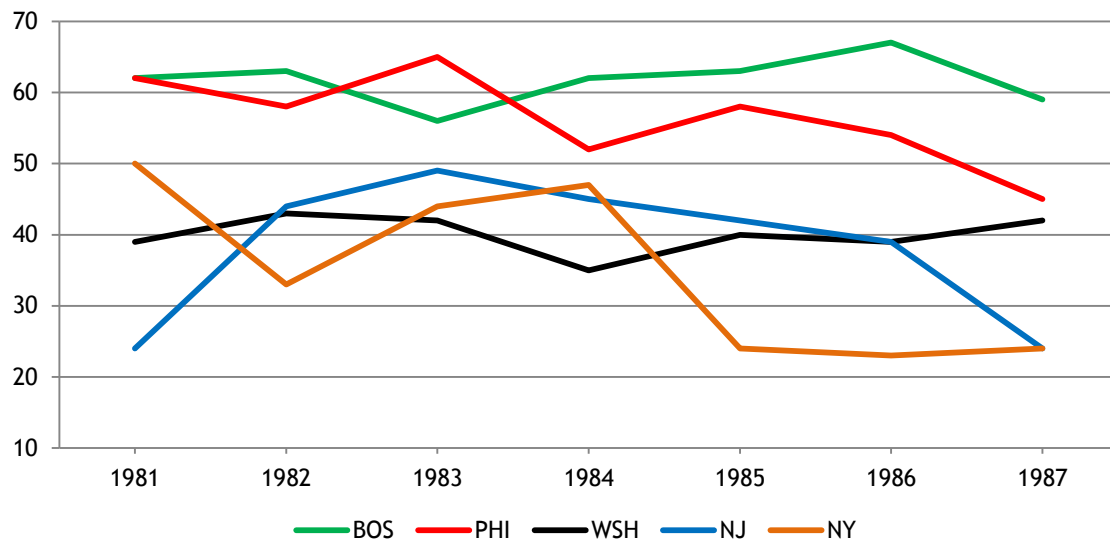
Note that the number of teams from each conference is evenly split, at ten apiece. None of them made the playoffs. Only two (1985-86 Clippers and 1984-85 SuperSonics) even won 30 games. Now look at the list of the twenty *best* teams in terms of point differential for this same period:

Season	Team	PPG	OPPG	DIFF	W-L
1985-86	Boston Celtics	114.1	104.7	9.4	67-15
1986-87	Los Angeles Lakers	117.8	108.5	9.3	65-17
1985-86	Milwaukee Bucks	114.5	105.5	9.0	57-25
1980-81	Philadelphia 76ers	111.7	103.8	7.9	62-20
1985-86	Los Angeles Lakers	117.3	109.5	7.8	62-20
1982-83	Philadelphia 76ers	112.1	104.4	7.7	65-17
1984-85	Los Angeles Lakers	118.2	110.9	7.3	62-20
1980-81	Milwaukee Bucks	113.1	105.9	7.2	60-22
1986-87	Atlanta Hawks	110.0	102.8	7.2	57-25
1984-85	Milwaukee Bucks	110.9	104.0	6.9	59-23
1984-85	Boston Celtics	114.8	108.1	6.7	63-19
1986-87	Boston Celtics	112.6	106.0	6.6	59-23
1983-84	Boston Celtics	112.1	105.6	6.5	62-20
1981-82	Boston Celtics	112.0	105.6	6.4	63-19
1986-87	Dallas Mavericks	116.7	110.4	6.3	55-27
1980-81	Boston Celtics	109.9	104.0	5.9	62-20
1981-82	Philadelphia 76ers	111.2	105.5	5.7	58-24
1982-83	Los Angeles Lakers	115.0	109.5	5.5	58-24
1980-81	Phoenix Suns	110.0	104.5	5.5	57-25
1981-82	Milwaukee Bucks	108.4	102.9	5.5	55-27

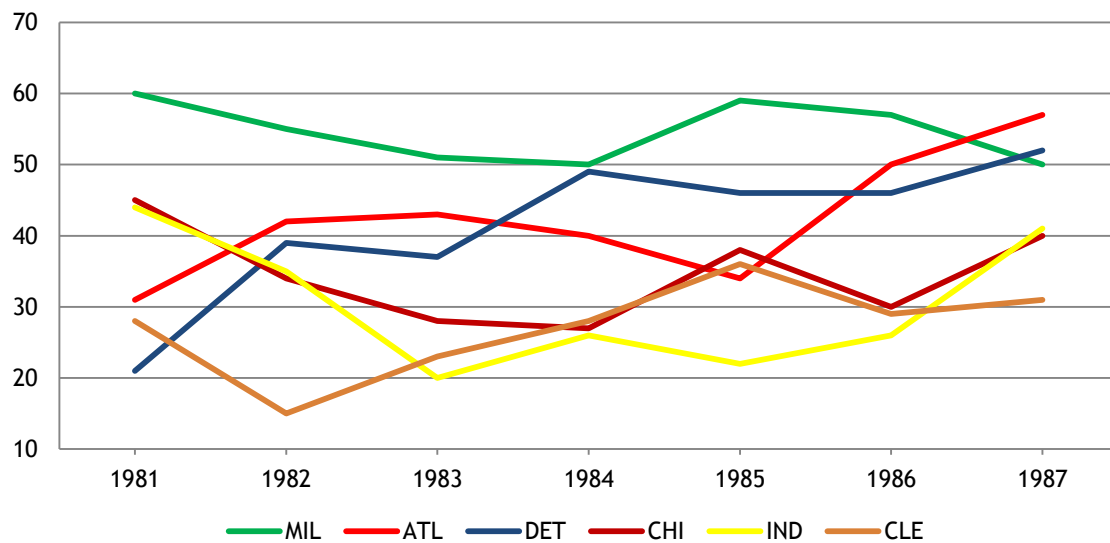
Every team in this table won at least 55 games and made the playoffs; six won the championship, ten reached the Finals, and fourteen reached the conference finals. Interestingly, fourteen of the teams are from the Eastern Conference; while the two conferences played at different paces, they also proved that it is possible to win or lose at any pace. The value of this statistic holds true in the playoffs as well; from 1981 through 1987, the only team to win the Finals without finishing first in point differential during the playoffs were the 1983-84 Celtics (4.2) who finished second the Lakers (6.9), but that is not truly an outlier: that Celtics team lost more playoff games (8) than any other 80s Era champion (it was the first year that the playoff field expanded to 16 teams) and were the only title winner to lose more games than the runner-up (Lakers, 7).

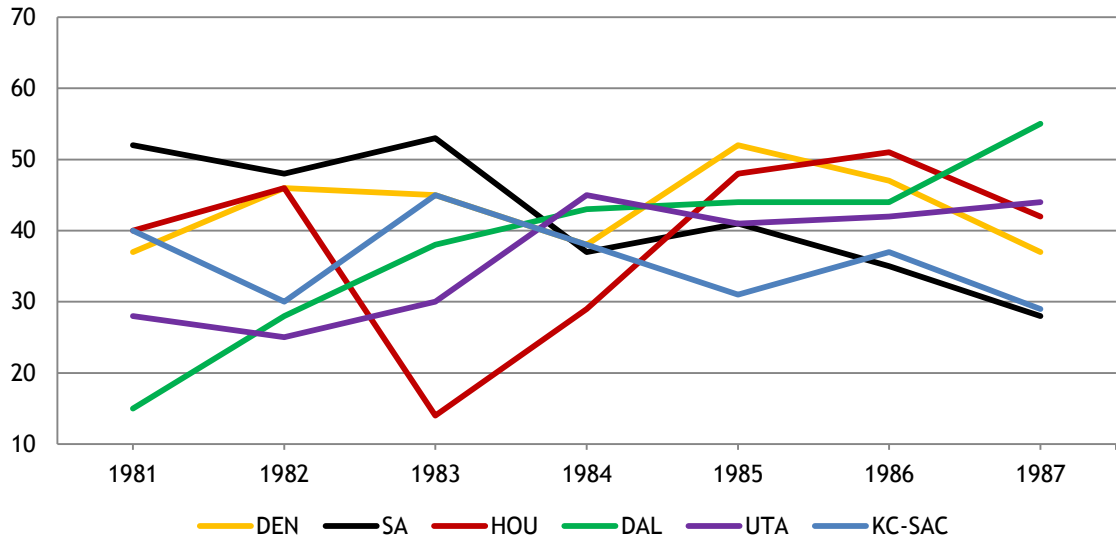
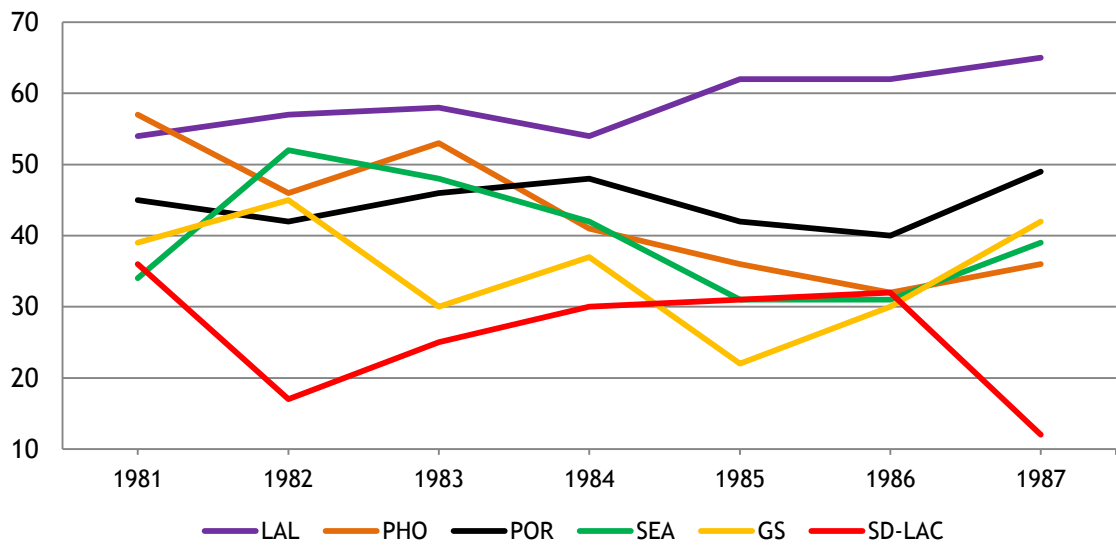
Division-by-Division Records

Atlantic Division Wins per Season 1981-1987



Central Division Wins per Season 1981-1987



Midwest Division Wins per Season 1981-1987**Pacific Division Wins per Season 1981-1987**

Chapter Four

Name Game

Word association is a common game and sometimes a layman's psychological tool. It provides insight into our subconscious, and helps us organize our memories and remember song lyrics. If someone says "1968" to you, you will probably have a much different reaction, and think of far different words, than if they had said "1988" or "1868".

When thinking about the 80s Era the same principle applies; mention any individual season to me and my instinctive reaction varies, based partially on whether the Celtics won the title that year. Something similar happens when I read a team name, catch a glimpse of a long-lost logo or uniform, or run across a mention of a former player or coach. This chapter provides a snapshot view of each of the twenty-three NBA franchises of the 80s Era, while focusing on one representative player or contributor. The goal is not to identify the "best" player for each team during this period, but rather to illustrate a person who symbolizes (at least, in my mind) an interesting aspect of his particular team. I have omitted superstars like Larry Bird, Julius Erving and Magic Johnson, whose careers are covered extensively throughout the rest of this book, to avoid repetition while shedding some light on their lesser-known teammates and colleagues.

Eastern Conference

Atlanta Hawks

Tree Rollins

#30 7'1" Center 1977-1988

Dominique Wilkins was a much better player, and other teammates such as Doc Rivers and Spud Webb may be more memorable as contributors on a pair of 50-win teams at the end of the 80s Era, but Tree Rollins left an unmistakable mark on Atlanta basketball history—and on Danny Ainge's right middle finger. Rollins was a tough, 7'1" center who

earned Third Team AP All-American honors at Clemson before being drafted by the Hawks with the fourteenth pick in the 1977 draft. He played in Atlanta for over a decade, and while Rollins never averaged double-figures in points or rebounds (topping out at 8.9/9.4 in 1979-80) he made his greatest impact on the defensive end of the floor. Fittingly for a man nicknamed Tree, he finished in the top three in blocked shots six times, and led the league in blocks in 1982-83, earning a spot on the All-Defensive Second Team for the first time. He received a First Team nod the following season.

Rollins was temperamental on the court, and the Celtics had not been spared his wrath. In January 1980, he was ejected in the first quarter, along with Dave Cowens of the Celtics, following an exchange of punches, and two years later he brawled with M.L. Carr. But what occurred during a nationally televised game on April 24, 1983 at Boston Garden will be remembered forever. The Celtics had inexplicably lost the second game of their opening round miniseries against the Hawks, forcing a deciding Game 3. Boston came out firing, leading 21-8 after seven minutes. The Hawks were being smothered by the Celtics pressing defense. "At the beginning of the game we had to apply a lot of defensive pressure and push the ball offensively," Gerald Henderson said after the game. "We had to play aggressively. We knew that if we lost, it would have been next year." Boston led 59-45 at halftime and still led by fourteen, 66-52, after a Rollins dunk with 6:15 left in the third.

Then Rollins turned up court, seeking retaliation for a "punch" that he believed Ainge had thrown at him moments earlier. (Ainge protested that allegation after the game, saying, "I put a fist in his chest, but it wasn't hard enough to hurt my wife.") Rollins threw his left elbow at Ainge's head as the latter tried in vain to push him away. The 6'3" Ainge then felled Rollins with a tackle below the waist, and in the ensuing fight Rollins bit Ainge's right middle finger, resulting in a cut that took five stitches to close. The benches emptied and the two teams piled on top of each other on the floor, while coaches, trainers and referees tried to separate the players. Strangely, Ainge and Hawks guard Mike Glenn were the only two players ejected; Glenn had scuffled with Ainge earlier in the game but Rollins was the clear antagonist in this incident.

Rollins was unapologetic after the game. "Danny turned around and caught me in the open floor. I squared off and he charged me. He made a mistake. After that, things got wild. ... There were a lot of guys out there, and I don't know what happened. I certainly didn't bite anybody." The NBA disagreed. Rollins was fined \$5,000 and suspended without pay for the first five games of the 1983-84 season, though the suspension was eventually reduced to two games.

Boston Celtics

Tiny Archibald

#7 6'1" Point Guard 1978-1983

Generously listed at 6'1" and possessing the best ball-handling and penetration skills of his generation, Nate "Tiny" Archibald cemented his Hall of Fame credentials with the Celtics in the first half of the 80s Era. Bob Cousy and the Cincinnati Royals had drafted Archibald in 1970 with a second-round pick, and by 1973 Tiny was the NBA's MVP, leading the league in scoring, assists and minutes played, all while playing on a 36-46 team (now called the Kansas City Kings) that failed to make the playoffs. Archibald's 34.0 scoring average that year arguably undervalued his importance to his team; he scored 40 or more points seventeen times, including three 50-plus efforts.

Injuries then derailed his career. Chicago center Tom Boerwinkle stepped on Archibald's foot during the season opener in October 1973, causing an Achilles tendon injury. Archibald's 42 points that night would remain his season high, and he would fail to score more than 31 the rest of the year, while playing just thirty-five games. Then, after being traded to the Nets, he suffered a ruptured Achilles tendon and missed the second half of the 1976-77 season and all of the 1977-78 campaign. In the meantime, Archibald was traded to the Buffalo Braves and then included in a franchise swap between the owners of the Braves/Clippers and the Celtics that sent him to Boston. Tiny pouted through the Celtics worst season in thirty years as he sensed his career was sputtering to an unsatisfying conclusion. Bill Fitch, who was hired at the start of Archibald's second season in Boston, admitted later that he knew that "Tiny was sullen and withdrawn when he fell on hard times" but felt that the former three-time All-Star could still run a pro team.

So in 1979, Archibald was as much in need of renewal as the Celtics franchise, and the arrival of Fitch, M.L. Carr and Larry Bird provided the needed spark. Archibald led the league in assists for part of the season before finishing second behind Micheal Ray Richardson; it was Archibald's best performance since his days with the Kings. He also made the All-Star Team again, but that did not stop the Celtics from leaving him exposed in the 1980 Expansion draft pool. Fortunately, Dallas valued youth over experience and selected Jeff Judkins instead. Archibald then had another stellar season in Boston and piloted the Celtics offense to the championship. The combination of Archibald and Bird led to some of the most amazing displays of passing the game had seen, rivaling the budding artistry of the "Showtime" Lakers' on the break.

Sadly for Celtics fans, Archibald's career did not end in Boston. After injuries cost him parts of the 1982 and 1983 seasons, including a separated shoulder during the 1982 Eastern Conference Finals, the Celtics released him in July 1983 a few weeks after acquiring Dennis Johnson and a few months before Tiny's thirty-fifth birthday. Archibald then signed with the

Milwaukee Bucks and played just 34 games before a right hamstring injury forced his retirement.

Chicago Bulls

Reggie Theus

#24 6'7" Shooting Guard 1978-1984

Before Michael Jordan arrived in Chicago, Reggie Theus was the star shooting guard for a bad team with a cool logo that made the playoffs only once from 1977 through 1984. Described by Anthony Cotton in *Sports Illustrated* as “so handsome, witty and urbane that he has come to be regarded by many women as a kind of matinee idol,” Theus cultivated his image by frequently taking spokesman and modeling jobs and talked freely with the press.

As a rookie in 1978-79, Theus was the Bulls second-leading scorer behind center Artis Gilmore, but as the 80s Era began the team floundered, going through a handful of coaches during Theus’s first four seasons with just one playoff appearance, a mild upset of the Knicks in the first round in 1981 followed by a four-game sweep at the hands of the Celtics. Two years later, the Bulls hired Paul Westhead as head coach, and he brought his fast paced style to Chicago, a task made easier when the slow-footed Gilmore was dealt to San Antonio. Theus, who had spent three years as a member of the UNLV Running Rebels, went on a scoring spree unprecedented in his career. During the first seven weeks of the 1982-83 season, he scored 40 or more points five times and averaged nearly 28 points per game. Theus had never scored 40 points in a pro game before—and never would again.

The peak of the outburst was a career-high 46-point performance at the Garden against the Celtics on December 22; the author was watching that night and followed Theus’s career from that point on. Theus was 16 of 33 from the floor and 12 of 13 from the line, then was his usual becoming self after the game: “I’m just one member of this club. Some nights I don’t score. ... I got fired up early in the game tonight.” However, the Celtics won 140-131, snapping a 1-3 skid. The score illustrated the problem with Westhead’s strategy: the Bulls simply could not play NBA-caliber defense. Chicago’s offensive output had risen to ninth in the NBA at 111.0 a game, but they would surrender 115.9 points a game, second-worst in the league, and their record would fall six games behind their pace of a year earlier, culminating in a 28-54 record.

Twelve months after his electrifying performance in Boston, Theus was benched, and then traded to Kansas City in February 1984. Paul Westhead’s tenure in Chicago had lasted only one season, and when the more defensive-minded Kevin Loughery replaced him, Theus could not measure up. “I just play a different system than Reggie is accustomed to,” Loughery told reporters during a seven-game winning streak in December 1983 that coincided with a

DNP-CD (did not play, coach's decision) streak for Theus; he played just five games from December 10 through the end of January. Loughery claimed he was not angry with Theus as a person (although Theus had held out in the preseason, which did not endear him to his new coach), but Loughery publicly lamented that he should have benched him *earlier*. Loughery said he initially backed down because Bulls ownership and the fans were so supportive of the popular guard, but Loughery then chose to do what he thought was best for the team. Theus tried to be diplomatic in public but the stress was showing: "If it was something I did or could do—work harder, say—I'd be at practice right now," Theus said at one point, "but I know that whatever's going on is out of my hands entirely." With Loughery preferring Quintin Dailey and rookie Mitchell Wiggins at shooting guard, Theus, a two-time All-Star, was soon dealt to the Kings for center Steve Johnson (who was destined to be a journeyman) and three second-round picks.

Obviously, once the Bulls selected Jordan in the 1984 draft, and he blossomed into the greatest player in NBA history, no one in Chicago would miss Theus on the court, despite his earlier popularity. Theus went on to have four-plus productive years with the Kings.

Cleveland Cavaliers

World B. Free

#21 6'2" Shooting Guard 1982-1986

When Bill Fitch left Cleveland in 1979 after shepherding the franchise through its first nine seasons in the NBA, he left behind a reasonable record for the coach of an expansion team: three winning seasons, all resulting in playoff appearances, including a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals in 1976. It would take the Cavaliers until 1985 to make the playoffs again, and they would not post a winning record until 1988. Even future Hall of Fame coach Chuck Daly, who left Philadelphia after four-plus years as an assistant to take the head job in Cleveland, suffered through a 9-32 tenure in 1981-82 with a young Bill Laimbeer and James Edwards in the frontcourt. During the 80s Era, the Cavs averaged 28 wins a year, and earned a series of high draft choices—which were all traded away. The Cavaliers original majority owner Nick Mileti sold out in February 1980, and when the team was subsequently purchased by Ted Stepien in April, chaos reigned for the next three years until the franchise changed hands again. Most famously, Stepien dealt away every Cleveland first-round pick from 1983 through 1986. Those moves inspired the NBA to pass the "Ted Stepien rule" to prohibit a team from trading back-to-back first round picks, and the league also allowed new owners George and Gordon Gund to "purchase" additional first-round picks for those four years. However, Stepien was following the playbook left behind by the previous ownership regime(s), who had traded all of Cleveland's first-round picks from *1977 through 1982*,

though they did manage to obtain a choice in 1978 by trading away their first-rounder in 1979, and acquired first-round picks in 1980 and 1982 as part of other deals. However, each of those picks turned out to be lower, and in some cases much lower, than the original selections that the Cavaliers had traded away.

Prior to 1986, when the Cavs (as the Gund's rechristened them with the introduction of a new logo) hired Wayne Embry as general manager and Lenny Wilkens as head coach, drafted Brad Daugherty and Ron Harper, and dealt for Mark Price, arguably the most recognizable basketball player in Cleveland was World B. Free, whose balding head was as distinctive as the name he bestowed on himself. Free, whose given name was Lloyd Bernard Free, had picked up the nickname "All-World" (or simply "World") during his junior high school days in Brooklyn, and by 1981 decided to legally change his first name to World. The obvious double meaning of his new name ("World B. Free") was intentional. "I saw how things were going," said Free in 2011, "and I just wanted the world to be at peace and be free. That's why I made that statement with the name change."

Acquired by the Cavaliers in December 1982 from the Warriors for Ron Brewer, Free led Cleveland in scoring the next four seasons, regularly finishing in the top ten in the NBA in scoring (and shot attempts). Cavaliers executive Harry Weltman was enamored with Free; in the book *Forty-Eight Minutes*, Weltman explained that "World brought talent and charisma to a franchise that desperately needed him." But in the summer of 1986, with Weltman out of the picture, Embry had no intention of burdening his new coach with a shot-obsessed veteran while trying to rebuild with young players, so he let Free's contract expire.

Coincidentally, Free had a connection with M.L. Carr of the Celtics: they were teammates for one season at Guilford College in North Carolina in 1973. Along with Bob Kaufman and Greg Jackson, they are the only Guilford alumni to play in the NBA. Carr was a First Team NAIA All-American in 1973, and Free succeeded him during the next two seasons, averaging 25 points a game.

Detroit Pistons

Kelly Tripucka

#7 6'6" Small Forward 1981-1986

In 1981 the Pistons had reached rock bottom. They had won just 37 games the previous two seasons combined, the product of the colossal failure of Dick Vitale, who was in Detroit less than two years but did a disproportionate amount of damage to the franchise, and the Pistons lackluster history, which stretched back decades.

The Pistons had never won a championship, and had not reached the NBA Finals since 1956, when the team was still based in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Their last appearance in the

(Western) Conference Finals was in 1962; from 1963 through 1973, the Pistons made the playoffs just twice (1963 and 1968) and finished above .500 only once (1971). Former player Ray Scott had engineered a renaissance of sorts during his tenure as head coach, guiding the team to the first two of four consecutive playoff appearances from 1974 through 1977. But Scott was fired midway through the 1975-76 season, and Herb Brown was canned after a 9-15 start in 1977-78. Vitale arrived the next season, posted a 30-52 record, and proceeded to build a dynasty—in Boston.

The 1977-78 Pistons were not devoid of talent. Their starting lineup featured Bob Lanier, M.L. Carr and Chris Ford, along with Eric Money and power forward John Shumate. Vitale dealt Ford to Boston after just three games for an underachieving Earl Tatum (who in turn was flipped for the equally underwhelming Ron Brewer) and brought back point guard Kevin Porter to run the offense. After the season, Porter signed a deal with the Bullets, and the Pistons were awarded Washington's first round picks in 1980 and 1982 as compensation. At the time, the Bullets were coming off back-to-back NBA finals appearances, so those draft picks were viewed as probable low round selections, likely with little value.

When Carr subsequently signed with Boston as a free agent, the two teams began work on negotiations for compensation. The Pistons rated Bob McAdoo the third-most valuable Celtic after Bird and Cowens, and ahead of Maxwell, who they felt lacked Carr's "defensive and leadership capabilities" (Carr did make the NBA All-Defensive Second Team in 1979, but this analysis illustrates the Vitale regime's inability to evaluate talent). Red Auerbach had publicly stated that McAdoo was off limits, and rejected the Pistons initial offer of two first-round picks in 1980 and 1982 to include McAdoo in the deal. But privately Auerbach wanted to dump the former MVP, due to McAdoo's poor attitude and because he had been acquired by former owner John Y. Brown without consulting him. The subsequent negotiations featured Auerbach offering Curtis Rowe or Tiny Archibald (both considered washed up at that point) and the Pistons suggesting that they would include a 1981 first rounder if Maxwell was sent to Detroit. Vitale, concerned that Larry O'Brien might be swayed by a legal argument floated by the Celtics that the Pistons had acted in bad faith during their negotiations with Carr—and thus were due no compensation at all—then offered to take McAdoo and include both of the Pistons and Bullets first round picks in 1980. Auerbach eagerly accepted.

A 4-8 start and a five-game losing streak led to Vitale's dismissal in November 1979. Jack McCloskey was then hired from the Pacers (where he was an assistant coach) to run the basketball operation, and by February, with the team in last place, Lanier was dealt to the Milwaukee Bucks for Kent Benson and a 1980 first-round draft pick to fill the gap left by the Carr/McAdoo swap. The Pistons lost 29 of their final 31 games and finished at 16-66. Boston won the coin flip for the number one pick, and turned the picks acquired from Detroit into Kevin McHale and Robert Parish; together with Ford, they were critically important contributors on the Celtics 1981 championship team, finishing sixth, fifth and fourth,

respectively, in minutes played. Meanwhile, the Pistons used the pick from Milwaukee to take guard Larry Drew at number seventeen, whose (drug-influenced) poor play led Detroit to dump him for two second-round picks after his rookie season. McAdoo's stay in Detroit lasted just one season and six games the next due to injuries; he was released in March 1981, as the Pistons were in the midst of a 21-61 season under new coach Scotty Robertson.

But there were glimpses of light on the horizon. The Pistons picked up an additional first rounder in 1981 when the Kansas City Kings signed center Leon Douglas as a free agent in June 1980. Detroit's record in 1980-81 was the worst in the Eastern Conference, and despite losing the coin flip to the Mavericks (who took Mark Aguirre) the Pistons selected future Hall of Fame point guard Isiah Thomas with the second pick. Then they used the Kings selection at number twelve to take forward Kelly Tripucka (pronounced Truh-puke-ah) from Notre Dame. Tripucka was the son of former NFL, CFL and AFL quarterback Frank Tripucka, who had also starred for the Irish.

The Pistons immediately became respectable again. "It's not an ideal situation, relying on two youngsters," Robertson told *Sports Illustrated* that season, but the team won 39 games for their best finish in five years. Tripucka had averaged 18 points per game during his junior and senior seasons at Notre Dame; he was an undersized small forward, but started all 82 games his rookie year and averaged over 21 points per game while shooting nearly fifty percent from the floor. Tripucka also made the All-Star team, and did not share his coach's reservations. "I've never been the kind of player who would back down and hide in the corner saying, 'Please don't pass the ball to me.' I'd rather be taking the big shots," Tripucka told a reporter that season. "I've been doing it for a long time. Why stop now?" Tripucka was equally effective against good teams. He scored 30 or more points against the 76ers five times as a Piston, including 45 on November 14, 1984. Meanwhile, the Pistons continued to improve the rest of their roster, acquiring Vinnie Johnson and Tripucka's former college teammate Bill Laimbeer during the season in separate trades with Seattle and Cleveland.

Tripucka continued to be one of the team's top two scorers over the next four seasons, making the All-Star team again in 1984, but when Chuck Daly was hired as head coach in 1983, Tripucka's days in Detroit were numbered; he never fit in with Daly's defense-first style. The Pistons made the second round of the playoffs in 1985, losing to the Celtics in six games, and when the Pistons regressed the following season, Tripucka was traded with Kent Benson to Utah for Adrian Dantley and two second-round picks. Tripucka was upset by the trade, and was quoted as saying, "They're just making changes for the sake of changing," but the addition of Dantley, the maturation of second-year guard Joe Dumars, and new rookies John Salley and Dennis Rodman, did propel the Pistons to the Eastern Conference Finals in 1987 and the NBA Finals a year later. The retooled Pistons were unmistakably a more athletic and physical team, better equipped for deep playoff runs. Dantley was then flipped for Mark Aguirre, and the Pistons won back-to-back NBA titles in 1989 and 1990.

Indiana Pacers

Herb Williams

#32 6'10" Power Forward-Center 1981-1989

The 80s Era was not kind to Pacers fans, who had seen the team win three ABA championships in the early 1970's under the tutelage of Bob "Slick" Leonard. The Pacers final season in the ABA foreshadowed their future struggles. For the first time since their inaugural season in 1968, Indiana finished below .500, as stars such as George McGinnis and Mel Daniels were replaced with the likes of Billy Knight and Len Elmore, inferior inheritors of the Pacers legacy. Leonard remained head coach for their first four seasons in the NBA but failed to post a winning record. The team even tried bringing back McGinnis, an Indianapolis native, in an ill-advised trade that sent Alex English (and more than 22,000 points over the next eleven seasons) to Denver in February 1980. McGinnis had been an All-Star in 1979, but after tearing ligaments in his left ankle later that season, he was never the same player. "I felt I had let the [Nuggets] organization and myself down," McGinnis said later, after Denver had missed the playoffs. "I felt I deserved to be traded." The aftereffects of the injury, combined with a loss of confidence, drove him out of the league after the 1981-82 season.

That same year, the Pacers had drafted Herb Williams from Ohio State and immediately moved him into the starting lineup. Williams remained there for the rest of the 80s Era, a steady but not spectacular presence on a frontline that featured Clark Kellogg, Steve Stipanovich, and later, Chuck Person. The Pacers draft record was more than respectable—Kellogg, Stipanovich, Vern Fleming, Wayman Tisdale and Person were their top picks from 1982 through 1986—but until they took Reggie Miller in 1987 they had never drafted a true superstar player despite earning a top ten selection each year. In 1983 they lost a coin flip for the top spot and settled for Stipanovich when the prize of the class was Ralph Sampson. But what happened the next season was far worse, the result of a bad trade made three years earlier. Five days before the 1980 draft, Indiana swapped their 1984 first-round pick to Portland for center Tom Owens, a journeyman who had already played for nine teams, including a sixteen-game stint with the Pacers in the ABA. Owens lasted one year in Indiana before being traded to Detroit for a second-round pick. In 1983-84 the Pacers finished with the worst record in the Eastern Conference again; the 1984 draft choice they had traded away became the second overall pick, which Portland used to take Sam Bowie ahead of Michael Jordan, Sam Perkins and Charles Barkley. The Pacers had lost a shot at getting out of the basement.

Williams stuck around long enough to score 19 points and grab 5 rebounds in the Pacers first NBA playoff victory against the Hawks in 1987, but after Rik Smits was drafted in 1988, Williams became expendable. The Pacers sent him to Dallas in a shrewd deal that brought back Detlef Schrempf, who blossomed into a two-time Sixth Man award winner and a three-

time All-Star in Indiana, along with a future draft choice that turned into Antonio Davis, a very serviceable backup forward. Williams was 31 years old and had never fully come back from bruised ribs suffered during the 1986-87 season. He was never as effective again.

Milwaukee Bucks

Sidney Moncrief

#4 6'4" Guard 1979-1989

Moncrief was a First-Team AP All-American in 1979 for Arkansas, nearly averaging a double-double (22.0/9.6 rebounds) as a *guard*. Bill Sharman and Jerry West of the Lakers thought about trading down in the first round of the draft before taking Magic Johnson at the request/demand of incoming owner Jerry Buss, and the Bucks were pleased to find Moncrief available at pick number five. Milwaukee was selecting fifth as a result of two trades. A year earlier they sent a 1978 first rounder (#15) to Cleveland for their 1979 first rounder (which turned out to be #4), then Milwaukee traded down from fourth to fifth and picked up \$50,000 in cash when head coach Don Nelson convinced Dick Vitale that the Bucks wanted to take Greg Kesler of Michigan State. But after the draft Nelson insisted he preferred Moncrief all along, despite questions about the soundness of his basketball fundamentals.

Injury trouble plagued him from the start. At the draft, concern about a "roughened" left knee cap scared away the Bulls, and in 1986-87 he would play just 39 games due to right knee tendonitis and was never a force again. But when healthy, Moncrief had a vertical leap of 38 inches and was equally adept on both offense and defense. In the 1979 NCAA Tournament Moncrief drew the assignment of guarding the much taller Larry Bird and held him to six points over the last ten minutes as the Razorbacks lost by two. Moncrief also did a credible job of guarding Bird in the pros. "He does everything you're supposed to do on defense and doesn't take any short cuts," Bird said in 1982. "Plus he does it every night." Moncrief made five All-NBA Teams and four All-Defensive Teams, was named Defensive Player of the Year in 1983 and 1984, and earned a spot on five consecutive All-Star teams.

With Moncrief in the backcourt, Milwaukee became a perennial playoff rival of both the Celtics and 76ers after the Bucks moved to the Eastern Conference for the 1980-81 season. However, they were destined to be remembered as the fourth-best team of the 80s Era, unable to reach the NBA Finals despite a talented roster that always seemed a player short: a center. In the early 1980's Bob Lanier was past his prime; he was succeeded by Alton Lister, a good backup center but a mediocre starter. By the time the Bucks acquired Jack Sikma in 1986, he was past *his* prime and the supporting cast had begun to decay.

In 1981 Milwaukee won 60 games, third-best in the NBA behind Boston and Philadelphia, but the Bucks fell in seven games to the 76ers in the Eastern Conference Semifinals, losing

99-98 in the clincher despite rallying from a sixteen point deficit in the third quarter behind 36 points by Marques Johnson. A year later, Milwaukee lost to Philadelphia again, as both Quinn Buckner and Junior Bridgeman missed the playoffs with injuries. The Bucks upset the Celtics with a stunning sweep in 1983, but then lost to the 76ers for the third straight year.

Following a 4-1 loss to Boston in 1984, Nelson shuffled the deck, sending Johnson, Bridgeman and Harvey Catchings to the Clippers for former Rookie of the Year Terry Cummings, shooting guard Craig Hodges, and swingman Ricky Pierce. Milwaukee had allowed Bob Lanier and Brian Winters to retire, and wanted to avoid growing old again; it was no coincidence that the Bucks got back the three youngest players involved in the deal with the Clippers. After three seasons of declining win totals, Milwaukee won 59 games the next year, prompting Nelson to tell reporters, "I've had more fun coaching this season than in any of my previous eight. To do a job on paper and have the team believe in your principles and then carry them out on the court gives me a very special feeling." But his Bucks were swept by the 76ers in the Eastern Conference Semifinals anyway.

Redemption came in 1986. After trailing 2-1 against the 76ers, the Bucks won a rousing 113-112 victory at home in Game 7 to finally break through, even as Moncrief was hobbled by plantar fasciitis in his left heel. Unfortunately, they ran into a buzz-saw against the 67-15 Celtics, losing three games by double-digits en route to a sweep. A similar scenario unfolded in the following season. The Bucks failed to win their division for the first time in seven years, but got off to a great start in the playoffs with a 4-1 victory over the fading 76ers. In the semifinals, Milwaukee dropped the first two games in Boston, won Game 3 in overtime, and then dropped a heartbreaker in double-overtime in Game 4 as Bird and McHale combined for seventy-six points. But the Bucks forced a seventh game by winning the next two, and led 89-88 at the start of the fourth quarter in the deciding game before falling 119-113 in Don Nelson's last game as head coach. The Bucks run of 50 or more victories a season was over, and the franchise has only won that many games once since the end of the 80s Era. Moncrief retired in 1989 after playing two injury-plagued seasons, then returned for a one-year comeback with the Hawks in 1990 before retiring for good.

New Jersey Nets

Buck Williams

#52 6'8" Power Forward 1981-1989

Williams became famous for being an underrated player for so long that he eventually became overrated. It is closer to the truth that Williams was a remarkably *consistent* player, and thus an invaluable member of some otherwise forgettable Nets teams.

Statistically, his first six seasons after being drafted third overall out of Maryland are almost too similar to believe, especially on the boards:

Year	G	MPG	FGA	FG%	PPG	RPG	APG
1981-82	82	34.5	10.7	.582	15.5	12.3	1.3
1982-83	82	36.1	11.1	.588	17.0	12.5	1.5
1983-84	81	37.1	11.4	.535	15.7	12.2	1.6
1984-85	82	38.8	13.3	.530	18.2	12.3	2.0
1985-86	82	37.4	11.7	.523	15.9	12.0	1.6
1986-87	82	36.3	11.4	.557	18.0	12.5	1.6

When the 1982-83 Nets put together a shocking eleven game winning streak that began two days before Christmas, Williams had a double-double in ten of them, propelling New Jersey to a 24-13 record. The Nets finished the season with 49 wins, their most since joining the NBA; it would take New Jersey *nineteen years* to win that many games again (52 in 2001-02, coinciding with their first trip to the NBA Finals). Williams deserved most of the credit. Instead of basking in the glow of his Rookie of the Year season, Williams played in the Southern California Pro Summer League in 1982 and worked with head coach Larry Brown at a youth clinic in Italy. The extra work paid off, and Williams earned his second straight All-Star selection and his first (and only) All-NBA selection (to the Second Team).

A few weeks after the winning streak came to an end, the Nets sent Sleepy Floyd to the Warriors for point guard Micheal Ray Richardson. But the man nicknamed “Sugar” had a taste for the wrong kind of candy, and he spent part of the summer of 1983 in drug rehab. Richardson then showed up for training camp, but disappeared on October 5 for three days. When Richardson returned, he went back into rehab until December, when the Nets agreed to take him back in exchange for submitting to three drug tests a week and a league-imposed threat to ban him from basketball if he failed even one test. The Nets were 12-16 in his absence, then went 28-20 with Richardson in the lineup and 33-21 overall to get back into the playoffs.

The Nets had never won a NBA playoff game (they had been swept in three first-round miniseries) and were facing the defending champion 76ers in the first round, which had been expanded to a best-of-five format this season as the number of playoff teams was increased from twelve to sixteen (which also eliminated the first round byes previously awarded to division winners). But the 76ers had struggled to win 52 games that year, thirteen off their blistering pace of the year before; two 13-3 stretches, one leading into December and another in March, constituted half of their victory total for the season. Williams posted 25 points and added 16 rebounds in the first game, while Richardson scored 32 in the second, to go along with 9 assists, 7 rebounds and 4 steals, as the Nets took both games in Philadelphia by the nearly identical scores of 116-101 and 116-102. Williams was holding his own on the boards against Moses Malone, while Richardson was sparking the offense by taking the ball to the

basket against an injured Maurice Cheeks (right knee tendonitis). "Philly's a great defensive half-court team," Nets coach Stan Albeck said later. "You can get by one defender, but the second always comes over to trap you or block the shot. The thing we did best against them was break that pressure down by taking the ball right to the basket. Nothing stops pressure defenses better than layups."

The 76ers returned the favor when the series shifted to the Meadowlands in New Jersey, winning a pair of eight point games (108-100, 110-102) even as Williams continued to play Malone to a virtual draw on the scorecard (21/17, 16/18 for Williams vs. 21/17, 22/15 for Malone). Julius Erving sounded a confident note by telling reporters after Game 4, "We're a team on a mission, a mission worthy of our talent. We've got to go for it. Nothing is going to stop us." Most of the press and fans agreed; the Sixers were widely expected to win the fifth game at home and survive their scare.

Instead they suffered a stunning 101-98 defeat. It was not just the result that was stunning, but the details. Philadelphia lost despite compiling a 16-3 run in the second quarter to overcome an eight point deficit at the end of the first period. Playing at home, the 76ers took just six free throws in the second half, compared with twenty-six for the Nets. Philadelphia also gift-wrapped 26 of New Jersey's points courtesy of 23 turnovers. Leading 90-83 with 7:10 left, the 76ers were outscored 18-6—Malone was shutout for the entire quarter—before Andrew Toney added a layup in the closing moments. After the game, Williams gave part of the credit to the 76ers captain: "That statement that Doc made really got us fired up and gave us an added incentive to come out here and win the ballgame."

The Nets then lost to the Bucks in six games. Williams, who had shot over fifty percent from the floor throughout the 76ers series, was held to thirty-eight percent against Milwaukee, and admitted that the five-game battle with Philadelphia had "drained" the entire team. It was certainly the highlight of the 80s Era for the Nets. The team slowly descended from their 49 win peak in 1983 to 45, 42, and to 39 wins as Richardson stumbled again and was kicked out of the league. From 1987 through 1991 the Nets would hover between just 17 and 26 wins a year.

After the 80s era was over, Williams offensive numbers began to decline, and he began to get more attention for his defensive skills, earning four NBA All-Defensive Team selections between 1988 and 1992. Three days before the 1989 draft, Williams was sent to Portland for the Blazers first-round pick and Sam Bowie. Williams became the final piece of the puzzle in Portland, replacing Caldwell Jones in the starting lineup as the Blazers improved their record by twenty wins and reached the NBA Finals for the first time since 1977. They lost to the Pistons, then returned to the Finals two years later and were defeated by the Bulls. Williams stayed in Portland until 1996; he came off the bench in his final season there, but had started all but five games from 1989 through 1995. He finished up his career with two seasons as a reserve with the Knicks, retiring in 1998.

New York Knicks

Bernard King

#30 6'7" Small Forward 1982-1987

King had one of the most fascinating careers in NBA history. His first three seasons were played in a haze of alcoholism, leading both the Nets and Jazz to give up on him. Later, he lost two years in his prime due to a significant knee injury, yet King still finished his career with more points than Bob Lanier, Gail Goodrich, Scottie Pippen or Isiah Thomas, and came within 2,000 points of Larry Bird, Walt Bellamy and David Robinson.

King, a New York native who grew up near the Brooklyn Navy Yard, earned All-American honors at the University of Tennessee by averaging 24 points and 14 rebounds a game. He was drafted by the New Jersey Nets with the seventh pick in the 1977 draft despite five arrests for various offenses which indicated that King might have a troubled future. As a rookie he nearly duplicated his college numbers (24.2/9.5) and earned the respect of veteran superstars like Julius Erving, who told *Sports Illustrated* in February 1978, "This guy moves away from the ball, not toward it. He backs away, and that allows him to get open, where he is deadly." King continued playing well the next season, but then his off-court problems resurfaced. He was arrested on December 18, 1978 (and later placed on probation) for possession of drugs and driving while impaired and without a valid license. For the rest of the season, the Nets shopped him around the league, and rumors of swaps involving John Drew, Truck Robinson, and even Bob McAdoo from Boston swirled around him. In October 1979 King was dealt to the Jazz for center Rich Kelley.

The trade was seen as a positive move for King, giving him a new start on the newly relocated Jazz in Salt Lake City, far away from his friends in New York City. Instead, his life spiraled even more out of control. In January 1980, King was arrested on multiple sexual assault charges and possession of cocaine; the Jazz suspended him immediately and King missed the rest of the season. King responded by entering alcohol rehab, pled guilty to the assault charges and received a suspended sentence, two years' probation, and a \$2,000 fine. The drug possession charge was dropped when the Jazz reactivated King in June 1980, and then Utah traded him to Golden State three months later for center Wayne Cooper and a second-round draft pick. It was there that King rebuilt his career. "It took the events of a year ago to make me realize for the first time that I had an alcohol problem. Now I feel sure I can beat it," King told John Papanek of *Sports Illustrated*. In his second season in Oakland, King made the All-NBA Second Team and played in his first All-Star Game, and earned a handful of MVP votes at the end of each of his two years with the Warriors.

King was then a free agent, and signed a five-year, \$4.5 million offer from the Knicks; the Warriors wanted to match but King was adamant about returning home. In October 1982 the Warriors agreed to trade him to the Knicks for Micheal Ray Richardson, inheriting another

troubled player who, unlike King, had not learned from his mistakes (Richardson lasted less than half a season in Oakland before being shipped back East, to New Jersey). New Knicks coach Hubie Brown was thrilled to add King to a frontline that already included center Bill Cartwright, who had established himself as a 20/8 player over his first two seasons. King was leading the Knicks in scoring in January, but then missed a month when he sprained his right ankle in Atlanta. He quickly returned to form and the Knicks got back to the playoffs with a 44-38 record. King scored 40 in their playoff opener against the Nets en route to a 2-0 series victory (their first in five years), but the 76ers swept the Knicks in the second round. Still, the Knicks appeared to be heading in the right direction.

Bernard King's career peaked in 1983-84, which proved to be the last time the Knicks would make the playoffs during the 80s Era. King, Cartwright and Truck Robinson were all returning up front, while the Knicks had remade their backcourt. New York had acquired point guard Rory Sparrow from Atlanta the previous season, and now Sparrow teamed with Ray Williams, who averaged 20 points a game as a star with the Knicks in the late 70's but now played a supporting role. The bench was thin, though second-year guard Trent Tucker showed flashes of talent. New York peaked in January and February, reeling off eleven wins in twelve games, including back-to-back 50-point games by King, the first player to accomplish that since Wilt Chamberlain in 1964. In mid-February the Knicks were 33-19; only the Celtics, Lakers and Sixers had a better record at that point. But a five-game losing streak brought the Knicks down to earth and they struggled to play above .500 the rest of the way, finishing at 47-35.

New York began the playoffs on the road against Detroit, who had beaten the Knicks four out of six times during the regular season. But the Pistons had been unable to contain King, whose 37.3 average against Detroit was his highest against any Eastern Conference opponent. In the playoffs King did more of the same. "We tried fronting him, backing him, everything. He was utterly magnificent," said Pistons head coach Chuck Daly after the series. King scored 36 points in Game 1, then, despite two dislocated middle fingers and flu symptoms, scored 41 or better in each of the next four games, setting an NBA playoff record for the most points in a five-game playoff series (213). The Pistons tried using Kelly Tripucka, Kent Benson, Earl Cureton and Cliff Levingston on him, to no avail. "I learned each player's deficiency on defense and I tried to attack it," King said later. New York took Game 5 in Detroit 127-123 in overtime to win the series 3-2.

The Eastern Conference Semifinals were a seven game grudge match featuring the two best players in the league, Larry Bird and Bernard King (who split the NBA MVP and *The Sporting News* MVP awards between them). Prior to the series, Cedric Maxwell shrugged off King's performance against the Pistons, stating "he ain't getting 40 on us. We're going to stop the bitch." Maxwell was correct for three games. The Celtics limited to King to 39 points over the first two games *combined* as Boston took a 2-0 lead behind Larry Bird's torrid shooting

(26-38, .684, 60 points total). The Knicks regrouped to tie the series, as King hit for 43 points in Game 4 to overcome a balanced Celtics attack that featured four players with 20 or more points (Bird, McHale, Johnson and Parish). After Boston held serve at home in the next game, the Knicks held off the Celtics 106-104 in Game 6 as King poured in 18 points in the first quarter and went on to outscore Bird 44-35. "The Knicks ride with Bernard emotionally," Celtics guard Quinn Buckner said after the game, "and when he's going good he's like the magic carpet, carrying everybody else along on his back." But in Game 7, the magic disappeared. Bird's triple double (39/12/10) and King's 8 for 17 shooting doomed the Knicks; by the end of the third quarter Boston led by 25 and coasted to a 121-104 victory. The 4-3 series margin mirrored the closeness of the Bird-King matchup (30.4 to 29.1 over the seven games) and it looked like the Knicks might replace the Sixers as the Celtics chief rivals in the Eastern Conference.

It never happened.

Before the 1984-85 season even started, Cartwright broke a bone in his left foot and backup Marvin Webster was diagnosed with hepatitis; neither would play a game all year. Then Truck Robinson suffered a hairline fracture in his right foot in the second game of the season and never returned to the lineup either. King even missed sixteen games early in the year with a groin pull and a sprained right ankle. Forced to use the likes of Pat Cummings and Ken Bannister up front, the Knicks were 19-36 even with King in the lineup and 24-47 overall by late March, but then King tore the ACL in his right knee. Not only did King miss the rest of the season, during which the Knicks went 0-11, but he missed the next two years while attempting to rehab from knee surgery. King finally returned on April 10, 1987, played six games, and then signed with the Bullets as a free agent. No longer as explosive, and now shooting in the mid-40's instead of the mid-50's from the floor, King still averaged over 20 points a game during his four years in Washington, peaking at 28.4 per game in 1990-91 as he made the All-Star team before back trouble ended his season prematurely. He sat out the next year, then made a brief comeback with the Nets before retiring in 1993.

Meanwhile, the Knicks fared little better. Their disastrous season in 1984-85 put the Knicks in position to win the draft lottery and draft center Patrick Ewing, but with King out, Cartwright playing just two games after breaking his left foot again, and Ewing limited to fifty games with a knee injury and Pat Cummings playing just thirty-one with a bad right ankle, the Knicks won only 23 games in 1985-86. A year later, a 4-12 start got Hubie Brown fired, and Bob Hill piloted the team to an unsatisfying 24-win season. Ewing would finally stay healthy and help the Knicks start a streak of fourteen straight playoff appearances in 1988, but during the 80s Era, the Knicks were little more than a tease.

Philadelphia 76ers

Andrew Toney

#22 6'3" Guard 1980-1988

The man who became known as the “Boston Strangler” for his prowess against the Celtics was a product of the Deep South. Born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, Toney starred at Glenn High School before enrolling at the University of Southwestern Louisiana (USL) in 1976. The school was still reeling from the effects of a two-year death penalty imposed by the NCAA three years earlier in response to 125 rule violations ranging from falsifying transcripts and test scores to providing cash to help athletes with routine expenses like gas and clothes. The draconian measure coincided with the resignation of sixteen-year head coach Beryl Shipley, who denied knowledge of the most severe violations. The scandal overshadowed Shipley’s most significant achievement: the integration of the USL basketball team in 1966, the first Division I college in the Deep South to field an integrated team in any sport. Moreover, it was the struggle to integrate that indirectly led to the violations.

When Shipley recruited Marvin Winkler, Elvin Ivory and Leslie Scott, he acted with the support of school president Clyde Rougeou, but was in violation of the Gulf States Conference “unwritten law” against integrated teams and drew the ire of state officials in Alabama who refused to provide scholarship money for the three African-American players. Shipley’s response was to raise the money from local black leaders and send it to the University; he later said that he “didn’t care about any damn rule book. I just tried to do what was right for the boys, what I knew I had to do.” That spirit later led Shipley to provide help to his players who were struggling financially, explaining that “humanitarian reasons” justified making exceptions.

Toney’s arrival helped lift the spirits of the basketball program, which was still on probation, but in Toney’s words, “it was obvious things were coming around.” He promptly averaged 21 points a game as a freshman as USL won their conference championship. Unlike some of his predecessors, Toney was just as proficient in the classroom as on the court, and just as proud of it. In December 1979 Toney earned his degree a semester early, and flew back to the campus in Lafayette during a West Coast road trip to accept his diploma in person. “My parents had come all the way from Birmingham and I had to be there,” Toney told a reporter in January. “Accepting the degree in the mail wouldn’t have been right.” By then, Toney had enrolled in graduate courses, determined to make the most of his time in college while still planning to play in the NBA. Toney finished his college career with 2,526 points, which placed him thirteenth on the all-time NCAA scoring list at that time.

The 76ers selected Toney with the eighth pick in the 1980 draft. Toney began the season on the injured list with a sprained ankle, then returned to come off the bench until Doug Collins suffered another stress fracture in his right foot in early November. Collins would

never return to the lineup, while Toney began impressing everyone. In his fifth start, in Indiana against the Pacers, Toney shot 9 for 11 in a 19-point first half en route to 32 points for the game. Toney averaged 12.9 points a game as a rookie and began to earn his nickname as the “Boston Strangler” by scoring 35 off the bench in the Boston Garden on the final day of the season. His performance nearly allowed the 76ers to claim the Atlantic Division crown and a first-round bye, but the Celtics won 98-94. Toney matched his season average against the Pacers in the first round, but was held to just 62 points in the Eastern Conference Semifinals—including a goose egg in Game 7—by the Bucks.

However, the subsequent series against the Celtics cemented his reputation as a prime time performer. He scored 26 in the opener as the 76ers won 105-104, then added 35 in a 118-99 loss. The fact that both performances came at the Garden allowed him to claim the “Boston Strangler” label once bestowed on Lloyd Free (who had scored 27 off the bench in Game 7 of the 1977 Eastern Conference Semifinals in Boston to lead Philadelphia to victory). Toney averaged 18 points a game over the next three contests, but was held to single-digits as the Celtics won Games 6 and 7 by a total of three points to win the series.

The following year, Toney was second on the Sixers in scoring (16.5) despite starting just one game and continued his knack for rising to the occasion in big games. In February 1982, he scored 27 points against the Lakers at the Forum; nine days later at the Spectrum, Toney shot 21 for 29 from the floor for a career-high 46 points including 20 in the fourth quarter as the Sixers rallied from eight points down at the start of the period to win. Two weeks after that, he scored 38 against the Celtics for his second-highest point total of the season. Throw in a 30 point outing at home against Boston back in December and three of Toney’s top five performances that season were against the two best teams in the NBA (not including his own Sixers). It was a pattern that would continue throughout the peak of Toney’s career:

Season	Regular Season				Playoffs			
	Overall	Bos	LA	Milw	Overall	Bos	LA	Milw
1980-81	12.9	15.0	12.0	17.8	13.8	19.1	-	8.9
1981-82	16.5	25.2	36.5	17.2	21.8	22.1	26.0	19.5
1982-83	19.7	22.0	24.5	20.7	18.8	-	22.0	22.2
1983-84	20.4	20.0	15.0	21.7	20.6	-	-	-
1984-85	17.8	13.8	21.0	17.7	16.8	17.6	-	15.3

In the 1982 Eastern Conference Finals against the Celtics, Toney scored 15, 18 and 3 points in the 76ers losses—the latter an inexplicable 1 for 11 horror show in Game 6—but rung up 30, 16, 39 and 34 in their four victories. Game 7 was arguably his masterpiece, given the circumstances (playing on the road and facing the possibility of blowing a 3-1 lead for the second straight season). “I thought I was in the game right from the tipoff,” Toney told reporters afterward. “I was really ready for it today. I felt I had to be very aggressive on offense because I’d been hesitating Friday night [Game 6] and didn’t play as well as I wanted

to.” Toney’s three 30-plus point games in the series featured shooting lines that were as consistent as they were impressive: 13 for 22, 14 for 21 and 14 for 23. “He just was hitting some shots with two or three guys in his face,” said Danny Ainge. “And he was hitting some shots over the big people inside. He just gets that way sometimes. I don’t know what we can do differently to stop him, except maybe knock him unconscious.”

The Celtics would eventually trade for Dennis Johnson in the summer of 1983 to try to slow down Toney in a more conventional way. Toney once stated that the only man in the NBA who could truly stop him was T.R. Dunn of the Nuggets, a fellow Birmingham native who frequently faced Toney in offseason workouts, but in seven games against Dunn and the high-scoring Nuggets from 1982 through 1985, Toney still averaged 23.4 points per game. The Lakers didn’t have any answers for Toney in 1982 either; after shooting just under 50 percent against the Celtics, he made 64 of 121 shots (52.9%) against the Lakers and led the Sixers in scoring with 26 a game in a losing cause in the NBA Finals. When Philadelphia won the title in 1983, Toney’s field goal percentage was off his torrid pace of the year before, but he was still the 76ers second-leading scorer.

Coincidentally, the same ailment that shortened Doug Collins’s career would also claim Andrew Toney’s. He first felt the pain in his feet midway through the 1984-85 season, but it was not until three games into the following season, with Toney shooting just 33 percent from the floor and playing less than half the minutes he was accustomed to, that he was diagnosed with stress fractures in both feet. Toney took the rest of the season off, and missed a third of the 1986-87 season as well. The pain was still there, yet team officials and many teammates believed that Toney was healthy enough to play; general manager John Nash even banned him from the bench during Toney’s controversial stint on the injured list in January 1987, stating that “[Toney’s] demeanor has been a source of distraction.” But the pain was real, a result of Toney believing in his own basketball immortality. “It was a case of playing too long on injured feet [back in 1985],” Toney told Jackie MacMullan of the *Boston Globe* in 1991. “I didn’t have any swelling, and the tendency is to convince yourself nothing is wrong. I played on them too long that way, and it caught up with me.” The deterioration in his game was easy to see: of the 83 games in which Toney scored twenty-five or more points during his career, 70 of them took place before New Year’s Day 1985, and he reached the twenty-five point mark just 4 times after the 1984-85 season was over.

His last game was on February 27, 1988. Fittingly, the Sixers were falling apart even faster than his own career. Julius Erving had retired the previous year, coach Matt Goukas had been fired three weeks earlier, and Toney’s last game coincided with the final game of an 0-5 road trip that dropped Philadelphia’s record to 22-32. Toney agreed to retire when 76ers owner Harold Katz said the team would pay him the remainder of his last contract, which ran through 1992. Toney then kept his distance from the franchise for over two decades, until surfacing at a reunion of the 1983 champs in 2012.

It was hard to believe that Toney's career was over so soon. Years later, M.L. Carr spoke for most of his fellow players (and fans) when he said, "It never should have happened like this. Andrew should have had a 12-year career, should have been a Hall of Famer." But his exploits, his unique chest-first shooting style, and his penchant for prime time heroics will live on in YouTube video clips and in the memories of his fans.

Washington Bullets

Greg Ballard

#42 6'7" Forward 1977-1985

Frankly, the Bullets uniforms were the most memorable aspect of the team during the 80s Era. On the floor they won between 35 and 43 games each season, and won just one playoff series, a 2-0 miniseries victory over the Nets in 1982. Their 7-18 playoff record during the 80s Era included losses to the 76ers in 1980, 1985 and 1986, and defeats at the hands of the Celtics in 1982 and 1984.

But those red, white and blue uniforms were spectacular, a welcome divergence from the more sedate apparel wore by most teams during the 80s Era. The Bullets had a long history of nickname, logo and uniform design changes, moving from the boring to the sublime to the beautiful:

Year	Team Name	Notes
1962	Chicago Packers	Bare-bones logo features outline of a steer's head on a brown basketball.
1963	Chicago Zephyrs	Whimsical logo shows the word "Zephyrs" in tan type appearing to vertically float in the air (play on meaning of "Zephyrs" = wind).
1964-68	Baltimore Bullets	A speeding bullet is prominently displayed in logo and on uniform; by 1966 the bullet is being phased out from the jerseys, which feature orange and blue as the team colors and remain traditional in design with a single color as the background behind the logo.
1968-73	Baltimore Bullets	The bullet disappears completely, replaced by a new logo with two hands formed from the "ll" in bullets with a basketball above them; logo appears near the bottom hem of the uniform shorts ... Orange, blue and white are still the team colors, but jerseys evolve into a "groovy" ensemble with a large J-shaped stripe across the entire front of the jersey (top and shorts) that is mirrored on the back; road jerseys are orange with a white and blue stripe, home jerseys are white with a blue and orange stripe. A red, white and blue variation features the player's first name on the back instead of his last name.
1974	Capital Bullets	Team colors change to red, white and blue but logo design is the same; top half of jersey now has wide red and white horizontal stripes and a large version of the logo, lower half is white at home, blue on road. Shorts are white with blue stars or blue with white stars.

1975-87	Washington Bullets	Logo remains the same, jerseys change slightly by the end of the 80s Era to center the uniform number on the horizontal stripes instead of bridging the lower stripe and the field below.
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For the 1987-88 season, the stripes disappeared completely and the “hands” in the logo were altered to be more anatomically correct, eliminating the whimsical cartoon effect (and making them look a little creepy). It would take another decade for team officials to exchange the gun violence-invoking “Bullets” moniker with the more tame “Wizards”; fortunately the 80s jerseys have since made a comeback in a slightly modified form.

Greg Ballard had joined the team in 1977. The Bullets had made the playoffs every spring since 1969, losing twice in the NBA Finals. In 1977-78, with the rookie forward coming off the bench behind the frontline of Wes Unseld, Elvin Hayes and Bob Dandridge, the Bullets won their first championship by defeating the Seattle SuperSonics. Head coach Dick Motta got the same crew back to the Finals the next season but Seattle won the rematch. A first round playoff loss in 1980, Ballard’s first year as a starter, led Motta to depart for the expansion Mavericks, and Gene Shue replaced him.

Shue was sort of the Grover Cleveland of the Bullets. Cleveland served two nonconsecutive terms as President of the United States, while Shue coached the Baltimore Bullets for six-and-a-half seasons from the late 1960’s into the early 1970’s, then returned seven years later to coach the team in Washington for nearly six more seasons. Shue also won a Coach of the Year award in both stints (1969 and 1982; the thirteen year gap between his two awards is second only to Hubie Brown, who won in 1978 and 2004). While a half-dozen other coaches also had nonconsecutive terms with the same team (coaching another team or teams in between), only Alex Hannum had done it in two different cities (Syracuse, Philadelphia) and no one had longer terms than Shue. Also, no one else ever did it *twice*: Shue also coached the San Diego Clippers in the late 1970’s and the Los Angeles Clippers in the late 1980’s, before and after his second term with the Bullets.

Ballard’s career peaked in 1982 and 1983, averaging 18 points a game. Known as a “smooth” forward who lacked three point range, he was consistent but rarely spectacular, scoring 30 points or more in a game just seventeen times, including three times against the 76ers in 1980. Ballard set a then-career-high with 31 points on January 11, as Washington lost to Philadelphia 119-106. The game was remarkable because Ballard made three consecutive three pointers late in the contest; during the rest of the 1979-80 season, he made just thirteen from behind the arc. In addition to that game against the 76ers, he also made three in each of two games against the Celtics that year—Ballard would do that only one other time during his career, in a game at Cleveland in 1983. The Bullets lost all of these games by thirteen points or more, which explains why these were exceptions. For his career Ballard averaged less than *half* a three point shot *attempt* per game despite compiling a .338 three-point field goal percentage that was reasonable for the early years of the 80s Era.

Ballard's career spanned the end of the Unseld/Hayes years and arrival of Jeff Ruland and Rick Mahorn. Ballard was dealt to the Warriors in 1985 for a pair of second-round picks. As of 2013 Ballard's name still appears numerous times on the Bullets/Wizards all-time team leader lists: first in steals, third in games played, fourth in minutes, fifth in rebounds, and tenth in points.

Western Conference

Dallas Mavericks

Rolando Blackman

#22 6'6" Shooting Guard 1981-1992

A Native of Panama who became a U.S. Citizen in 1986, Rolando (pronounced Ro-LON-do) Blackman was the starting shooting guard for the Mavericks for ten seasons, teaming with forward Mark Aguirre to help Dallas steadily rise from an expansion team to a perennial playoff contender.

The Mavericks joined the NBA in 1980, the league's first expansion team since the NBA-ABA merger and the culmination of a half-decade worth of effort to get another pro basketball team for Dallas. The city's first entry, the Dallas Chaparrals of the ABA, lasted six years before moving to San Antonio in 1973 as the Spurs. A few years later, Buffalo Braves president and general manager Norm Sonju investigated moving the Braves to Dallas at the urging of owner John Y. Brown, who wanted to relocate his financially struggling club. Sonju met with Dallas Mayor Bob Folsom (formerly a member of the Chaparrals ownership group) and even opened an office in the city as the courtship progressed. But then Brown and Henry Mangurian worked out a franchise swap with Irv Levin of the Celtics, and Levin moved the Braves to San Diego instead.

Sonju went to work for Levin, and Dallas businessman Don Carter picked up the quest, trying to convince another existing NBA team to move to his home city. There were promising signs that a deal could be struck to buy either the Milwaukee Bucks or Kansas City Kings and relocate them, and since the new Reunion Arena was already being built in Dallas, there was no concern about getting a facility built. But when NBA Commissioner Larry O'Brien announced in February 1979 that the NBA would expand by two teams in 1980, Carter hedged his bets and submitted a bid for an expansion team. However, Carter's decision ended any chance for relocating an existing team; the NBA owners preferred adding an expansion team, which would generate money for all of the owners via a share of a franchise entrance fee, instead of moving an existing club which would only benefit the city of Dallas and the owner of the team involved. Carter hired Sonju as his general manager and the two went

through a roller coaster-like year, with Carter dropping out of the process for a while when the NBA kept changing/increasing the price of the Dallas franchise when no ownership groups from other cities stepped forward. Finally, in April 1980, Carter got back on board and the Mavericks application was accepted by the league as a lone expansion team.

Dallas won just 15 games in their first season, and were forced to trade their first draft choice, Kiki Vanderweghe, to Denver when he refused to sign with them. But the trade brought back Denver's first-round pick in 1981, which Sonju used to select Blackman. Blackman did not have a typical childhood. At eight years old he traveled from Panama to New York on a student visa with his sister to join his grandmother in Brooklyn, who had immigrated to the United States around the time that Rolando was born. Rolando's parents followed their children to Brooklyn three years later. Blackman became a basketball star at a vocational school on Coney Island, earning the nickname "Ro" and drawing the attention of college scouts. He settled on Kansas State, became a Third Team All-American in 1979-80, and would have played for the U.S. Olympic Team in 1980 had the United States not decided to boycott the Summer Games in Moscow.

The Mavericks used their own picks in 1981 to take Mark Aguirre first overall and then Jay Vincent in the top of the second round. Over the next four seasons, this trio would be the Mavericks top three scorers, and by 1983-84 the Mavericks posted their first winning season and earned the first of five consecutive playoff appearances under the tutelage of former Bulls and Bullets head coach Dick Motta. For most of the 80s Era, the Mavs record was rarely more than a few games above .500 (except for 1987, when they won 55 games) which gave Dallas a series of high draft picks. They used them well: Dale Ellis, Derek Harper, Sam Perkins, Detlef Schrempf and Roy Tarpley eventually formed a solid surrounding cast. Unfortunately, the Mavericks never had a star center, as Tom LaGarde, Wayne Cooper, Pat Cummings and Kurt Nimphius all failed to measure up when compared with the best centers of the early 1980's.

The Mavericks also won their first playoff series in 1984, rallying from 2-1 down against the SuperSonics, taking the series-clinching game at SMU's Moody Coliseum because Reunion Arena was already booked for a WCT tennis match. However, the Mavericks were then smoked in five games by the Lakers, and a year later they lost in the first round to Portland. As a result, Dallas became desperate to improve themselves at the center position. On draft day in 1985 the Mavericks had picks 8, 16 and 17 in the first round and pick 40 in the second; they took Schrempf at number eight and then selected *three centers in a row*: Bill Wennington, Uwe Blab (Dallas had a penchant for European players even before drafting Dirk Nowitzki) and Mark Acres. None proved to be the answer, so in November they sent Nimphius to the Clippers straight up for 7'2" center James Donaldson. Donaldson was best known for his defense and durability—he had not missed a game since his rookie season in 1981—but averaged 8.5/9.5 during his career with the Mavericks and gave them their first credible center (he would even make the All-Star team in 1988). Still, Dallas could not get by the

Lakers, losing in the Western Conference Semifinals in 1986 and the Conference Finals in 1988; in three playoff series over a five-year period the Mavericks failed to win a single game at the Forum. The next season, with the Mavericks barely above .500 in February, Aguirre was traded to Detroit and Schrempf was dealt to the Pacers, then Donaldson suffered a season-ending injury in March. Donaldson's final game of the year was the beginning of a twelve game losing streak, and Dallas went on to miss the playoffs. Their run as a contender was over. With the exception of a first round defeat in 1990, the Mavericks would not make the playoffs again until the turn of the century.

Denver Nuggets

Kiki Vandeweghe

#55 6'8" Forward 1980-1985

Vandeweghe was Denver's version of Larry Bird, without the rebounding (3.4 per game for his career) or passing (2.1 assists) ability and lacking Bird's charisma; *The Christian Science Monitor* once wrote that Vandeweghe was "about as showy as the rubber boots on a fisherman." His given name was Ernest Maurice Vandeweghe III and he was born in Wiesbaden, Germany while his father, Ernie Jr., was stationed there as a captain in the Air Force. Dubbed Kiki by a nurse who liked his curly hair, Vandeweghe came from an athletic family. Ernie Jr. was born in Montreal, moved to New York as a kid, became a Third Team AP All-American basketball player at Colgate, and played parts of six seasons with the Knicks from 1949 to 1956. He met Colleen Kay Hutchins through her brother, NBA center Mel Hutchins, and later married her; Ernie Jr. was not going to let the woman who had been crowned Miss America in 1952 get away.

With NBA players on both sides of the family, Kiki's basketball career seemed predestined. After settling in Pacific Palisades, California, Vandeweghe was recruited by UCLA. He averaged 19.5/6.8 as a senior and the Bruins reached the NCAA championship game in 1980 before losing to Louisville, an achievement that was later wiped off the books due to violations of NCAA policies—related to giving money to players—that were largely arranged by booster Sam Gilbert.

Vandeweghe was selected by the Dallas Mavericks in the NBA draft that year, but had no interest in playing for an expansion team. His stated desire was to stay on the West Coast or play with the Knicks like his father, but when head coach Donnie Walsh and assistant Doug Moe of the Denver Nuggets decided to try to trade for him, Vandeweghe agreed. The Nuggets gave up first-round picks in 1981 and 1985 and signed Vandeweghe on December 10. The lack of a training camp hindered his performance as a rookie, and the Nuggets missed the playoffs for a second straight season despite elevating Moe in mid-season to replace Walsh.

Vandeweghe broke through with a 21.5 average in 1981-82, giving the Nuggets three 20+ per game scorers on their frontline, along with Alex English and Dan Issel. Meanwhile, Moe earned his players' respect by benching guard David Thompson, known as "Skywalker" for his athletic dunks, who had led the team in scoring the year before but was descending deeper into drug addiction and was simply too disruptive in the locker room. At the end of the season Thompson was dealt to Seattle for forward Bill Hanzlik who spent the next eight seasons in Denver as a valuable role player.

Denver made the playoffs each of the next three seasons, but only won one series and their regular season records regressed every year. Meanwhile, Vandeweghe blossomed offensively, finishing second in the league in scoring in 1983 and third the following season; during that campaign, Vandeweghe scored a game-high 51 points in the highest scoring contest in NBA history, a 186-184 Denver loss to Detroit in triple overtime on December 13, 1983.

Vince Boryla, a former teammate of Ernie Jr., took over as Nuggets president in the summer of 1984 and decided to shake up the roster. "I wasn't afraid of making trades," Boryla told a reporter years later. Dan Issel was a year from a retirement, and unlike his predecessor, who had been shopping guard Alex English, Boryla preferred to keep English and trade Vandeweghe, despite his popularity in Denver. "You just have to plug your ears to the outside comments," Boryla continued. "You can't do it by popularity. We needed somebody to get some rebounds." With Doug Moe and Portland head coach Jack Ramsay helping to lay the groundwork, Boryla and Trail Blazers general manager Stu Inman worked out a swap that sent Vandeweghe to Portland for center Wayne Cooper, forward Calvin Natt, point guard Fat Lever and two draft picks, including a 1985 first-rounder to replace the choice given up in the deal that had brought Vandeweghe from Dallas four years earlier.

Ramsay had fought to acquire Vandeweghe to provide another outside shooter to compliment Jim Paxson, and was unconcerned about losing Cooper and Natt's rebounding talent because the Trail Blazers planned to select center Sam Bowie in the upcoming draft. But the deal turned out to be one-sided in favor of the Nuggets. Denver won 52 games the next season, an increase of fourteen victories, and they reached the Western Conference Finals, losing to the Lakers in five games. The Nuggets never reached the NBA Finals, but were competitive throughout the rest of Moe's tenure, which ended in 1990. Meanwhile, Portland dropped below .500 for the first time in six years, costing Ramsey his job. The Trail Blazers would fail to win a playoff series until 1990, and by then the team had been completely reconstructed around Clyde Drexler, and Vandeweghe was gone. He had been traded again, for what turned out to be an inconsequential first-round pick.

Golden State Warriors

Sleepy Floyd

#21 6'3" Guard 1983-1987

The Warriors were irrelevant for most of the 80s Era, missing the playoffs every year from 1978 through 1986. They began the decade under the leadership of Al Attles, whose association with the franchise dated back to 1960 when the Philadelphia Warriors selected him in the fifth round of the draft. Attles went with the team to San Francisco two years later, became player-coach with thirty games remaining in the 1969-70 season, then moved to the bench full time after retiring in the summer of 1971. The Warriors were on the move again: they had been playing a portion of their games at the Oakland Coliseum Arena ever since that facility opened in 1966, and by 1971 were playing half of their games there and the other half at the antiquated San Francisco Civic Auditorium (built in 1915) or at the thirty-year-old Cow Palace. For the 1971-72 season, majority owner Franklin Mieuli moved his Warriors to Oakland full-time and changed the team's name to "Golden State." Attles remained on the bench through the end of the 1983 season, except for a twenty-one game sabbatical in 1980 due to a torn right Achilles tendon suffered during a team practice, then turned the reins over to Johnny Bach to focus on his front office responsibilities.

Meanwhile, Eric "Sleepy" Floyd, who earned his nickname due to his failure to field a ground ball during an elementary school baseball game, was starring in the Georgetown Hoyas backcourt. Floyd led the team in scoring as a freshman in 1978-79 as the team won a school-record 24 games. A year later he was named the MVP of the Eastern Regionals in the NCAA Tournament despite losing to Iowa in the regional final 81-80; Floyd scored 31 points and was 11 for 14 from the floor in a losing effort. In 1982, with freshman center Patrick Ewing getting most of the headlines, the even-keeled Floyd drove the Hoyas into the championship game against North Carolina. But Georgetown lost 63-62 as freshman Michael Jordan hit a jumper to give North Carolina the lead and Hoya guard Fred Brown mistakenly threw the ball to the Tar Heels' James Worthy on the ensuing fast break. Floyd's contribution, which included a leaning jumper that had put Georgetown ahead 62-61 with less than a minute left, was destined to become a footnote. Floyd also earned First Team AP All-American honors and ended his college career as the Hoyas's all-time leading scorer.

The New Jersey Nets selected Floyd with the thirteenth pick in the NBA draft, but he played little as a rookie behind Darwin Cook and Otis Birdsong. Then in February Floyd was traded to the Warriors for Micheal Ray Richardson. The Nets, 31-18 at the time of the trade, made the move to improve their chances in the playoffs, but by the time head coach Larry Brown resigned in April to take a job with the University of Kansas, the Nets were 47-29, only a handful of games above .500 since the trade. Brown's resignation sent the team into a 2-4

tailspin to end the season, and the Nets were eliminated quietly by the Knicks in the first round.

With the Warriors, Floyd's playing time doubled, and power forward Mickey Johnson, who was also acquired in the deal, proved valuable enough to earn a starting spot alongside Floyd by the end of the season. Over the next three years, Floyd started every game for the Warriors, and by the 1986-87 season, with former Cavaliers head coach George Karl at the helm, the Warriors were back in the playoffs with a 42-40 record, their first winning season in five years. Floyd was joined in the backcourt by second-year shooting guard Chris Mullin, and the frontcourt featured Joe Barry Carroll and Larry Smith, flanked at small forward by a combination of Rod Higgins, Purvis Short, and former Bullets forward Jeff Ballard. The selection of Mullin in 1985 had ended a four year drought for Golden State in the first round of the draft; the Warriors draft record had been poor since the ill-fated trade that brought Carroll to Oakland in 1980:

Year	#	Selection	Notes
1981	10	<i>None</i>	Traded to Portland for their 1978 first round pick, 6'3" G Ray Townsend, who played just 154 games in the NBA
1982	14	Lester Connor	Known as a defensive guard; played four years for Warriors
1983	6	Russell Cross	6'10" center who played just 45 games in the NBA; the next five picks all played 900+ games and were solid pros: Thurl Bailey, Antoine Carr, Dale Ellis, Jeff Malone and Derek Harper
1984	8	<i>None</i>	Traded with Phil Smith for World B. Free in 1980; Free lasted less than three years with Golden State

In 1986-87 Floyd averaged 18.8 points and a career best 10.3 assists a game, and was named to his first All-Star Game (along with Carroll; the pair were the first Warriors All-Stars in five years). In the first round of the playoffs, Golden State pulled a mild upset, defeating Utah in Salt Lake City in Game 5 for a 3-2 series win. The second round would be a tougher task.

Golden State faced the Los Angeles Lakers, winners of 65 games and determined to get back to the Finals to get the bad taste of their 1986 playoff defeat to Houston out of their mouths. The first three games went as expected: the Lakers won them all, by an average margin of sixteen points a game, and they were not afraid to let the Warriors know they were being beaten badly. "When they dunk it in your face, then go around, jiving, that's L.A.," Karl said after Game 4. Game 3 in Oakland had been a 133-108 rout, and the next day the Lakers led 102-88 heading into the fourth quarter, even though Floyd had already scored 22 points—already his best scoring performance of the series—despite nursing a sore left hamstring. The series was all but over.

But Floyd was not going to let the Lakers trash talk their way to a sweep on his home court. He scored 29 points in the fourth quarter, outscoring the Lakers entire team by ten as

the Warriors rallied to win 129-121. Floyd's speed and penetration skills were on full display, as he repeatedly torched Michael Cooper. The Lakers helped by playing sloppy basketball, and were even passive at times as Floyd swooped towards the hoop. "That's when we decided they (the Warriors) were just going to go away," Pat Riley said after the game. "That it would be easy, and we were going home." The Warriors shot 17 for 25 in the fourth while the Lakers were an anemic 4 for 16. Floyd's 29-point quarter also broke Isiah Thomas's two-day-old playoff record of 25. However, the euphoria in Oakland was short-lived, as two days later, a refocused Lakers team defeated the Warriors 118-106 to win the series.

Seven months after his electrifying performance, Floyd was traded to Houston along with Joe Barry Carroll in order to bring Ralph Sampson to Oakland. Sampson had missed 39 games in 1986-87 with a pair of sprained ankles and the beginnings of knee trouble; his knees paid the price when he changed his running style to compensate for a back injury suffered in March 1986 during a violent fall on the floor at the Boston Garden. Sampson also became the latest player to chafe under Bill Fitch's leadership, publicly acknowledging their turbulent relationship and disagreements over the Rockets offensive style and Sampson's choice of a European vacation in the summer of 1985 instead of investing in more workouts. Sampson's injuries worsened and he never played a full season again; he was dealt to the Kings in 1989 for former teammate Jim Petersen, and retired in 1992. Meanwhile, Floyd continued to be durable for the Rockets, playing every game from 1988-89 through the 1991-92 season (other than five missed games in 1987-88, Floyd played in every game from 1984 through 1992.) Unfortunately for Floyd, he was waived by the Rockets in August 1993, just as Houston was about to win two championships, and finished out his career as a spare part with the Spurs and the Nets over the next two seasons.

Houston Rockets

Robert Reid

#50/#33 6'8" Forward-Guard 1977-1982, 1983-1988

The Houston Rockets were not an easy team to love. They had their share of drug addicts in the backcourt (John Lucas, Lewis Lloyd, Mitchell Wiggins) and the team had openly tanked in back-to-back seasons to draft a Twin Towers frontcourt (Ralph Sampson, Akeem Olajuwon) that spawned fear and copycats throughout the league. But Robert Reid was a different kind of player, and person, one who deserved respect.

Reid was born in Atlanta, grew up in Texas, and attended St. Mary's University in California. His mother Blondell and grandmother Cora were both active ministers in the fundamentalist Pentecostal church and nurtured Robert's faith, which he successfully balanced with basketball—until 1981. After three seasons out of the spotlight on a team that

won just two playoff games, Reid posted a career high of 15.4 points per game while the 40-42 Rockets made an improbable trip to the 1981 NBA Finals. First they defeated the Lakers in an opening round miniseries in which the road team won each of the three games; in the finale, Magic Johnson shot 2 for 13 and air mailed his final shot as the Rockets won by three. Then Houston knocked off the Spurs in seven grueling games. Meanwhile the 40-42 Kansas City Kings had gone on their own magic carpet ride: a mild upset of the Trail Blazers followed by a stunning seven game victory over the Phoenix Suns, the top seed in the West. The Rockets were just 2-4 against the Kings during the regular season, but all six games were decided by nine points or less, and Houston had won the last two meetings at the end of March. Houston would cruise to a 4-1 series victory, holding Kansas City below 90 points in every game, to earn the franchise's first trip to the NBA Finals.

Once there, the Rockets surprised everyone by splitting the first two games in Boston, despite two excellent outings by Larry Bird (18/21/9 and 19/21) who was playing with an injured right thumb. Reid had told reporters before the series that he was looking forward to guarding Bird, saying he would "cover him so close I'll tell you what kind of cologne the (bleep) is wearing. ... He'll be seeing my number in his sleep." But so far it was Reid who was having nightmares. With seven minutes remaining in the first game, Bird made one of the highlight plays of his career. Freeing himself from Reid courtesy of a Robert Parish pick, Bird took an 18-foot jumper in between the three point line and the free throw circle on the right side of the court. As soon as he shot it, Bird knew it would be short and that the rebound would go towards the right baseline, so he immediately ran in that direction, grabbed his miss out of the air, and then, while still in midair as he neared the baseline, switched the ball from his right hand to his left, and swished a follow up shot through the net.

The next two games at The Summit in Houston were also split, though now Reid was holding Larry Bird in check. Bird scored just eight points in each game, the first—and only—time in his career that he was held below ten points in back-to-back games. Reid's defensive work was considered overrated by some, including Bill Fitch, and the fact that Bird averaged 15.3 rebounds a game in the series shows that Bird was hardly a non-factor. Still, Bird had scored 20 points a game against the Rockets in the 1980 playoffs, including 34 in the clincher, so Reid was more effective this time around. Cedric Maxwell would win the Finals MVP award on the strength of two monster games in Games 4 and 5 (24/14 and 28/15), the latter coming after Moses Malone's declaration that he "could get four guys off the street from back home in Petersburg [Virginia]" and defeat the Celtics. Boston went on to win the championship in six games. Reid's performance raised his profile in the game, and also drew interest from female fans who now appreciated his good looks more than ever. "It got so I had to run a gauntlet of women when I left the locker room," Reid said a few years later.

The fame made Reid question his devotion to his faith, and he took a leave of absence in December 1981, missing five games while wrestling with whether to return, which he then

did, against the wishes of his mother and grandmother. But after the season ended with a first-round playoff loss to the SuperSonics, Reid walked away again, this time apparently for good. At a press conference in October 1982 he said, "I think that in the long run people are going to realize that there's nothing insane about it, the man just realizes that there's something bigger in life than running up and down the court, bouncing a basketball." For the next year, Reid lived in Miami near his family, attended church five days a week, and worked "regular" jobs. He was an assistant manager of the local Eagle Family Discount Store, making \$1000 a month—less than 1/5th of his *weekly* salary with the Rockets—to look after a store he acknowledged was in "a rough part of town" and prone to break-ins and robberies. Later he worked at a cement plant.

Meanwhile, his former team was in free-fall after Moses Malone signed with the 76ers. The Rockets had managed to pry away Caldwell Jones and a 1983 first-round pick as compensation, but Jones was hardly a suitable replacement for Malone. The Rockets were in last place with a 10-39 record by early February and then won just four games the rest of the way as they made sure they finished with the worst record in the West. Then they won the coin flip for the number one pick, allowing them to take Ralph Sampson. Houston used the pick obtained from Philadelphia (third overall) to select forward Rodney McCray. The Rockets (after a brief dalliance with Tom Heinsohn) also hired Bill Fitch as their new head coach after he resigned from the Celtics.

Reid decided to return and endured a losing season in 1983-84 as the team again "worked" to acquire the top pick, and selected University of Houston star Akeem Olajuwon. (The Rockets winning the coin flip incensed the rest of the league, partly because three teams in the East had worse records than Houston, but the rule at the time was that the worst team in each conference participated in the coin flip. A year later, the NBA switched to a draft lottery system.) The Rockets then became contenders again. Reid had been mostly coming off the bench since his latest comeback, but late in the 1985-86 season he returned to the starting lineup out of desperation. In March, Fitch and the Rockets players convinced point guard John Lucas to go back to drug rehab for his own good, and then his backup, Allen Leavell, broke a bone in his wrist after starting twelve games. Houston still had the Twin Towers, but no point guard, so Fitch turned to Reid to fill the void. He collected 28 assists over the final five games of the regular season, then averaged nearly seven a game during the playoffs, continuing to start even after Leavell returned from his injury. Houston was now starting a team that was even taller than Los Angeles, with 6'6" Lewis Lloyd as their shortest starter. The Rockets ended the regular season with 51 wins and their first division title in nine years.

In the playoffs, the Rockets swept the Kings and knocked out the Nuggets in six games, taking the clincher in the latter series in dramatic fashion by overcoming 42 points by Alex English (who tied a career playoff high) in a 126-122 double-overtime victory at McNichols Arena. Meanwhile, the Pacific division champion Lakers, winners of 62 regular season games,

swept the Spurs and defeated the Mavericks in six games that mirrored the Rockets-Nuggets clash: the home team won the first five games, and the road team closed out the series in Game 6. In the Western Conference Finals, the Lakers won the opener at home, 119-107, which promoted Jack McCallum of *Sports Illustrated* to write that a third straight Lakers-Celtics matchup in the NBA Finals was “inevitable.”

But the Lakers would not win again until November, because the Rockets proceeded to win four in a row to take the series. In Game 2 they won with defense, as Abdul-Jabbar shot 9 for 26 in 38 grueling minutes. The veteran center had little relief help; facing the Twin Towers, the Lakers had only an aging Maurice Lucas, a soon-to-retire Mitch Kupchak, and the immortal Petur Gudmundsson (whose qualifications began and ended with his 7’2” height) to play alongside Abdul-Jabbar. The next game belonged to Olajuwon, who scored 40 points on 14 for 28 shooting (and 12 for 15 from the line) and added 12 rebounds. The series ended in shocking fashion when, in Game 5 at the Forum, Reid made a three-pointer in front of the Lakers bench with fifteen seconds left to tie the game at 112-112, and then Sampson made a blind 12-foot turnaround prayer at the buzzer—which bounced high into the air before rattling back down through the rim—to win it. It was the Rockets only lead of the game.

The improbable victory set up a Finals meeting with the Celtics that was full of subplots. Red Auerbach had publicly courted Sampson while he was still an underclassman, pressuring the University of Virginia star to turn pro so the Celtics could draft him in 1980. Fitch had left the Celtics in 1983 under the cloud of being swept out of the playoffs, but some Celtics players, including Larry Bird, still appreciated him for helping mold their careers. In fact, it seemed that Fitch had done it again, turning a young Rockets team into winners just like he had done in Boston a few years earlier, blending in veterans as role players alongside young stars.

On the court, McCray was given the task of helping Reid guard Bird, but the results spelled trouble for Houston. Bird averaged 24 points and nearly 10 rebounds and 10 assists a game in the Finals, including two triple doubles, highlighted by a 29/11/12 effort in Game 6. Reid played admirably, and his 13 points and 17 assists in the fifth game helped the Rockets stave off elimination in a contest marred by a fight between the 7’4” Sampson and the Celtics 6’1” guard Jerry Sichting. Sampson had already been a lightning rod in the series; he shot 1 for 13 in the opener, and had just one quality effort before the fight (24/22 in Game 3 as the Rockets overcame a late eight point deficit to stay alive in the series). Back in Boston for Game 6, Celtics fans booed him mercilessly every time he touched the ball, fulfilling Bird’s prophesy that Sampson “had better wear his hard hat” during the game. Sampson finished with 8 points on 4 for 12 shooting and 10 inconsequential rebounds in a 114-97 drubbing.

Reid and the Rockets never got back to the NBA Finals, or even the Western Conference Finals, dissolving almost overnight as the supporting cast around Olajuwon saw their careers cut short by drugs (Lloyd and Wiggins) or injuries (Sampson). In 1985-86 Lloyd, Wiggins and Sampson each played 78 games or more; the following season they played a total of just 107

games between them. Reid was supposed to be an elder statesman off the bench, but was forced to start 63 games and played over four hundred more minutes in 1987 than he had the year before; third-most on the team behind McCray and Olajuwon. By the summer of 1988, when Reid was traded to Charlotte for Bernard Thompson (who played just 23 games for Houston before his career ended) and Fitch was replaced by Don Chaney, Olajuwon and Leavell were the only members of the 1986 Rockets—previously known as the young and up-and-coming Rockets—still on the roster, and Reid’s battles with Larry Bird seemed like a distant memory.

Kansas City (Sacramento) Kings

Cotton Fitzsimmons

Head Coach 1978-1984

Lowell Fitzsimmons was born in Samuel Clemens’ hometown of Hannibal, Missouri, and like the famous writer, preferred a pseudonym (at least a partial one). An All-State guard in high school, and a JUCO All-American at Hannibal-LaGrange Junior College, he moved on and played at Midwestern State University in Texas for three seasons. After nine seasons as head coach at Moberly Junior College in Missouri, where he earned two Coach of the Year awards and two JUCO championships, Fitzsimmons coached at Kansas State, won Big Eight Coach of the Year in 1970, then began his pro coaching career that fall with the Phoenix Suns in their third season of existence.

In Phoenix, Fitzsimmons led the Suns to their first winning season, but after two respectable years of 48 and 49 wins (but no playoffs) Cotton moved on to Atlanta. The Hawks won 46 games and reached the playoffs in his first season in 1972-73, but then won fewer games in each successive year. After being fired late in 1977, Fitzsimmons spent a year as director of player personnel for the Golden State Warriors before getting back into coaching with the Buffalo Braves, but his stay in Buffalo lasted just one season, a season that produced the worst record (27-55) of his NBA coaching career.

In 1978, Fitzsimmons agreed to coach the Kansas City Kings and hoped to build something out of the long forlorn franchise which had not won a playoff series since 1964 (when the team was the Cincinnati Royals) and had not won a championship since 1951 (when the team was the *Rochester* Royals). “I was tired of being a vagabond. The book on the Kings was that if you can stay close you can beat them at the end,” Fitzsimmons said later that year. “But I liked their potential. I loved Birdsong and Scott Wedman. I thought Sam Lacey had an unfair reputation for being lazy. Their offensive rebounding was pathetic, their defense was weak. Their ball handling was awful.” He solved the latter problem by convincing North Carolina star point guard Phil Ford to sign with Kansas City; Fitzsimmons drafted him

second overall despite being warned by Tar Heels head coach Dean Smith that Ford would refuse to play for the Kings. Ford went on to average 15.9 points and 8.6 assists a game, won Rookie of the Year and a spot on the All-NBA Second Team. Fitzsimmons earned Coach of the Year honors as the Kings improved by 17 wins to 48-34.

After a pair of early playoff exits, the Kings slumped to 40-42 in 1980-81, backed into the postseason despite a 3-6 finish (thanks to the Warriors, who lost five of their last seven games), but then caught fire. Led by the scoring of Birdsong and Wedman, the gifted ballhandling of Ford, and the rebounding talents of Reggie King and veteran Sam Lacey, the Kings were not expected to do much that season, especially after injuries to both Birdsong and Ford cost them a total of 27 games. The latter was still on the sidelines following eye surgery in February when the Kings upset the Trail Blazers 2-1 in the first round. Then, in the opener against the Suns, Birdsong, their leading scorer, sprained his right ankle as the Kings lost by 22 in Phoenix. That night, King and backup center Leon Douglas stayed up most of the night talking about how embarrassed they were with their performance. The soul-searching session helped. With Birdsong out of the lineup, Fitzsimmons started Wedman and Ernie Grunfeld in the backcourt and inserted Douglas at forward; years later Fitzsimmons recalled that the injuries forced him to coach "the ugliest that I've ever coached basketball in my life." The Kings then won three in a row to take control of the series. Wedman and King, a second-year power forward, combined for 21 points in the fourth quarter of Game 2 as the Kings won 88-83. In the next game, King led all scorers with 29 points in a 93-92 victory and added 11 rebounds while Wedman hit the game-winning shot with nine seconds left. King had started the year slowly, but became more assertive on the offensive end as injuries hampered their backcourt; of the thirty-three times he scored 20 or more points during the regular season, all but two took place after Christmas. The hero of the fourth game was Grunfeld, who scored 27 while Wedman and King scored 21 apiece in a 102-95 win. But the Suns, who had won 57 games that season, took the next two games to force a seventh game. By the time that contest tipped off, the Kings knew that the Rockets, who also finished at 40-42, had upset the Spurs and would be waiting for the winner in the Western Conference Finals. Birdsong returned but was hampered by his injury and scored just three points. His teammates made sure it did not matter: Grunfeld and King each scored 23 points to offset 28 by Dennis Johnson in a 95-88 victory.

Kansas City's luck ran out against Houston in the Western Conference Finals. Birdsong missed the first two games due to his ankle and the final sixteen minutes of Game 5 with back spasms, scoring just 29 total points against the Rockets. Ford returned but was ineffective for most of the series, and after getting past the likes of Mychal Thompson and Alvan Adams, the Kings finally ran up against a center that could take advantage of them inside: Moses Malone. In the regular season the Kings won four of six games against the Rockets and averaged 102.7 points a game. Now in this series, the Kings were held under 90 points in *every* game, even in

Game 2 which they won 88-79. In that game, Reggie King outscored Malone 31-18, and the Kings held Malone to 12 points in their next meeting, but the Rockets won anyway, 92-88 as Calvin Murphy, Billy Paultz and Robert Reid each scored 20 or more. Then Malone took over. He had 42 points and 23 rebounds in Game 4, a 100-89 victory that left little doubt who would win the series. "Mo really wanted the ball today," Reid said after the game, "and when the big guy wants the ball, you've got to give it to him." Fitzsimmons publicly guaranteed that the Kings would return to Houston for Game 6, but Malone disagreed: he scored a game-high 36 points and added 11 rebounds as the Rockets closed out the Kings in five games. Still, it had been an unexpectedly joyful ride for the Kings.

The jubilation in Kansas City was short-lived. Birdsong and Wedman soon signed free agent offer sheets with the Cavaliers. Six weeks later, on the day before the draft, the Kings matched the offer for Birdsong and traded him to the Nets, while they worked out a compensation agreement with the Cavaliers for Wedman. It was a crippling blow, which was exacerbated when King showed up to camp out of shape; he would never repeat his solid sophomore performance. The Kings won only 30 games the next season. It was the same pattern that had befallen Fitzsimmons in Atlanta; initial success, followed by a gradually falling win total. The Kings rebounded to win 45 and 38 games the next two years, but Fitzsimmons resigned when his contract expired in May 1984 following a first-round sweep at the hands of the Lakers. After two mediocre years in San Antonio, Fitzsimmons would not coach again until the Suns rehired him in 1988. He promptly won 50+ games in each of his five seasons before moving into the front office. Meanwhile, the Kings moved to Sacramento, California in 1985, and would not finish above .500 again until the 1999 season.

Not only were the Kings playing terrible basketball, they also made quite a bad fashion statement when they traveled away from home. The Kings had used blue, red and white as their primary team colors for years, but after the move to Sacramento they changed their road uniforms from royal blue to powder blue, reminiscent of the old Buffalo Braves uniforms a decade earlier. Luckily, this never became a trend in the NBA like it did in Major League Baseball in the early 1980's. During the period from 1980 to 1987 ten of their teams wore a powder blue uniform, usually as their road uniform:

Team	Seasons
Kansas City Royals	1980-1987
Montreal Expos	1980-1987
Philadelphia Phillies	1980-1987
Atlanta Braves	1980-1986
Minnesota Twins	1980-1986
Milwaukee Brewers	1980-1984
St. Louis Cardinals	1980-1984
Seattle Mariners	1980-1984
Texas Rangers	1980-1982
Chicago Cubs	1980-1981

The garish uniforms were on full display in the 1980 and 1982 World Series, where *both* teams wore powder blue on the road. Sacramento wisely chose to shelve their new uniforms in 1990, returning to a shade closer to the royal blue of the first half of the 80s Era.

Los Angeles Lakers

Jamaal Wilkes

#52 6'6" Forward 1977-1985

Wilkes was a smooth player with a cool nickname ("Silk") who spent his entire basketball career in sunny California. Born in Berkley in 1953, Keith Wilkes grew up in Ventura and then transferred to Santa Barbara for his junior year of high school, where he led the basketball team to 26 straight wins. He then spent four years at UCLA, and together with Bill Walton won two NCAA championships and led the Bruins to another Final Four in 1974, where a double overtime loss to North Carolina State ended UCLA's streak of seven straight titles. Wilkes was a Second Team AP All-American as a junior and made the First Team as a senior. He also achieved First Team Academic All-American status for all three of his varsity seasons, studying hard while UCLA posted an 86-4 record on the court.

Wilkes's given name was Jackson Keith Wilkes, but he disliked being called "Jackie" so he chose to use Keith instead. In 1975 he made a more radical change. While at UCLA Wilkes began to study Islam, and after winning the Rookie of the Year award and an NBA championship with the surprising Golden State Warriors, decided to convert, and changed his name to Jamaal Abdul-Lateef Wilkes. It was an unexpected step for the son of a Baptist preacher, but Wilkes's father Leander supported Jamaal throughout the process. His Warriors teammates could see the father's influence every day on the son. "Coming out of UCLA, he was totally different than what I expected," Clifford Ray said decades later. "So many of those guys had really big, unique personalities: Walton, Sidney Wicks, Curtis Rowe, Marques Johnson. Jamaal was just this totally different, down-to-earth guy. I drove down to Santa Barbara one time and spent some time with his parents. I went to that Baptist church and heard his father speak. You could see where it all came from."

After two more years with the Warriors, Wilkes signed with the Lakers as a free agent, joining a frontline that featured fellow UCLA alum Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, but it was the arrival of Magic Johnson two years later that truly elevated his game. Wilkes's shooting percentage, which hovered in the mid-40s during his first four seasons, rose dramatically to .535 during Magic's rookie campaign, and over the next three seasons Wilkes averaged over 20 points per game for the first time in his career. "The transition game is suited to me because I can get out and move," Wilkes told Anthony Cotton of *Sports Illustrated* in 1981. "To me the game is

a series of moments passing. I get distressed when I don't use those moments as best I can." On the Lakers teams of the early 1980's, Jabbar, Magic, Nixon and others got the headlines, but Wilkes was just as essential to their success, and was rewarded with two All-Star selections during his time in Los Angeles. Coach Paul Westhead told reporters that "when Kareem is out (of the game), the offense really revolves around Jamaal, but the way he goes about his business no one really notices. His in-conspicuousness is part of his greatness." And in 2012, Scott Ostler told Bruce Jenkins of the *San Francisco Chronicle* that Wilkes was a humble presence on the "Showtime" Lakers: "He played such a quiet game, almost no talk, no visible emotion. He even ran softly, like he didn't want to make noise, and his shot was so soft it didn't make noise on the rim or the net." His 37 points and 10 rebounds in Game 6 of the 1980 Finals were overshadowed by Magic Johnson's performance (42/15/7) but was just as appreciated by his teammates.

Wilkes also had the most distinctive shooting style in the NBA. Whether he was shooting from outside or from the free throw line, his "sling shot" motion was one of the most fluid yet unorthodox shots in the game. But some folks, like his Warriors teammate Rick Barry, needed to be convinced. "Jamaal's shot was the ugliest I ever saw, until I started analyzing it," Barry later said. "Yeah, he had that crazy right elbow flying out, but it came back straight to the basket before he let it go." Wilkes developed his style, in which he held the ball behind his right ear before slinging it over his head toward the basket, during games against older players while he was still in junior high; his opponents were (much taller) high school and college graduates who could easily block his shot if he tried a "normal" approach.

Wilkes also overcame his share of adversity off the court. A heart ailment took the life of his four month old daughter Taara in August 1977 while his first marriage was falling apart. He remarried, then in September 1981 welcomed another daughter, Arianne Julise Wilkes. She passed away suddenly at just eight days old. (Happily, Wilkes and his wife Valerie were later blessed with three healthy children, Sabreen, Omar and Jordan; his daughter Sabreen played volleyball at UCLA, while his sons were members of the University of California basketball team.)

On the court, Wilkes was very durable, missing just three games from 1978-79 through 1982-83; his first season in Los Angeles was cut short by a broken little finger on his left hand, and an intestinal infection cost him seven games in 1984 and left him weakened for the playoffs. The following season he started slowly, losing playing time as James Worthy and Kurt Rambis emerged as the starting forwards, and then suffered partial tears of two left knee ligaments in February when he collided with the Knicks Ernie Grunfeld. Six months later, after selecting forward A.C. Green in the first round of the draft, the Lakers waived Wilkes. "I feel emptiness and some hurt," Wilkes said that summer, "but to a small degree, I anticipated something happening. I wasn't as shocked as I could have been." Wilkes attempted a comeback with the Clippers but retired in December, frustrated with being a bit part on a

losing team that seemed to have already given up on the season. Fittingly for the California native, his final game was against the Kings in Sacramento; Wilkes scored two points in eight minutes, an inglorious end to a remarkable career.

Phoenix Suns

Larry Nance

#22 6'10" Forward 1981-1988

Nance, a South Carolina native who starred at Clemson, was the twentieth pick in the 1981 draft. He is best known for four things, in no particular order:

1) Winning the first NBA slam dunk contest during the 1984 All-Star Weekend, using a cradle dunk in the final round to defeat a field that included Julius Erving, Dominique Wilkins, Clyde Drexler and the 7'4" wunderkind known as Ralph Sampson. (It's probably less well-known that Nance invested his \$10,000 prize winnings on a fur coat for his wife and a Jacuzzi.)

2) Becoming a professional drag race driver after retiring from basketball, after dabbling with it as a hobby while he was still an active player. Jerry Colangelo, who was the Suns general manager during Nance's time in Phoenix, later said that "Larry was a great player and is still one of my favorite guys, but his love of cars and driving fast sure scared the heck out of us."

3) Stepping on Kevin McHale's right foot on March 11, 1987, causing a hairline fracture that was not fully diagnosed until the first round of the playoffs six weeks later. Despite constant pain, McHale's kept playing, earned a fourth place showing in the MVP balloting (nearly finishing ahead of Larry Bird) and a spot on the All-NBA First Team, the only All-NBA team he ever made. McHale was shooting .615 from the floor at the time of the injury, averaging nearly 27 points a game along with just under 10 rebounds. He had shot 50 percent or better from the floor in fifty-four out of the sixty-two games he played to that point, including eighteen games where he shot over *70 percent*. After the injury, McHale shot under 50 percent six times over his final fourteen games. Ironically, Nance had missed the first meeting of the season between the teams, as McHale torched the Suns with a season-best 15 for 18 performance the day after Christmas, compiling a 32/15/7 gem. In March, Nance did little better against him, as McHale posted a 15 for 19, 36/14/5 stat line. When McHale broke the bone completely in the playoffs against the Pistons, and kept right on playing, the subsequent damage was so severe that McHale was never the same player; his statistics declined slightly the following season, and then fell off dramatically in 1988-89.

4) Being included in a trade on February 25, 1988 between the Suns and the Cavaliers that brought point guard Kevin Johnson to Phoenix as part of a five-player, three draft pick swap that turned around both franchises.

The 80s Era in Phoenix began with promise and ended with frustration. Head coach John McLeod had been hired in 1973, and got the Suns back in the playoffs in 1976 with a mediocre 42-40 record, but led them to the NBA Finals before losing to the Celtics. It would be McLeod's best playoff finish in Phoenix, despite averaging 51 wins in the regular season between 1978 and 1983. Success kept slipping through their fingers; in 1979 the Suns took a 3-2 lead in the Western Conference Finals against the SuperSonics but lost Game 6 in Seattle by a point, as center Alvan Adams sat out his third straight game with a sprained ankle, and then dropped the finale at home 114-110 when their rally from a 15-point fourth quarter deficit fell short.

It took them five years to get back in that position again. The Lakers dispatched the Suns in five games in the Western Conference Semifinals in 1980, and the next year Phoenix had the best record in the West but lost to the 40-42 Kings in the same round. In 1982, Nance's rookie year, Los Angeles swept Phoenix, sparked by consecutive 19-point victories in the first two games of the series at The Forum. After losing to the Nuggets in a first-round miniseries in 1983, the Suns, wanting to toughen up their lineup, shipped Dennis Johnson to Boston to get center Rick Robey. But Kyle Macy was not up to the task to replace D.J. at guard, and Robey was nearly invisible, buried behind Adams and James Edwards at center and a steadily improving Nance at power forward. Phoenix finished the regular season at 41-41, but the team made it to the Western Conference Finals. With Robey, Adams, Maurice Lucas and Paul Westphal providing championship experience, the Suns upset the Trail Blazers and Jazz before taking on the Lakers. Nance then did something he had not done all year: score 20-plus points in four straight games. "I love playing against them," Nance said, after scoring 23 points (with 12 rebounds) in the Suns 135-127 Game 3 victory. "The more they run the more we run, and that definitely makes me play better." But the Suns fell in six games.

Nance got off to a great start in the 1984-85 season, setting a career high with 44 points, along with 17 rebounds and 6 blocks despite fouling out in a triple-overtime victory over Portland on November 1. Two weeks later, he posted 40 points (on 19 for 23 shooting) and 13 rebounds in a 102-97 regulation loss to the Lakers. These performances helped Nance make his first All-Star team. But on March 2 against the Kings, Nance suffered a groin pull while going up for a dunk; other than a cameo appearance against the Clippers at the end of the month, Nance missed the rest of the season, including the playoffs. It was the latest in a long line of injuries and other ailments that would cost the Suns 266 player-games during the regular season (players shown in **bold** below also missed the playoffs).

Player	Games Lost	Reason
Rick Robey	78	Heel surgery
Walter Davis	59	Torn ligaments left knee, bone spurs right ankle
Mike Sanders	58	Torn cartilage left knee
Larry Nance	21	Strained groin muscle, sprained left ankle
Kyle Macy	17	Strained left big toe, strained right big toe, bruised right hip, flu
Maurice Lucas	13	Tonsillitis, flu, tendinitis right knee
James Edwards	12	Bruised right knee
Alvin Scott	5	Bruised left shoulder
Jay Humphries	2	Bruised right hip
Charles Jones	1	Sprained left ankle

Phoenix was 29-32 when Nance got hurt against the Kings, and were already 14 games behind the Lakers but, incredibly, still in second place in a very weak Pacific Division. The Suns limped to a 7-14 finish and prepared to play the Lakers in the first round. No one gave Phoenix a chance to win, and players seemed resigned to striving for an honorable defeat. "We can lose and we can be embarrassed," Alvan Adams said prior to the series. "We're not looking to lose, but they're so much better than we are right now. We don't want to get down by 20 after one quarter and have their guys on the bench laughing at us. That would really be embarrassing."

The next day, at the end of the first quarter of Game 1, the Lakers led the Suns 45-24.

There was little Phoenix could do to respond. Los Angeles went on to outscore Phoenix 142-114 as Mike McGee scored 22 off the bench to lead the Lakers; Magic Johnson had to settle for 18 points and 19 assists in 29 *minutes*. Two days later, the Suns stayed closer, but still surrendered 147 points in a 147-130 defeat. Even for the Lakers high-flying offense, which would go on to set an NBA playoffs record of 126.3 points per game, the 289 points in the opening two games were impressive; Los Angeles had topped 140 points in a game just six times during the regular season, including twice against the hapless 22-60 Warriors (final scores: 145-119 and 144-110; they also beat them 139-109, 137-130, and 131-107—apparently the Lakers were out for blood after losing to the Warriors 122-106 during a 3-5 stretch to start the season). The Suns held the Lakers to 119 points in Game 3 in Phoenix, but lost 119-103 to mercifully end their season.

The next three years were even worse, as the Suns failed to make the playoffs as the 80s Era came to an end. A litany of distractions contributed to a toxic situation: Nance held out and missed the 1985-86 season opener, Walter Davis recovered from his injuries but then spent time in drug rehab, lottery picks Ed Pinckney (1985) and William Bedford (1986) failed to produce, and Alvan Adams was now getting old and neither he nor James Edwards were able to hold their own against an NBA now stocked with increasingly taller frontcourts. McLeod was fired in February 1987 but neither Dick Van Arsdale nor John Wetzel could turn the team around. But before Wetzel departed in 1988, the Suns laid the foundation for a

turnaround by making a trade with the Cavaliers that truly helped both teams. A year to the day after McLeod was shown the door, the Suns sent Nance, Mike Sanders and a first-round pick obtained from the Pistons to the Cavaliers for point guard Kevin Johnson, center Mark West, and three draft picks, including the Cavs 1988 first-rounder that the Suns turned into swingman Dan Majerle. With Nance and Sanders starting in Cleveland and complimenting Brad Daugherty and Mark Price, the Cavs won a franchise record 57 games in 1988-89 and would win 50 or more games again in back-to-back years in the early 1990's. The Suns did even better; Johnson had been buried behind Price in Cleveland, but turned into a three-time All-Star in Phoenix and regularly finished in the top five in the league in assists. Phoenix won 55 games in 1988-89 (two off the franchise record) and won 50 or more games every year through 1995, all with Johnson at the helm. The Suns also owed much of the credit for their resurgence to new head coach Cotton Fitzsimmons (back for a second stint), and his successor Paul Westphal, but Johnson, Majerle, and West all played key roles on the court, and it was the Larry Nance trade that brought those players to Phoenix.

Portland Trail Blazers

Jack Ramsay

Head Coach 1976-1986

Ramsay is the choice here instead of Clyde Drexler because Drexler was drafted in 1983, missed the first half of the 80s Era, and most importantly, his career peaked during the five seasons immediately after the Era had concluded, including two trips to the NBA Finals. On the other hand, Ramsay was the head coach for seven of the eight years, and while he never repeated the magic of his first season back in 1976-77, the man known as "Dr. Jack" remained a respected member of the NBA coaching fraternity and was instantly recognizable to fans across the country.

Ramsay had an impressive basketball resume. He grew up in Philadelphia, and after a stint in the Navy in World War II, returned to St. Joseph's University and was captain of the basketball team for the 1948-49 season. Ramsey originally intended to become a doctor, but became enamored with the game while in the service. After graduation he began his coaching career at St. James High School in nearby Chester, while also studying at Penn for his doctorate, and playing—and scoring over 2,000 points over six seasons—for the Pottsville Packers and Sunbury Mercuries in the Eastern League (minor league basketball). By 1955 Ramsay was coaching at St. Joseph's and would compile a 234-72 record over the next eleven seasons. Jack McKinney, who played for Ramsay in high school and at St. Joseph's, and coached under him as an assistant in Portland before his accident-shortened stint as the Lakers head coach, told John Papanek of *Sports Illustrated* in 1982, "We never got the great

players at St. Joe's, But Jack always did a great job getting 99 percent of the good player's potential out of him."

In 1966 Ramsay took the general manager's job with the 76ers and immediately hated it, even though the team won their first championship that season. He wanted to coach, and when Alex Hannum quit after the following season, there was an opening on the bench. Initially, his relationship with Wilt Chamberlain was cordial enough that the superstar floated the idea of becoming player-coach with Ramsay as his assistant. Ramsay later said that he "was kind of looking forward to it," but when Chamberlain had a falling out with 76ers owner Irv Kosloff, the temperamental center decided he wanted out of Philadelphia entirely. Ramsay dealt Chamberlain to the Lakers and took over as head coach instead, and managed to lead the 76ers to 55 wins with an undersized lineup. But the team then struggled, and after a 30-52 record in 1971-72 Ramsay left for the Buffalo Braves. Ramsey led the Braves to the franchise's first three playoff appearances, then moved on to Portland.

With the Trail Blazers, Ramsay became a health and exercise nut off the court and a legend on it. Portland's first six seasons in the NBA had produced zero postseason games, but in Ramsay's first year the Trail Blazers won the championship. Center Bill Walton later wrote that he had blamed himself for the Blazers previous lack of success due to his inability to stay healthy, and that Ramsay's predecessor Lenny Wilkens deserved a share of the credit for the 1977 title. But Walton was also effusive with his praise of Ramsay: "Ramsay was sheer joy to work with, a real dreamer. He would push you and push you and then push you some more. You were able to reach your highest levels of performance and achievement because of his constant emphasis on excellence." Their relationship was also strengthened because Ramsay was erudite enough to evoke comparisons with John Wooden; in his 1978 book *The Coach's Art*, Ramsay compared basketball with the artistry of ballet: "The game is unified action up and down the floor. It is quickness, it is strength; it is skill, it is stamina; it is five men playing as one..."

Unfortunately, Walton's fragile feet prevented Portland from reaching even the Western Conference Finals again during Ramsay's tenure. Portland was 50-10 in 1978 before Walton was lost for the season (and the next). The team that Don Nelson once called "a team for all time" spiraled downward as the 80s Era began. Ramsay kept the team above .500 every year except 1980 and 1986—the Blazers would earn the fifth-best regular season record during the 80s Era—but they were never serious championship contenders. In May 1986 Ramsay was unceremoniously let go with a year remaining on his contract, with the Blazers interviewing his replacement, Milwaukee assistant coach Mike Schuler, even before they officially fired him.

San Antonio Spurs

George Gervin

#44 6'7" Forward-Guard 1974-1985

Gervin was known as “the Iceman” (or “Ice” for short) due to his cool demeanor on the court, but the nickname originally bestowed on him by Virginia Squires teammate Fatty Taylor was “Iceberg Slim,” which was also the pen name of author Robert Beck. Taylor thought Gervin resembled Beck, a former pimp who went on to write several novels about his experiences in the late 1960’s and 1970’s, including *Trick Baby*, which was made into a movie in 1972 by Universal Pictures. Gervin was one of the best medium-range shooters in pro basketball history, finishing his career with a shooting percentage of just over 50 percent, mixing jumpers with a deadly bank shot and a mesmerizing finger roll, accurate from 12 feet (or more) from the basket. He was unafraid to shoot early and often, averaging a shot every 1.69 minutes on the court during his career and finished in the top ten in the NBA in field goal attempts for seven straight seasons.

Gervin was born in Detroit and focused his youthful energies on basketball instead of roaming the city’s tough streets. After averaging 31 points and 20 rebounds a game as a senior in high school, he received a scholarship from Long Beach State but was homesick and returned to Detroit before finishing the year. Then, Gervin’s basketball career nearly ended due to a stunningly uncharacteristic incident while playing for Eastern Michigan University. In a 1972 NCAA Division II semifinal game, with his Hurons trailing 81-56, Gervin hit Roanoke sophomore Jay Piccola with an elbow and then, as Piccola was straightening up from the blow, Gervin landed a right hook and briefly knocked him unconscious. Gervin, also a sophomore, had never picked up a technical foul in a game before, but now was in the middle of a firestorm; he was ejected from the game and suspended by the school for the third-place game (Eastern Michigan had gone on to lose the semifinal contest 99-83) and eventually was thrown off the team entirely due to the incident and academic troubles.

With no other option for playing college ball, Gervin dropped out of school and joined the Pontiac Chaparrals of the Continental Basketball League. Then, in January 1973, the Virginia Squires of the ABA selected Gervin in a special draft of underclassmen. On January 27, Gervin scored 20 points, including a pair of three pointers in the final minute, as the Squires lost to the Utah Stars 127-121. Gervin spent the rest of the season learning the pro game from teammate Julius Erving, as he related to Zach Lowe of the website *Grantland.com* forty years later: “I used to try to go into the locker room [after practice] and Doc used to call me up and say, “Hey, rook! Where you goin’?” And I used to say, “I’m going to the locker room.” And he’d say, “You ain’t done yet!” And me and him used to play one-on-one.”

But sadly for basketball fans, the Erving/Gervin partnership lasted just thirty games. Squires owner Earl Foreman was hemorrhaging money, and that offseason Erving forced his

way out of Virginia amid a series of lawsuits between the Squires and New York Nets of the ABA, and his suitors in the NBA, the Atlanta Hawks and Milwaukee Bucks. Desperate for cash, Foreman then sold center Swen Nater to the San Antonio Spurs in November, and in January 1974, Gervin was sold to the Spurs too. However, the sale of Gervin to San Antonio was not a simple transaction. The deal between the two teams was struck in mid-January but was not to be announced until after the All-Star game, which was slated to be held at Squires's home arena, The Scope. Since Gervin had already made the All-Star team as a reserve, Foreman wanted him to still be a member of the "home team" in order to generate more interest from fans. But then ABA commissioner Mike Storen voided the deal on the grounds that it was bad for the league and the Squires. The Spurs took the dispute to court, and on February 6 Federal District Court Judge Adrian Spears issued the first of three injunctions allowing Gervin to play for San Antonio. The next day, Gervin started for the Spurs and scored 12 points in an 86-83 loss to the Utah Stars.

For the next decade, Gervin was the on-court leader of the Spurs as the team flirted with playoff success but never quite achieved it. The franchise debuted in 1967 as the Dallas Chaparrals, then moved to San Antonio in 1973 on what was supposed to be a three-year lease, but within a year, two dozen partners bought the franchise outright. The team has proven to be remarkably resilient over the years. Through the 2013 season, the Chaparrals/Spurs have missed the playoffs just five times (1973 in the ABA; 1984, 1987, 1989 and 1997 in the NBA), and two of those were more-or-less intentional; the Spurs tanked in 1987 to get the number one pick and draft David Robinson, then, ten years later, with Robinson out injured, San Antonio won just 20 games and ended up with Tim Duncan as the lottery ping-pong balls again fell their way.

But Gervin's Spurs never reached the NBA Finals, losing in the conference championship round three times. In 1979 the Spurs nearly blew a 3-1 lead against the 76ers in the Eastern Conference Semifinals before rallying in the fourth quarter of Game 7 to win 111-108. Then they *did* blow a 3-1 lead against the Bullets in the Eastern Conference Finals, despite 42 points from Gervin in the finale. The Spurs were even less competitive in two Western Consecutive Finals losses to the Lakers in 1982 and 1983.

Part of the problem was that the Spurs relied on surrounding Gervin with very good players, but not great players. As the quality of that supporting cast fluctuated, so did their win-loss record. Their win totals since joining the NBA resembled an amusement park ride: 44, 52, 48, 41, 52, 48 and 53, and then just 37, 41, 35 and 28 from 1984 through 1987 as the team began rebuilding. During the regular season, there were advantages to their strategy of building a deep roster. In 1982, the Spurs, with Gervin winning his fourth scoring title in five years, led the NBA in rebounding for the second straight season despite not having a single player average eight rebounds a game. But then they were swept by the Lakers in the Western Conference Finals. The Spurs responded by shipping a pair of starters, Dave Corzine and Mark

Olberding, to the Bulls for 33-year-old center Artis Gilmore. Gilmore averaged 12 rebounds a game the next season, and the Spurs pulled down a few more boards than the year before (though they finished second behind Moses Malone and the 76ers) but San Antonio lost again to the Lakers—in six games this time—and then did not win another playoff series for six years as Gilmore (and Gervin) declined.

At his peak, Gervin was unparalleled as a scorer. On April 9, 1978, Gervin and the Spurs visited the New Orleans Jazz and the Iceman dropped in a career high 63 points in a 153-135 loss. Gervin also knew how talented he was, and would occasionally refer to himself in the third person (cool tense), such as when he told a reporter in 1979, “Ice’s game is to put it in the hole.” Two years later, after listening to the Indiana Pacers promote a matchup of defensive-minded rookie forward Dudley Bradley against Gervin, the Iceman responded by scoring 55 points, his second 50-plus point performance of the month and fourth of his career to that point (he would hit the 50 point mark only once more, at home against the Bucks in March 1982).

By 1985, Gervin was slowing down, and the Spurs decided to trade him. Spurs President Angelo Drossos went hunting with Gervin in the offseason and knew his friend had kept the franchise afloat since the ABA days, but San Antonio wanted to rebuild around 23-year-old shooting guard Alvin Robertson. Gervin was dealt to Chicago for David Greenwood, a marginal starter at power forward whose career had already peaked. Ice was supposed to serve as a veteran presence behind Michael Jordan at shooting guard for the Bulls, who were now coached by former Spurs coach Stan Albeck. But Jordan broke his foot during the third game of the season against the Warriors, and Gervin replaced him in the starting lineup. He averaged 16 points a game, but returned to the bench soon after Jordan returned in March. As Jordan showed that he was fully recovered, Albeck buried Gervin on the bench, barely playing him in the final two regular season games, and gave him just eleven total minutes in the first two games of the playoffs against Boston. Game 2 was the double-overtime classic in which Jordan scored 63 points at the Garden; Jordan played fifty-three minutes, Gervin just five. It would turn out to be Gervin’s final game. Prior to Game 3 in Chicago, Gervin’s wife called the Bulls to tell them that Gervin was sick with the flu and had been “throwing up for two days” in the words of Albeck. The Bulls lost, ending their season, and Gervin would not be re-signed for the following season.

San Diego (Los Angeles) Clippers

Bingo Smith

#7 6'5" Small Forward 1980

Robert “Bingo” Smith had the perfect nickname for the carnival-like atmosphere that followed the Clippers throughout the 1980’s as they averaged 27 wins a year and never made the playoffs. Smith, who was given the moniker by Tulsa sports editor Mel Elliott while in college, was also the only person to play for both of the NBA franchises that were located in San Diego. Drafted by the then-San Diego Rockets with the sixth pick in 1969, Smith was selected by the Cleveland Cavaliers in the expansion draft a year later. Smith spent a decade in Cleveland, becoming one of Bill Fitch’s stable of scorers on a team known for spreading the offense around (Smith led the team in scoring during 1974-75 with just a 15.9 average). When he was traded to the Clippers early in the 1979-80 season, Smith had been the last original Cavalier left on the team.

Smith lasted just one year back in San Diego. His exit mirrored what had happened ten years earlier: he was selected in the expansion draft by Dallas. A year later, attorney Donald Sterling bought the Clippers from Irv Levin (reportedly without consulting a financial advisor or having another attorney double-check the paperwork) and almost immediately tried to move the team, announcing in June 1982 that he intended to sign a twenty-year lease with the Los Angeles Sports Arena. The news sparked a flurry of lawsuits and threatened lawsuits, since, at a minimum, Sterling was breaking his lease in San Diego, and his announcement led to at least one attempt to find a local buyer that would keep the team from moving. In the end, the Clippers stayed in San Diego through the 1983-84 season before signing a ten-year lease and moving into the Sports Arena, a facility that the Lakers had abandoned seventeen years earlier.

However, by that time, the Clippers most recognizable player, Bill Walton, had played just 92 games over five seasons, and team officials had crippled the franchise’s prospects by dealing away three consecutive number one picks, *after taking a quality player with each selection*:

Date	Transaction
August 18, 1983	Traded Tom Chambers [8th pick 1981] with Al Wood, a 1984 3rd round draft pick (Terry Williams) and a 1987 2nd round draft pick (Fred Banks) to the Seattle SuperSonics for James Donaldson, Greg Kelser, Mark Radford, a 1984 1st round draft pick (Michael Cage) and a 1985 2nd round draft pick (Calvin Duncan).
October 10, 1983	Traded Byron Scott [4th pick 1983] with Swen Nater to the Los Angeles Lakers for Eddie Jordan, Norm Nixon, a 1986 2nd round draft pick (Jeff Hornacek) and a 1987 2nd round draft pick (Bruce Dalrymple).
September 29, 1984	Traded Terry Cummings [2nd pick 1982] with Craig Hodges and Ricky Pierce to the Milwaukee Bucks for Junior Bridgeman, Harvey Catchings, Marques Johnson and cash.

In fairness, the Scott-for-Nixon trade might have worked if Nixon had stayed healthy, but the other two maneuvers were questionable from the start. The Cummings trade was the first made by new Clippers general manager Carl Scheer, who had been in a similar position with the Nuggets the previous season. Acquiring Johnson was partly motivated by P.R.—Johnson was a star at UCLA and had played his high school ball in Los Angeles—but was also done to help convince Walton not to sign elsewhere by adding veterans in the place of young players. It was a dubious strategy given Walton's injury history. The trade of Tom Chambers to Seattle yielded two solid pros for the Clippers in Michael Cage and James Donaldson, but a year later Donaldson was dealt to Dallas for the underachieving Kurt Nimphius, since the Clippers believed Nimphius was better suited to play alongside 1985 draft pick Benoit Benjamin. It was yet another mistake, as Donaldson turned out to be the best of the three.

But you need to go back even further to realize the full scope of the Clippers missteps. The Clippers dalliance with World B. Free at the end of 1970's cost them dearly in the 1984 draft. The Clippers gave up their own first-round pick to acquire Free from the 76ers in 1978, and got back a first-rounder for him from the Warriors two years later. But in 1984 the Clippers original pick was fifth overall while the Warriors selection was eighth. Picks five, six and seven turned out to be Charles Barkley, Mel Turpin and Alvin Robertson. The Clippers used the Warriors selection to take Lancaster Gordon, who, like Turpin, was a disappointing pro. And the Clippers gave up their 1986 first-round pick when they shipped that selection to the 76ers in 1979 for a disappointing Joe Bryant. Although Donald Sterling's mismanagement has haunted the franchise for three decades, the seeds of their struggles were sown even before he bought the team.

Seattle SuperSonics

Jack Sikma

#43 6'11" Center 1977-1986

Sikma was memorable to me for two reasons, one frivolous, one serious. Sikma's permed blond hair early in the 80s Era reminded me a little of Larry Bird, and Sikma chose to wear his hair straighter around the same time that Bird cut his shorter; both choices were an improvement over the "Dutchboy"-like look that Sikma had sported as an NBA rookie. But Sikma was also one of the best centers in the league and one of the better players who never made an All-NBA team in the period before the Third Team was added in 1989 (and cheapened the honor a bit). All-Star voting results are hardly a scientific way of measuring performance, but Sikma was selected to seven consecutive All-Star games from 1979 through 1985, and finished second to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in the West voting in 1980, 1981 (outpolling Moses Malone) and again in 1983.

Sikma's best seasons were in Seattle, but he was a Midwesterner at heart. A native of Kankakee, Illinois and graduate of Saint Anne High School, Sikma surprised many observers by enrolling at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington. His rationale was partly based on his relationship with head coach Dennie Bridges who was in the midst of a 36-year run leading the Titan basketball team. Bridges was the first coach to recruit Sikma, before the latter drew national attention as a high school senior, and Bridges explained to Sikma that the small NAIA school played a quality schedule including several Division I opponents and promised Sikma that he would start at center even as a freshman. "I was a late bloomer," Sikma said three decades later, "and I wanted to play right away. I knew I was going to get a chance to get on the floor and play, and the competition in that league was pretty good." Sikma, a devout member of the fundamentalist Reform Church back home, also cherished the chance to be a "real college student" instead of a cog in a basketball machine. After he broke Illinois Wesleyan's scoring and rebounding records, the Seattle SuperSonics drafted Sikma with the eighth pick in 1977, despite knowing that he was reluctant to move to the Pacific Northwest.

Sikma walked into a mess. After four mediocre seasons under the leadership of Bill Russell, Bob Hopkins replaced him as head coach. Hopkins lasted until five days after Thanksgiving, when the SuperSonics fell to 5-17 with a sixteen point loss at Denver. He was replaced by Lenny Wilkens, who had been serving as director of player personnel. It was Wilkens' second tour with Seattle. After eight seasons as a player in Atlanta where he was named to five All-Star teams as a 6'1" point guard, Wilkens had been traded to Seattle in 1968 for Walt Hazzard. That season Wilkens established a personal career high with 22.4 points per game to go along with 8.2 assists. In August 1969, Wilkens was elevated to player-coach by SuperSonics general manager Dick Vertlieb to replace the departed Al Bianchi, who had resigned after the season (coincidentally, Bianchi had been a teammate of Hopkins at Syracuse in the late 1950's). With the recent retirement of Russell from the Celtics, Wilkens was the only African-American coach in the NBA. Wilkens continued to play at an All-Star level, but Seattle missed the playoffs in each of his three seasons as coach despite a rising win total that reached 47 in 1972. The SuperSonics then traded him to the Cavaliers in a deal for Butch Beard. With Bill Fitch entrenched as the head coach in Cleveland, Wilkens did not coach again until he was sold to the Portland Trail Blazers two years later.

In 1977, now retired as a player, Wilkens shook up the Sonics immediately, demoting Fred Brown, Slick Watts and Bruce Seals while inserting Dennis Johnson, John Johnson and Gus Williams into the starting lineup. At the same time, Wilkens cool demeanor was a welcome departure from the volatile Hopkins. Seattle won six in a row and 11 of their first 12 games under Wilkens's direction, en route to a 42-18 mark for the rest of the season. "You always expect a little surge after a coaching change," Wilkens said in January 1978, "but this is too many wins to be a little surge." Sikma was still coming off the bench behind Marvin

Webster, but gradually took minutes away from veteran Paul Silas by taking the floor at forward alongside the 7'1" Webster. Seattle, who had won just one playoff series since their inception in 1967, made it all the way to the NBA Finals, a task made easier when Bill Walton suffered a stress fracture in his foot which weakened the defending champions in Portland.

A year later, with Sikma now starting at center and joined in the frontcourt by Lonnie Shelton (acquired from the Knicks as part of the compensation package for the Knicks signing Webster as a free agent), Seattle won 52 games and their first NBA championship. Sikma rose to the occasion, particularly against Phoenix in the Western Conference Finals, scoring what proved to be a playoff career-high of 33 points and adding 11 rebounds in the deciding Game 7. Overall, Sikma's playoff averages of 15 points and 12 rebounds a game placed him third and first among the SuperSonics, respectively.

However, the 80s Era proved to be disappointing for Seattle. Sikma spent the next seven years as the SuperSonics dependable star in the middle, averaging just under 18/12 a game, but Seattle never got back to the Finals. Their best chance was in 1980, when they won a franchise-record 56 games, but the Lakers defeated them in five games in the Western Conference Finals. A year later, disaster struck: Wilkens dealt the disgruntled Dennis Johnson to Phoenix for Paul Westphal, but Westphal broke his foot, while Shelton missed most of the season with a wrist injury and Williams sat out the entire year in a contract dispute. In a season in which a pair of 40-42 teams met in the Western Conference Finals, the 34-win SuperSonics did not even qualify for the playoffs. Seattle rebounded to win 52 games in 1982, as Sikma averaged a career-high 19.6 points a game, but Westphal held out and deprived the SuperSonics of desperately needed scoring at shooting guard. They lost to the Spurs in the second round of the playoffs.

The bottom fell out after that, culminating in back-to-back 31 win seasons in 1985 and 1986; the first forced Wilkens to accept a "promotion" to the front office, while the second led Sikma to ask for a trade to a contender for a chance to win another championship. Seattle grudgingly acquiesced, sending him to Milwaukee for Alton Lister and a pair of first-round picks. "Jack is huge in this community," SuperSonics president Bob Whitsitt said after the trade. "He's bigger than the Space Needle. If we had wanted to trade Jack and he had not come in first, it would probably have created the biggest public-relations nightmare the Sonics ever faced." But Seattle had courted that scenario when Sikma's contract had expired after the 1984 season, as the SuperSonics briefly shopped him, considering offers from Chicago and Atlanta that included their first round picks, before re-signing him.

Sikma played five years in Milwaukee, but never made it past the Eastern Conference Semifinals. Seattle, which had lost a chance to draft second in the 1986 draft because they had traded the pick to Boston for Gerald Henderson a year earlier, nearly recovered from that mistake by dealing Henderson with one of the Bucks picks to get the Knicks top choice in 1987. Seattle took future Hall of Famer Scottie Pippen with New York's pick but then dealt

him away (with the *other first-rounder* acquired from Milwaukee in a first-round pick swap that eventually sent Brad Sellers to Seattle) for Olden Polynice, a bust whose best seasons were in the mid-1990's, years after Seattle had given up on him. Lister, Polynice and Sellers were a disappointing harvest from a trade that had sent away Sikma, one of the most popular Sonics ever.

Utah Jazz

Mark Eaton

#53 7'4" Center 1982-1993

Eaton's beard and towering height made him look like a supersized biblical prophet, a fitting image for the modern land of Mormon. Celtics coach K.C. Jones once remarked that after watching Eaton square off against Artis Gilmore, who was listed at 7'2", Eaton "made Artis Gilmore look like a baby kangaroo in a pouch." Eaton led the NBA in blocked shots four times, which makes you wonder how dominant of a water polo goalie he was in his youth. Yes, *water polo*, which was Eaton's primary sport at Westminster (California) High School. Eaton did not receive any college scholarship offers, so for three years after graduation Eaton attended a trade school while working at a tire store. He was then recruited to play basketball for a local junior college, and spent two years there followed by two quiet seasons at UCLA, scoring 53 points and grabbing 71 rebounds in thirty games.

But Frank Layden, the gregarious and rotund head coach and general manager of the Jazz who had taken over on the bench in December 1981, took a chance on Eaton in the fourth round of the June 1982 draft. (Layden was always good for a sound bite; after dropping a few dozen pounds before the 1983-84 season, he frequently told reporters that "I've always had a great body. It was inside the one everybody saw.") By August, Eaton had signed a multi-year contract, but was expected to come off the bench at center behind Danny Schayes, the thirteenth overall pick in 1981, and Jeff Wilkins, who was entering his third season. Schayes was viewed as a project with a lot of upside, much more talented than Wilkins or Eaton.

Meanwhile, the Jazz were so confident in their top scorers Adrian Dantley and Darrell Griffith that they traded their top choice in the 1982 draft, Dominique Wilkins, to the Hawks in September for John Drew and Freeman Williams. But Drew missed half of the season in drug rehab (he would be out of the league two years later), Dantley's season ended in December due to a wrist injury, and Williams was waived after eighteen games. Then in February, Schayes was dealt to Denver for a reported \$300,000 in cash plus former Jazz first-round draft pick Rich Kelley, who was seven feet tall but little more than a journeyman backup center and power forward. The combination of the trade and injuries gave Eaton a chance to play, and he started thirty-two games as a rookie.

Eaton remained limited offensively throughout his career (he was frequently referred to as “mechanical”) but over the next nine seasons he started 726 out of a possible 738 games at center for the Jazz, which coincided with Utah’s first nine playoff appearances in team history. Despite his size, Eaton was not a great rebounder; with the exception of 1985, when he led the NBA in defensive rebounds and finished fifth in overall rebounding at 11.3 a game, he averaged over nine rebounds a game only once, in 1988-89 (10.3). Eaton’s skills were largely confined to the defensive end of the court. Julius Erving once told Jazz owner Larry Miller that, “I don’t care who you are in the NBA, if you go in the paint, you’re going to have to worry about Mark.” Eaton finished in the top three in blocks per game in each of his first seven seasons, and as of 2013 was still the NBA’s career leader in blocks per game with a 3.5 average. He was voted Defensive Player of the Year in 1985 and 1989, and was a five-time member of the NBA All-Defensive Team (three of which were First Team selections).

Under Layden, the Jazz won 41 to 45 games a year during the second half of the 80s Era, despite losing Griffith for the entire 1986 season with a foot injury and trading Dantley to Detroit after that season for Kelly Tripucka and Kent Benson. Dantley’s holdout in 1984 had fractured his relationship with Layden to the point where, after the trade was announced, the jocular coach remarked that, “I’ve already lost 220 pounds. We got rid of Dantley. I don’t know that much about chemistry, but in terms of physiology, the Dantley trade probably saved my life.” Griffith and Dantley were not missed because Layden had landed back-to-back gems in the middle of the first round of the draft in 1984 and 1985, selecting future Hall of Famers John Stockton (#16 pick) and Karl Malone (#13), respectively. Malone started immediately and offset Eaton’s lack of offensive production; it took Stockton three years to officially unseat Rickey Green at point guard but they had played nearly identical minutes during Stockton’s second and third seasons. In 1985 Layden reflected on his successes to Bob Ottum in *Sports Illustrated*: “For a few years there, I was the worst coach in the NBA. Not only that, I was also the worst dressed, the sloppiest, the fattest and all that ... suddenly, like overnight, I became a bleeping intellectual. People started to ask me my opinion on politics, religion. There was a little talk of my running for Utah governor. Isn’t it interesting how smart I suddenly got in one season?” Layden’s free-spirited nature also led him to resign as head coach in December 1988 because the game was no longer fun for him. His successor, Jerry Sloan, would eventually yield the position (but not until the 2010-11 season) for the same reason, after building on Layden’s foundation to regularly win 50 or more games throughout his tenure.

Eaton remained with the Jazz through the 1992-93 season, but was limited due to right knee surgery prior to the season and lingering back issues. After missing the entire 1993-94 campaign due to back pain caused by deteriorating discs, he announced his retirement that September.

Part Three

The Rivalries



Chapter Five

Building a Rivalry

The Celtics, Lakers and 76ers all took different paths towards building their championship teams, but they used the same tools available to their fellow franchises: draft picks, trades and free agent signings. This chapter describes how each of them did it, and in the cases of Boston and Los Angeles, how they retooled their championship machines on the fly and won multiple titles during the 80s Era.

Boston Celtics

The most consequential trade of the 1980's was actually a free agency compensation swap, triggered by the Celtics signing M. L. Carr away from the Pistons, as Red Auerbach convinced Detroit general manager Dick Vitale to send two 1980 first-round draft picks to Boston in exchange for Bob McAdoo to complete the transaction in July 1979. The Pistons then went 16-66 that season, and the Celtics won the coin flip to earn the number one pick. Boston had reached the Eastern Conference Finals in 1980 before falling in five games to Philadelphia, but Auerbach was on the hunt for some size. The Celtics had just two players over 6'9"—backup centers Rick Robey (6'11") and Eric Fernsten (6'10")—while the 76ers started the 6'11" duo of Darryl Dawkins and Caldwell Jones, and the champion Lakers still had Kareem Abdul-Jabbar manning the middle. Plus, Dave Cowens was turning thirty-two that fall, and could not outrun rival centers as easily as he could in his youth.

In the days leading up to the draft there were plenty of rumors, including speculation that the Celtics were interested in swapping the thirteenth pick (obtained from Washington via Detroit) for former Celtic Paul Westphal. But head coach Bill Fitch was intrigued with seven-footer Robert Parish of the Golden State Warriors, who owned the third pick, and more importantly, the Warriors were fearful of being unable to sign Parish to a contract extension. The Celtics agreed to send both the first and thirteenth selections to the Warriors for Parish and their number three pick. Warriors executive Scotty Stirling praised Carroll as "one of the

top center prospects of the past 10 years” while rival coaches wondered if Fitch could get Parish to live up his potential. When the Celtics took Kevin McHale with the third pick, they had acquired two future Hall-of-Famers to bolster their frontcourt; had they kept their original picks, they likely would have reached for a lesser-quality big man at number 13. (The Warriors used the pick to select the disappointing center-forward Rickey Brown, who averaged 4.4/3.5 during his five year career.) McHale’s skills were accurately forecasted by the Phoenix Suns general manager Jerry Colangelo on the day of the draft: “He has excellent hands and good timing... You can’t say he’s a great jumper, but he makes up for it with his timing and playing so hard. Offensively, he has an assortment of shots.” The trade also provided leverage in negotiations with free agent forward Cedric Maxwell, who later re-signed with the Celtics.

The “Parish-McHale trade” is one of the cornerstones of the Era, but it never would have happened if Celtics owner (and Auerbach nemesis) John Y. Brown had not acquired McAdoo in February 1979 without consulting his general manager. Auerbach had obtained two additional first-round picks in the 1979 draft the month before, sending a fading Jo Jo White to the Warriors and journeyman center Dennis Awtrey to the SuperSonics as the Celtics were spiraling towards a 29-53 finish. But in one move, Brown undid all of Auerbach’s work, sending those picks *plus the Celtics own selection in 1979* to the Knicks for McAdoo. Fortunately, Auerbach was able to convince Dick Vitale to help him undo the damage. But what if Brown had never made the McAdoo trade at all?

In that scenario, Boston likely would have ended up with the third, ninth (Warriors), and twenty-first (SuperSonics) choices in the 1979 draft, assuming that the absence of McAdoo would have had little impact on their win-loss record. Similarly, we could also assume that the meddling Brown would not have mishandled another trade a year earlier in July 1978, in which Brown relented and agreed to send Boston’s 1980 first-round choice to Indiana for Earl Tatum instead of the second-rounder that Auerbach thought was going to be part of the deal. How all of this would have changed history is impossible to know for sure, but here’s what the 1980-81 Celtics roster might have looked like (hypothetical players in *italics*):

Pos	Ht	Player	Notes
F	6’8”	Cedric Maxwell	
F	6’9”	Larry Bird	
C	7’1”	<i>Bill Cartwright</i>	#3 pick in 1979 by Knicks, 1980 All-Star, 20+ ppg first two seasons, USF alumni (Bill Russell’s alma mater)
G/F	6’6”	<i>Jim Paxson</i>	#12 pick in 1979 by Trail Blazers, 1983 and 1984 All-Star, averaged 17-21 ppg 1981-85; Celtics traded for him in Feb 1988
G	6’1”	Tiny Archibald	

F-C	6'8"	Larry Smith	#24 pick in 1980 by Warriors, averaged 9.2 rebounds per game over his 13 year career
G	6'2"	Gerald Henderson	
C	6'11"	Rick Robey	
G	6'3"	Kyle Macy	#22 pick in 1979 by Suns as a junior-eligible from U. of Kentucky, led league in FT% twice, top ten in 3-pt FGM four times
G	6'2"	Terry Duerod	
C	6'10"	Eric Fernsten	

Cartwright, Paxson and Macy are all logical choices. Cartwright for his size and college pedigree (Auerbach had selected six USF alumni over the years, starting with Bill Russell and then in 1965, Ollie Johnson, in the first round; K.C. Jones, Gene Brown, Russ Gumina and Byron Jones were later-round picks), Paxson for his scoring, passing, and ability to move without the ball, and Macy as a product of a high-profile program—albeit a member of a 19-12 team that year—which Auerbach always took into account when drafting. Smith's selection in 1980 might be a stretch due to his small school lineage; Alcorn State University has produced only four professional basketball players, but Auerbach had drafted the first such player, Julius Keye, in the third round in 1969. Another possibility at that slot would have been Jeff Ruland.

The combination of Cartwright and Smith in 1980-81 might have been statistically comparable to Parish and McHale that season (combined averages of 31.3/21.0—on a pair of sub-.500 teams—in 69.8 mpg vs. 28.9/13.9 in 48.1 mpg for Parish and McHale on a championship team in Boston) but Cartwright would be plagued by injuries and never repeated the numbers from his first two seasons, while Smith was extremely limited offensively. With Cartwright on the shelf, the Celtics would have been overpowered inside by the 76ers with Malone and the Lakers with Abdul-Jabbar later in the 1980's. It is also likely that the knee injury suffered by Cedric Maxwell in 1984-85 would have been more devastating to the Celtics, since the versatile McHale would not have been available to replace him in the lineup.

The substitution of Paxson and Macy for Carr and Chris Ford in the backcourt is more intriguing. (It is unlikely that Carr would have been signed in this scenario, and Ford was acquired in 1979 for Tatum, who we have erased from Celtics history for the purposes of this section.) In 1981 Carr and Ford were thirty and thirty-two, respectively, and better suited to deal with a taskmaster like Fitch as coach. Paxson was more skilled offensively, which this team would have needed without McHale's inside game as the 1980's unfolded, while Carr was a better defensive player; it would have been interesting to watch Paxson guard Andrew

Toney in the playoffs. But Carr played more than 75 games in a season just twice for Boston, and missed half of the 1981 campaign. Macy was arguably a better shooter than Ford, including from three-point range, during his relatively short career (he was out of the NBA by age 29). But this is all just speculation, presented here to underscore the point that the Celtics were ultimately fortunate that John Y. Brown and Dick Vitale were in basketball leadership positions in the late 1970s.

However, a dynasty is not built on one trade alone. A series of five other trades brought six other members of the 1980's championship teams to Boston, and indirectly allowed the Celtics to acquire their most important player of all.

December 27, 1977

*Boston Celtics trade Charlie Scott to Los Angeles Lakers for Don Chaney, Kermit Washington, and a **1978 first-round draft pick**.*

The thought of the Celtics and Lakers making a trade is nearly as unthinkable today as a Red Sox-Yankees swap. But in December 1977, the Celtics were 10-22 and the Lakers were 15-18, trailing their respective division leaders by over ten games. Chaney was returning home; he had been a little-used rookie on Bill Russell's final championship team in 1969 (partly due to a stint in the army reserves), but was a starter on the 1974 champs as a defensive-minded guard before jumping to the ABA. Washington was tainted by his recent fight with Rudy Tomjanovich that nearly killed the Rockets star, but Auerbach knew the twenty-six-year-old Washington D.C. native personally and felt that his quiet, almost cerebral, persona was far different than the thuggish image the press and league was allowing to fester. Meanwhile, Scott had slipped since his prime years in the first half of the decade, and the Celtics were eager to deal him away, especially since they were desperate for a rebounder. Auerbach had also gone behind the backs of Bill Sharman and Jerry West of the Lakers by asking owner Irv Levin to negotiate with Lakers owner Jack Kent Cooke over dinner. At the time, the draft pick was seen as a surprising throw-in, and Bob Ryan wrote in the *Boston Globe* that it could become the most important facet of the deal.

The pick ended up being the eighth overall selection, and gave the Celtics the latitude to select Larry Bird with their own pick at number six.

August 4, 1978

*Irv Levin trades the Boston Celtics to John Y. Brown for the Buffalo Braves. Boston sends Kevin Kunnert, Kermit Washington, Sidney Wicks, and Freeman Williams to Buffalo for **Tiny Archibald**, Marvin Barnes, Billy Knight, a 1981 second-round pick (**Danny Ainge**), and a 1983 second-round pick.*

In hindsight this deal between the two owners looks like a steal for the Celtics, with Archibald and Ainge both becoming starters on championship teams while a collection of lesser talent moved to the Braves, who were being relocated by Levin to San Diego to become the Clippers. No one in Boston shed any tears about the selfish Wicks being shipped out of town, but at the time there was a lot to gripe about for Celtics fans, and for Auerbach, who was not consulted about the deal. Archibald had played just 34 games in 1977-78, Barnes was a flake, Williams, selected with the 1978 first-round pick obtained from the Lakers, had averaged 35 points a game as a senior and was being counted on to improve the backcourt, and the loss of the newly-signed Kunnert, along with Washington, weakened the Celtics under the boards.

The most important aspect of this trade was who was *not* included—the Celtics other first-round pick, Larry Bird. Irv Levin was given his choice of Williams or Bird because the Celtics had taken two players in the first round of the draft; Levin chose Williams because Bird's junior-eligible status meant that there was a risk he would be unable to sign him, and Levin felt that if Bird failed to sign it would damage the credibility of the newly created Clippers.

January 16, 1979

*Boston Celtics trade Billy Knight to the Indiana Pacers for **Rick Robey**.*

Boston fans hated Billy Knight because they thought he was a soft player. Robey was the dictionary definition of the opposite of a soft player, and spent the next four seasons backing up Dave Cowens and Robert Parish, filling a role similar to what Auerbach had originally envisioned for Washington and/or Kunnert.

January 14, 1983

*Boston Celtics trade Darren Tillis and a 1983 first-round draft pick to the Cleveland Cavaliers for **Scott Wedman**.*

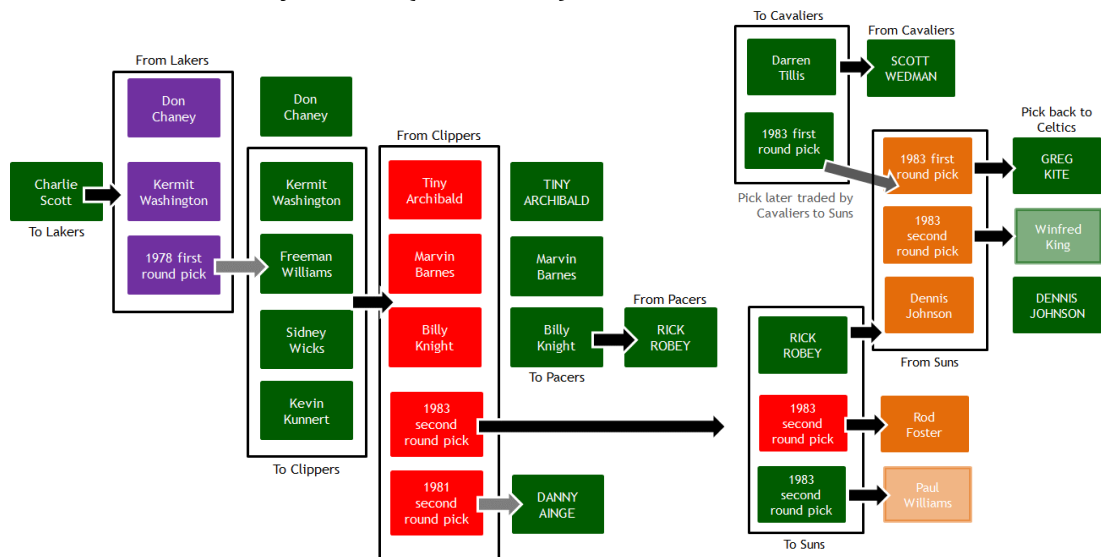
Tillis was the Celtics 1982 first-round pick who quickly washed out of the league. Wedman was an eight-year veteran and two-time All-Star who accepted his new role as a key reserve and spot starter on the 1984 and 1986 champs before a series of injuries ended his career.

June 27, 1983

*Boston Celtics trade **Rick Robey**, a 1983 second-round draft pick obtained from the Clippers, and their own 1983 second-round draft pick, to the Phoenix Suns for **Dennis Johnson** and a 1983 first-round pick (**Greg Kite**).*

Rumors about the Celtics shopping Robey had started during the playoffs, and this deal was considered a steal on the day it was made. It is difficult to understand why Suns general manager Jerry Colangelo was so in love with Rick Robey. “The place you win in this league is up front,” Colangelo said after the trade, adding that “[w]e got stripped in the playoffs last year. We needed more power.” But at the same time, Colangelo mentioned that James Edwards, Alvan Adams, Larry Nance and Maurice Lucas were also on the Suns roster, and as it turned out, all would play far more minutes than Robey during the upcoming season. On the other hand, without Johnson, the Suns slipped from 53 wins to 41 but instead of losing in the first round of the playoffs, they advanced to the Western Conference Finals, losing to the Lakers in six games.

Boston Celtics Five Key Trades (Illustrated)



Note: Players listed in ALL CAPS were part of a Celtics championship team in the 80s Era

Dennis Johnson had been branded as a “difficult” player who would take some games off mentally and/or physically, but Auerbach claimed that his former coach Lenny Wilkens had vouched for his work ethic. The MVP of the 1979 Finals for Seattle had already worn out his welcome in two cities, but Celtics fans would grow to love him (in spite of his tendency to take some games off), partly because Larry Bird would grow to love him, later calling him the greatest player he ever played with, and any friend of Larry’s was deserving of wider affection from Celtics fans than he would receive otherwise. Auerbach was practically gleeful after the trade, telling reporters, “We’ve solidified our backcourt. We had to get a good defensive guard and now we’ve got a guy that can play Magic [Johnson] and Gervin and Theus and Toney. We

now feel our backcourt is as good as any in the league.” The trade also allowed Boston to move up seven spots in the draft and take center Greg Kite, who ultimately proved to be a back-of-the-rotation player instead of a true replacement for Robey.

The Robey-for-Johnson trade also ties together several other deals, as shown above. Robey had been obtained for Knight, and both Knight and the 1983 second-round pick that was sent to the Suns had arrived in Boston as a result of the franchise swap with the Braves/Clippers. And the first-round pick that was sent to Boston for Robey was the *Celtics own first-round pick*, which they had sent to Cleveland in the Wedman deal. The Suns had acquired it from the Cavaliers on February 8 along with James Edwards in exchange for Jeff Cook, their own first-round pick (which ended up being one pick higher, at number 20, and was used by the Cavaliers to take Roy Hinson) and a third-round selection.

Unfortunately, Auerbach’s brilliance waned after this series of moves. Other than the Maxwell-for-Walton trade in 1985, and the ill-fated Henderson-for-Bias draft pick trade, Auerbach was unable to bolster the Celtics roster via trades, which, coupled with a poor draft record (outside of Reggie Lewis in 1987), ultimately led to Boston’s slow decline in the late 1980’s.

Los Angeles Lakers

Bill Sharman coached the Lakers from 1971 through 1976, winning a title in his first season and reaching the finals again in his second. By the end of the 1975-76 season, the 40-42 Lakers had the league MVP in Kareem Abdul-Jabbar but little else of value. That summer, disgruntled guard Gail Goodrich signed with the New Orleans Jazz, Jerry West replaced Sharman as head coach, and Sharman replaced Pete Newell as general manager. The Goodrich deal would turn out to be the most significant, as the Jazz sent their next *three* first-round picks to the Lakers as part of the compensation package. Those three drafts from 1977 through 1979 helped build the Lakers dynasty of the 1980’s:

Year	Pick	Player	Notes
1977	6	Kenny Carr	<i>Pick acquired from Jazz in Goodrich compensation trade</i> Backup power forward, traded to Cavaliers October 1979
	15	Brad Davis	<i>Pick acquired from Spurs for Mack Calvin</i> Point guard, released in October 1978, released again by Pacers and Jazz before playing twelve seasons for Mavericks, four as a starter
	22	Norm Nixon	<i>Starting point guard until traded to Clippers in October 1983 as part of deal for Byron Scott</i>
1978		None	#16 pick traded to Jazz in Goodrich transaction; #8 pick acquired from Jazz was traded to Celtics as part of Charlie Scott deal Note: Lakers selected Michael Cooper in the third round, pick 60
1979	1	Magic Johnson	<i>Pick acquired from Jazz in Goodrich transaction</i> Hall of Famer won five championship rings and three MVP awards

	14	Brad Holland	Backcourt role player who went to Bullets as part of compensation package for Mitch Kupchak in July 1981
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The selection of Magic Johnson was the key move (and allowed new owner Jerry Buss to cash in on his rookie's charisma by immediately raising the price of the Forum's \$15 front-row seats to \$60) but Nixon was also an important contributor to the 1980 and 1982 championship teams, finishing in the top five in the NBA in assists from 1978 through 1982. Later, using Nixon to acquire Byron Scott clarified the Lakers backcourt responsibilities—it is an over-simplification to say that Magic ran the break and Nixon ran the half-court set offense; Magic and Nixon had an uneasy co-existence sharing the point—and Scott was a starter on the next three Lakers championship teams.

In September 1979, Sharman made arguably his biggest mistake as general manager, shipping the well-traveled former Rookie of the Year and future Hall of Fame forward, Adrian Dantley, out of town for Spencer Haywood less than two years after acquiring him from the Pacers. (The Pacers had grabbed him from the Braves when then-owner John Y. Brown decided he just *had* to have Billy Knight.) "It's been tough," Dantley told Bruce Newman of *Sports Illustrated* in December 1979, "No ballplayer wants to get traded, because it hurts your pride, makes you feel like you aren't wanted." But Jack McKinney wanted a bigger forward to team with Jamaal Wilkes, and Haywood fit the bill. However, Haywood lasted just one season in Los Angeles as his drug-laced partying ruined the tail end of a productive pro career. McKinney then suffered a head injury in a bicycle accident in November while heading to a friendly tennis game against assistant Paul Westhead; Westhead then stepped in as interim head coach.

By then, Sharman had compensated for his misstep by fleecing the Cavaliers, who loved to trade first-round picks even before Ted Stepien became majority owner. The Cavaliers had already dealt their own first-round selection in 1980 (which would end up #9 overall) to the Clippers for guard Randy Smith, who was fading but had not missed a game since Richard Nixon's first term as President. On February 15, 1980, with the Lakers holding the third-best record in the league, but in second place behind the SuperSonics in the Pacific Division, Sharman sent his 1980 first-round pick and Don Ford to the Cavaliers for their 1982 first-round choice and Butch Lee. The Lakers went on to win the championship (with little contribution from Lee), and two years later, en route to another title, the Lakers watched as the Cavaliers reached rock-bottom with a 15-67 record. Los Angeles won the subsequent coin flip with the Clippers to claim the number one overall pick, the first time a defending champ had that honor. There was speculation that Dominique Wilkins, dubbed the "Human Highlight Film" and compared with Julius Erving, would be a good fit for the Lakers' high-flying offense, but the Lakers chose James Worthy, who had lesser college stats overall than Wilkins but opened eyes with a 28 point, 17 rebound performance in the NCAA title game for North Carolina. After making the selection, Lakers owner Jerry Buss admitted that the team tried to

trade the pick to get a first-rounder in 1983 in hopes of landing a replacement for Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, but when no partner was found, they were happy to select Worthy, who Buss called “the fastest big man in the draft in years” to team with Magic Johnson on the break.

By the time Worthy was selected, beginning a Hall of Fame career that included six All-Star appearances and the 1988 Finals MVP award, the other three players involved in the trade were already out of the league:

- The Cavaliers used the Lakers 1980 pick to draft Chad Kinch, whose NBA career consisted of 41 games for the Cavaliers and the expansion Mavericks in 1980-81.
- Butch Lee had been a star in college at Marquette, winning the 1977 Final Four Most Outstanding Player award on the NCAA champs, and was the AP Player of the Year in 1978. After a respectable rookie season in the NBA, injuries ruined his career. A knee injury had limited him to 3 games with the Cavaliers in 1980, and after the trade he played just 11 regular season games with the Lakers, and six minutes in the playoffs. Lee never played in the NBA again.
- Don Ford had never averaged in double-figures in points for the Lakers, but he was a valuable defensive player who was able to control some of the league’s top scorers. Ford played just 106 games for the Cavaliers before being released in January 1982.

In November 1981, Westhead lost the head coaching job in a power struggle with Magic Johnson and owner Jerry Buss. Buss then attempted to force Jerry West back into coaching by publicly announcing that West had agreed to be the “offensive coach” for the Lakers, but West, who was at the dais alongside Buss and Pat Riley, said no. “I’m going to be working with and for Pat Riley,” West said. “He is the head coach. I hope my position will be short-lived.” It was not the first time that Buss had awkwardly injected himself into the head coach selection process. Westhead had led the Lakers to the 1980 Finals as McKinney recovered from his injuries, but while the Finals were taking place Buss announced that McKinney would not be coming back as head coach. Buss issued a statement saying that since both men were qualified, “I could not make a basketball decision. This selection was made upon with whom I felt I could have the most fun. My actions in not allowing Jack to return earlier this season have perhaps strained our relationship and I don’t think I could have as much fun with McKinney.”

A month after Riley was hired, Sharman took another gamble, albeit a smaller one, sending a 1983 second-round pick to the New Jersey Nets for Bob McAdoo. The Lakers were desperate for a backup center when Mitch Kupchak, who they had signed to a seven-year, \$6 million contract that summer, was lost for the season with a knee injury. McAdoo’s fall from NBA stardom had been as swift as his rise. Named Rookie of the Year in 1973, he led the NBA in scoring for three consecutive years from 1974 through 1976, including 34.5 points a game

in 1975 when McAdoo won the MVP award. But McAdoo was traded to the Knicks in 1976, beginning a five-year odyssey with unhappy stops in New York, Boston, Detroit and New Jersey. His experience in Detroit was particularly painful; not only did fans blame all of the Pistons troubles on him, but McAdoo's marriage was falling apart and his father died during the season. McAdoo also struggled with injuries. From 1979 through 1981 he played in 60, 58 and 16 games, respectively. But McAdoo was still a useful player with a lot of talent and he experienced a rebirth in Los Angeles. "People still don't believe me," said Riley in May 1982, "when I tell them that I expected McAdoo to be this good. But I figured, with his shooting and rebounding skills, it was a perfect situation for him ... The one thing you don't worry about here is guys putting out. There is too much peer pressure, and I've learned over the years that our guys respect that more than the coaches themselves. I never worried about McAdoo. The guys wouldn't let him fail, and now everybody is benefitting from it." McAdoo averaged just under 10 points in 18-plus minutes a game during the regular season, then increased his production in the playoffs (averaging 17 points in 28 minutes a night) to help the Lakers win the title.

After the 1982 championship, Sharman was promoted to team president and Jerry West again replaced him, this time as general manager. Worthy was the only major addition to the team that offseason. A year later, following a disappointing loss to the 76ers in the NBA Finals, West made a bold move, dealing point guard Norm Nixon to the San Diego Clippers as part of a package to get rookie guard Bryon Scott and veteran center Swen Nater. "We made that trade because Byron was better for Magic Johnson. He needed the ball in his hands just about all the time," Jerry West later said, a reference to the fact that Scott was a traditional shooting guard, and that the pairing of Johnson and Nixon had run its course. Nixon was a fan favorite and loved the Los Angeles nightlife; the night Nixon was traded, a party was held in his honor (his birthday was the next day) at Mr. Chow's in Beverly Hills. The guest list included his former teammates, but also a celebrity lineup featuring Jack Nicholson and Burt Bacharach. Nixon averaged 17 points and 11 assists a game in San Diego that year, but the Clippers finished 30-52. His career would be cut short by a pair of season-ending injuries in 1986-87 (left knee) and 1987-88 (Achilles tendon). Meanwhile, Bryon Scott started for the Lakers for next ten years. The rest of the deal was a wash; the Lakers got one respectable season out of Nater (his last, after a comeback from a right knee injury in 1982) while the Clippers, exactly one week after acquiring Nixon, released Eddie Jordan and traded the pair of Lakers future second-round picks that had been included in the deal to acquire a young Ricky Pierce. Pierce went on to have a solid NBA career, but the Clippers kept him for just one season before including him in the ill-fated Terry Cummings trade.

Los Angeles Lakers Roster Timeline

[illegible]

West even managed to select a gem with his own draft choice in 1985, taking forward A.C. Green from Oregon State at number 23. By his second season, Green had replaced Kurt Rambis in the starting lineup and started 72 games. Green's durability became legendary; he missed three games during that season (1986-87) and didn't miss another one until 1998. By then Green had moved on, first to the Suns and then the Mavericks, but he returned to Los Angeles to play 82 games for the champion Lakers in 2000.

Arguably Jerry West's most strategic heist was obtaining Mychal Thompson from the Spurs in February 1987. Both the Celtics and Lakers needed to improve their frontcourt depth as the playoffs approached. After the death of Len Bias the previous summer, the best Red Auerbach could do was acquire Fred Roberts. Now West outmaneuvered his old rival. Thompson was 6'10" and perfectly suited to back up Kareem and add depth to a frontline that had previously featured the undersized Frank Brickowski. Magic Johnson had been lobbying for Thompson and even suggested his name to Lakers owner Jerry Buss, not just because of his basketball skills, but also because of his personality; a decade earlier, Johnson had quickly befriended Thompson during a thoroughly enjoyable campus visit to the University of Minnesota. After the trade was made, Pat Riley was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* trying to downplay expectations. "[Thompson is] a shooter who can fit right into the low-post offense we run for Kareem. He's also an excellent defensive player, he's very strong and smart and a fine passer. He's not a one-dimensional player. But any talk that this [trade] is going to guarantee something . . . people are making a big mistake."

Actually, people were not making a mistake. Thompson had played against Kevin McHale in practice when they were both at Minnesota and knew how to guard him, a fact that then-Pacers coach Jack Ramsey mentioned in the same article in the *Times*. The Spurs were willing to trade him for virtually nothing—Brickowski, center Petur Gudmundsson (who was out for the year due to back surgery) plus future first- and second-round picks that were destined to be low-round picks due to the strength of the Lakers—because San Antonio was struggling and were hoping to win the draft lottery to get the rights to the Naval Academy's star center David Robinson. (It worked. The Spurs ended the season with the fourth-worst record in the NBA and won the top choice in the draft lottery.) Meanwhile, Thompson helped the Lakers defeat the Celtics in the Finals. Larry Bird, who had not considered the Thompson trade to be significant when it was made, had dramatically changed his mind by the time the Lakers had finished off his Celtics. "They made changes and we didn't," Bird said after the series was over. "They came up with Mychal Thompson and the Celtics just couldn't do anything."

Bird was right, but if the Celtics had been interested in matching West's offer for Thompson, by including—assuming that salary cap restrictions would not have gotten in the way—Fred Roberts (exactly one year younger than Brickowski and with better NBA stats to that point) and Greg Kite (a wash or better than Gudmundsson), they likely would have shipped their 1987 first-round pick to the Spurs in the deal. Instead, they selected Reggie

Lewis with that choice, who was used sparingly as a rookie by K.C. Jones but then compiled five very solid seasons in Boston before tragically passing away in the summer of 1993 due to a heart condition. If the Celtics traded for Thompson, they may have won another title with the Big Three of Bird/McHale/Parish, and the late 1980's would have unfolded much differently in Boston. Bird's lost season of 1988-89 would have likely resulted in McHale or Parish being dealt instead of Ainge (there would have been little need to acquire Ed Pinckney and Joe Kleine with Thompson still around, and without Lewis the Celtics would have coveted Ainge's outside shooting) which may have accelerated the rebuilding process. But in the summer of 1987, the only thing the Celtics knew for sure was that Jerry West and the hated Lakers had outsmarted them.

Philadelphia 76ers

Unlike the Celtics and Lakers, who returned to greatness with the arrival of Bird and Magic in 1979, the 76ers road to the elite ranks of the NBA stretched back a few years earlier. On October 20, 1976, Philadelphia general manager Pat Williams convinced owner Fitz Dixon, who had purchased the team in May, to buy Julius Erving from the New York Nets in the wake of the NBA-ABA merger.

Williams had become general manager in 1974 but began his career as a minor league baseball executive with an eye for promotion before becoming the 76ers business manager in the 1960's. In 1969, at age 29, he was hired by the expansion Bulls to replace general manager Dick Klein. Over the next four seasons, Williams helped build the team to respectability; Chicago would average 53 wins a year from 1971 through 1974. But head coach Dick Motta wanted to be the general manager too, so after the 1972-73 season Williams was gone. After a year as general manager of the Atlanta Hawks, Williams was hired by the 76ers. In 1975-76 the 76ers had finished 46-36, which was good enough for second place in the Atlantic Division behind the eventual champion Celtics. Compared to previous seasons, the year had been a rousing success: it was Philadelphia's first playoff appearance, and their first above .500 finish, since 1971. The dismantling of the 1967 championship team, which had begun with the trade of Wilt Chamberlain, culminated in a miserable 9-73 season in 1973, a collapse which was partly the result of a terrible draft record since taking Billy Cunningham fifth overall in 1965:

Year	Pick	Name	G	Pts	Reb	Ast	PPG	RPG	APG
1966	9	Matt Guokas	735	4285	1446	2174	5.8	2.0	3.0
1967	12	Craig Raymond	27	55	68	8	2.0	2.5	0.3
1968	14	Shaler Halimon	170	1136	571	302	6.7	3.4	1.8
1969	13	Bud Ogden	74	257	106	48	3.5	1.4	0.6
1970	12	Al Henry	49	194	148	8	4.0	3.0	0.2
1971	12	Dana Lewis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1972	5	Freddie Boyd	327	2784	533	986	8.5	1.6	3.0
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While these are mostly low first-round picks that left the 76ers with few quality alternatives, they did miss opportunities to acquire more useful building blocks. In 1970 they could have selected Jim McMillian (pick 13), Calvin Murphy or Tiny Archibald (early second round); Jim Cleamons (pick 13) in 1971; and in 1972, they selected five picks ahead of the Celtics, who took Paul Westphal. The 76ers best pick during this period was center Dennis Awtrey, their *third-round* selection in 1970, who was later dealt to the Bulls for a second-round pick in 1972. That pick turned into Caldwell Jones, but the 76ers would not get his services until after the NBA-ABA merger.

In 1973, they finally got one right, landing guard Doug Collins first overall after a rumored deal with the Bulls fell through when Clifford Ray failed a physical. But in 1974, after losing the coin flip for the number one pick to the Trail Blazers (who took Bill Walton), the 76ers selected Marvin Barnes, the troubled forward who would sign with St. Louis in the ABA and was later acquired by the Pistons in the post-merger dispersal draft. Even if Barnes had signed with the 76ers, it is unlikely that Philadelphia would have been able to control his off-court lifestyle any better than his other employers. However, the 76ers did manage to select center Darryl Dawkins out of high school with the fifth choice in 1975, and followed that up by taking guard Lloyd Free in the second round. Both would have productive careers, and contributed to the resurgence of the team that season.

Julius Erving was the main reason the NBA had even bothered to talk with the ABA about a merger. When the blessed event finally took place in June 1976, after legal wrangling over the size and contents of the dowry, Erving's New York Nets, along with the Indiana Pacers, Denver Nuggets and San Antonio Spurs were allowed the privilege of spending \$3.2 million apiece to join the NBA. The Nets were essential to the merger because of Erving, and had won two of the ABA's last three championships, but they were also in the New York Knicks geographical territory, and Roy Boe was forced to pay an additional \$4.8 million directly to the Knicks, in the form of \$480,000 a year for ten years. Boe could not afford to begin life in the NBA with \$8 million of new debt, and the specter of a holdout by Erving added to Boe's concerns. Erving thought he had an agreement with Boe to re-negotiate his seven-year, \$1.9 million contract (which still had four years remaining) if there was a merger, and when Boe then traded for Tiny Archibald in September 1976, inheriting a contract which was larger than Erving's, it added to the rift between Erving and the team. Boe offered Erving to the Knicks in exchange for relief on his debt to them, but his proposal was rejected. At that point Boe was desperate and sold Erving to the 76ers for \$3 million; Dixon then gave Erving a new six-year, \$3.5 million contract to make his new star happy. Erving instantly upgraded Philadelphia's lineup, which had some other new arrivals as well.

1975-76 76ers	1976-77 76ers
SF Steve Mix	SF Julius Erving
PF George McGinnis	PF George McGinnis
C Harvey Catchings	C Caldwell Jones
SG Doug Collins	SG Doug Collins
PG Fred Carter	PG Henry Bibby
C Clyde Lee	C Darryl Dawkins
C Darryl Dawkins (R)	C Harvey Catchings (injured)
C Leroy Ellis	SG Lloyd Free
SG Lloyd Free (R)	PG Mike Dunleavy (R)
SG Connie Norman	SG Jim Barnett
PG Wali Jones	SG Terry Furlow (R)
PG Freddie Boyd	PG Fred Carter (to Milw.)
PF Joe Bryant (R)	SF Steve Mix
SF Billy Cunningham	PF Joe Bryant
SF Jerry Baskerville (R)	

The 1975-76 team began the season with four players who were 30 or older: Carter (30), Lee (32), Cunningham (33) and Ellis (36). Only Carter was still an active player by the time the year was over. The acquisition of Barnett (32 in July 1976) made him the oldest player on the 1976-77 squad, and other than Carter, the only over-30 player on the team. But the pair combined to play just thirty games for Philadelphia that season, and neither was around for the playoff run which ended with four straight losses to Portland in the Finals after taking a 2-0 series lead.

Head coach Gene Shue was consistently maligned by fans and the press—and Fitz Dixon—for being unable to get the best out of the 76ers combustible collection of young veteran players still in the prime of their careers. Curry Kirkpatrick of *Sports Illustrated* neatly summarized Shue's plight in a March 1977 article:

In all fairness to Shue, his team is not the most coachable unit on earth. If Collins isn't upset because Mix temporarily replaced him as the team's technical foul shooter, Free is mad because Collins has taken his starting job. If Caldwell Jones isn't disturbed that Erving and McGinnis get all the shots on the front line, McGinnis is pouting when Mix starts the second half of a TV game.

Over the next two seasons, the 76ers regressed. Shue was shown the door after a 2-4 start in the fall of 1977, and while his replacement, Billy Cunningham, sparked the team to win 14 of their next 15 games, the 76ers lost to the Bullets in the Eastern Conference Finals. That offseason, Pat Williams traded two of Cunningham's biggest headaches, the talented but ball-hogging duo of George McGinnis and Lloyd Free, along with their 1978 first-round pick, in separate deals that yielded a defensive stopper in forward Bobby Jones, along with two future

first-round picks from the Nuggets (to be exercised between 1980 and 1984) and the Clippers (1984). Surrendering their second and fourth-leading scorers was not as risky as it sounds. McGinnis and Free combined to average 36 points a game during the regular season, with a shooting percentage of .460, but in the playoff series against the Bullets they lost 75 to 100 points off their shooting percentages, and averaged just 14 points apiece. Jones was known for his defense but was an efficient offensive player, scoring 14 to 15 points a game while leading the ABA in field goal percentage in 1975 and 1976 and the NBA in 1978. Also, he must have been pleased that Erving would now be a teammate instead of an adversary. The Nuggets had given Jones the assignment to stop Erving in the 1976 ABA Finals. It didn't work. "In the first game I tried to make him go baseline, and he went right by me [for 48 points]," Jones said after Erving's Nets won the series 4-2. Jones then explained that, "[a]fter that I tried to make him pull up in the lane. So he made his jumpers. Or he went right by me. But I really enjoy watching him because every time he does one of those moves I know it's something I may never see again." Erving averaged 37 points a game in the series, exceeding his 29.3 regular season average in every contest.

The trades did not pay instant dividends for the 76ers, as they lost in the conference semifinals in 1979 when Doug Collins missed eight weeks after surgery for bone spurs and also sat out the playoffs. Dixon was rumored to be willing to fire Cunningham and Williams, but he held off, which turned out to be the wisest move of all when the 76ers bounced back and reached the NBA's equivalent of the final four in each of the next four seasons. Cunningham stuck to his defensive formula, realizing that his style was better suited to coaching a hard-working team of grinders instead of a group of high maintenance high-flyers. "Instead of thinking about the game," Cunningham told Anthony Cotton of *Sports Illustrated* in 1983, "I was worrying about the people who had to resolve their various problems. I just don't have the personality to deal with that." Assistant coach Chuck Daly helped install the defensive system. After the McGinnis and Lloyd trades, only in 1982 (a year in which Daly left for an ill-fated head coaching stint with the Cavaliers) would the 76ers be ranked higher in offense than defense during Cunningham's tenure behind the bench.

Season	Record	Playoffs	Offense	Rank	Defense	Rank
1977-78*	55-27	Lost East Finals	114.7	1	109.6	14
1978-79	47-35	Lost East Semifinals	109.5	11	107.7	5
1979-80	59-23	Lost Finals	109.1	10	104.9	4
1980-81	62-20	Lost East Finals	111.7	4	103.8	1
1981-82	58-24	Lost Finals	112.2	5	105.5	7
1982-83	65-17	Won Title	112.1	7	104.4	7
1983-84	52-30	Lost First Round	107.8	16	105.6	5
1984-85	58-24	Lost East Finals	112.9	8	108.8	6

*Cunningham took over 6 games into season

Meanwhile, the Clippers were ecstatic about their acquisition of Free. Shue, who spent the 1978-79 and 1979-80 seasons in San Diego as head coach, could not believe that the 76ers would deal Free for a 1984 first-round pick. "That is nothing," Shue said in January 1979. "Lloyd is one of the most talented players in the league, and they just gave him away." The Clippers were so ecstatic that they tried the same thing a year later, sending their 1986 first-round pick to Philadelphia for Joe "Jelly Bean"—and father of Kobe—Bryant. But Shue had misjudged his former colleagues. Free and Bryant failed to produce a single playoff appearance for San Diego, and by the fall of 1982 both were gone. Meanwhile, the 1984 first-round pick they had traded away came back to haunt the Clippers, and helped Philadelphia briefly sustain their run in the mid-1980's. The 76ers liked trading for first-round picks but also enjoyed trading them away. The following table lists the return that Philadelphia reaped for the first-round picks that they earned on the court:

Year	Pick	Results
1978	21	<i>To Nuggets, originally for 1980 #1 pick but later included in McGinnis trade</i>
1979	21	Jim Spanarkel
1980	21	Monti Davis
1981	22	Franklin Edwards
1982	22	Mark McNamara
1983	23	<i>To Pacers in deal for Clemon Johnson</i>
1984	22	Tom Sewell
1985	21	Terry Catledge
1986	21	<i>To Bullets in Malone-Ruland trade</i>

Obviously, the fact that the 76ers finished near the top of the standings for nearly a decade hurt their draft position, leading to a fairly weak crop of players. But Pat Williams skillfully used trades to improve his drafting prospects, and in most cases, he spent that capital wisely:

Year	Pick	Results	How Acquired
1978	36	Maurice Cheeks	From Bucks for Fred Carter, Dec 1976
1979	36	Clint Richardson	From Nets (originally Nuggets) for Wilson Washington, Jan 1978
1980	8	Andrew Toney	From Pacers for Mel Bennett, Nov 1976
1981	4	<i>To Blazers for Lionel Hollins Feb 1980</i>	From Cavaliers for Terry Furlow, Oct 1977
1983	3	<i>To Rockets as part of Moses Malone compensation Sep 1983</i>	From Cavaliers for Terry Furlow, Oct 1977
1983	17	Leo Rautins	From Nets for Darryl Dawkins, Aug 1982
1984	4	Charles Barkley	From Clippers for Lloyd Free, Oct 1978
1984	10	Leon Wood	From Nuggets for George McGinnis, Aug 1978
1986	1	<i>To Cavaliers for Roy Hinson and cash Jun 1986</i>	From Clippers for Joe Bryant, Oct 1979

Barkley ended up in the Hall of Fame, Cheeks was their starting point guard for a decade, Toney became known as a Celtics killer because of his outside shooting, and Richardson was a key defensive player off the bench for six seasons. Williams also used two of these picks in packages that brought Hollins and Malone to Philadelphia. The selections of Rautins and Wood were mistakes; in the former case, they passed over John Paxson and Roy Hinson, and in the latter, the 76ers could have taken seven-footer Kevin Willis, who went to the Hawks at number 11, played 1424 games over a twenty-one year career, and averaged 12 points and 8 rebounds a game. However, these were understandable blips on an otherwise excellent draft record.

The acquisition of Malone was controversial because the 76ers had signed him to the richest contract in NBA history (\$2.2 million a year) and had forced the team to sacrifice several players to compensate. Gone were Caldwell Jones (set to earn \$500,000), Darryl Dawkins (\$600,000), and Steve Mix and Mike Bantom (\$450,000 combined). The loss of Jones was particularly disturbing to Erving. "I remember times when he couldn't even walk in the locker room. But he'd go out onto the court and play his heart out. Everything that was said about him, his being underrated, should be multiplied 100 times. Those personalities are irreplaceable." Still, Erving was happy to have Malone on the team and vowed that "egos will not interfere with the success of this team." He was proven correct: the 76ers won the 1983 championship, their first since 1967.

After their title run, the team stagnated and then regressed. One way to analyze the relative age of a team is to examine the productivity of each player relative to their individual ages. Multiplying each players' age by their minutes played, then adding all of the resulting figures and dividing by the total number of minutes played by the entire team, yields an "average age per minute played":

$$\text{Average age per minute played} = (\sum (\text{player age} \times \text{minutes played})) / \text{team minutes played}$$

Similarly, the same calculation can be done for points scored or any other statistic.

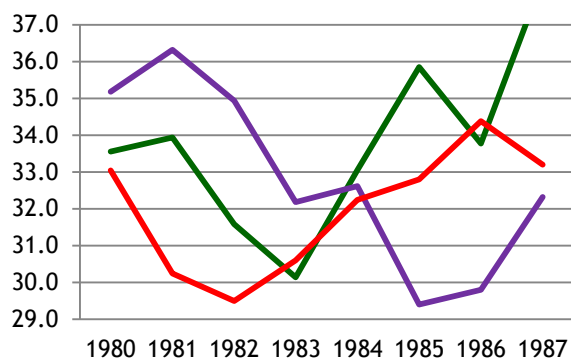
Season	Age per Minute Played			Age per Point		
	BOS	LA	PHI	BOS	LA	PHI
1979-80	27.29	26.20	26.99	26.89	26.48	27.28
1980-81	27.05	27.02	27.21	26.54	27.39	27.42
1981-82	27.35	26.79	28.14	26.98	27.31	28.18
1982-83	27.35	26.92	26.75	27.28	27.60	27.05
1983-84	28.04	27.51	27.74	27.91	28.05	28.16
1984-85	28.52	27.44	27.91	28.54	27.80	28.18
1985-86	29.31	28.07	27.99	29.46	28.57	28.07
1986-87	29.42	27.83	26.63	29.56	27.99	26.71

The figures in the table above are based on the player ages listed by Basketball-Reference.com, which are specified as the player's age as of February 1 for each season. If a team relied on the same players for same amount of minutes (or points) year after year, these numbers would increase by exactly one (year) every season as they aged. This rarely happens in real life, as new, younger, players filter in from year-to-year, especially on the bench. But there is one clear counter-example shown in this chart: the bulk of the rosters of the 1982-83 and 1983-84 Philadelphia 76ers were virtually unchanged, and the data here backs up that observation. Throughout the 1983-84 season, the 76ers struggled to recapture the combined brilliance they showed during their title run, and were upset by the Nets in the first round of the playoffs.

A team can also accelerate the "aging process" by trading youth for experience, such as the 1985-86 Celtics, who traded Cedric Maxwell for Bill Walton, who was three years older. But Boston also acquired guard Jerry Sichting in the fall of 1985, who was younger than the combination of Quinn Buckner and Ray Williams who together played a similar number of minutes in the 1984-85 season. A year later, the Celtics "aged slower" due to injuries, as the minutes that should have been played by Walton and Scott Wedman—a pair of 34-year-olds who combined to play just sixteen games—were entrusted to Fred Roberts and Darren Daye, a pair of 26-year-olds, along with small increases in playing time for the Celtics starters, who were all younger than Walton and Wedman.

There is another interesting trend in the data. For the most part, the average "age per point" for each team is higher than the average "age per minute played" which implies that veteran players contributed a higher percentage of the team's offense than the younger players. This is true for all of the teams listed above except for the five Celtics teams from 1980 through 1984. There are a couple of possible explanations, but the simplest is that Larry Bird was younger than the 76ers and Lakers leading scorers during those years, Julius Erving (1980-1982) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. It is also true that Celtics veterans Chris Ford and M.L. Carr, who were several years older than the Celtics core, played an inordinate amount of minutes from 1980 through 1982 compared to their point production.

Meanwhile, the Lakers successfully fought the aging process by incorporating rookies James Worthy (1982-83), Byron Scott (1983-84) and A.C. Green (1985-86, but more prominently the next year), along with slowly reducing Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's playing time and transferring more of the scoring load from him to the much younger Magic Johnson. Pat Riley, who became head coach in the fall of 1981, played his starters fewer minutes on average in the second half of the 80s Era than he and his predecessors had done earlier in the decade, and far fewer minutes than Boston or Philadelphia's starters played (shown below, listed by team color):

Starters Average Minutes Played**J**une 17, 1986 Headlines:

- *Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger resigns; President Reagan nominates Justice William Rehnquist as Chief Justice, and Antonin Scalia to fill vacancy on court*
- *State of Emergency in South Africa due to tenth anniversary of Soweto riots*
- *Space Shuttle Challenger accident investigation continues*
- *Singer Kate Smith ("God Bless America") dies*
- *Boston Celtics select Len Bias of Maryland with number 2 pick in the NBA draft; Philadelphia 76ers trade number 1 pick and Moses Malone in separate deals for Roy Hinson and Jeff Ruland*

For Celtics fans, this day was sensational. Not only was Bias going to be the bridge to the next generation of Celtics greatness, but it was obvious that the 76ers had blown a golden opportunity. Both the 76ers and Celtics had been very fortunate during the draft lottery on May 11; had the lottery not been in place, the 76ers (who held the Clippers pick) would have selected seventh and the Celtics (with the SuperSonics pick) sixth. Red Auerbach later told reporters that he "was having fun up there" as he sat next to Pat Williams on the stage as the picks were announced during halftime of Game 7 of the 76ers-Bucks playoff series. Each team representative plucked a sealed envelope out of a drum on the stage in the order in which they would have selected if no lottery was in place. When it was his turn, Auerbach fumbled his envelope, dropping it back into the drum before grabbing the same one (it would turn out to be Phoenix). Each envelope was placed on a small ledge built into a blue wall behind the drum. As Commissioner David Stern opened the envelopes, it became clear that the Celtics had moved up. Auerbach, smoking his cigar throughout the proceedings, started holding up

fingers to represent Boston's potential landing spot: five, then four, then three. When the Celtics were revealed to have the second pick, Auerbach was gleeful, confident that he would be able to secure another future star.

Pat Williams was also all smiles at the lottery that day, but later soured on the pick. Center Brad Daugherty from North Carolina was the consensus number one choice—NBA scouting director Marty Blake would later recall that “[t]here was absolutely no question that Brad Daugherty was going to be a helluva player”—but Williams claimed in 1988 that “nobody was excited about the guy.” Just as important was the 76ers belief that Daugherty would not fit the up-tempo game that head coach Matt Guokas wanted, which turned out to be a correct assessment. Still, two days before the draft it appeared that Daugherty would be the choice. The Pistons had offered a package of Bill Laimbeer, Kelly Tripucka and Vinnie Johnson to get Moses Malone and the number 1 pick, but Williams turned it down.

The Washington Bullets then made a better offer, at least in Williams's eyes: All-Star center Jeff Ruland and forward Cliff Robinson for Malone, a young Terry Catledge, their own 1986 first-round pick (#21) and a 1988 first-round pick. Williams liked Ruland and felt that getting Robinson, and keeping the top pick, was a better move than the Tripucka/Johnson swap. Malone had angered new 76ers owner Harold Katz by trying to get his contract extended even though his had two more years to run, and Malone's 1985-86 season ended with eight games remaining in the regular season when he broke the orbit bone underneath his right eye. Guokas, who had replaced Cunningham a year earlier, also felt Malone would not be a good fit for a more wide-open style, which provided another incentive to move on from Malone. (This gave long-time fans a sense of *déjà vu*, since similar arguments were made in 1968 by new coach Jack Ramsay when he wanted to ship Wilt Chamberlain out of town; coincidentally, Guokas was entering his second season as a player for the 76ers that year.) The 27-year-old Ruland was considered a better open court player but was a big medical risk: he had played just 37 games in 1984-85 due to a strained right shoulder, and only 30 in 1985-86 after breaking his right foot and suffering torn cartilage in his left knee that required arthroscopic surgery on March 31. But Ruland had returned to play against the 76ers in the playoffs. “We had many questions about Ruland's health,” Katz said the day after the trade. “We're convinced the injuries were minor. When healthy, he had Moses Malone-type numbers.” Malone, who Katz considered older than his age (31) “if you factor in the college ball he didn't play” was seen as heading into twilight years.

But Ruland's knee problems were not minor; they were chronic. The 76ers had grounds to cancel the trade when their orthopedic surgeon reported that he found big problems in Ruland's knees during a team physical, but Katz refused to reverse the deal because other

[illegible]

doctors failed to find evidence of problems and because Malone had publicly ripped Katz in the press after the trade was announced. Katz would pay for his personal vendetta, since Ruland played just five games for the 76ers in 1986-87 before retiring due to injuries. Ruland did make a brief comeback in 1991, appearing in 24 games over two seasons for the 76ers and the Pistons, but Malone went on to average 20 points and 11 rebounds a game for the next *four years* (two in Washington, two in Atlanta) and missed just 14 games over the next *six seasons*. He retired in 1995.

The rest of the deal was a basically a wash; Cliff Robinson was only 26 but the 76ers were his fifth team, and he posted career lows in rebounds per game over the next two-plus seasons before injuries cut his career short. Of the two first-rounders Philadelphia dealt, only Harvey Grant was a significant contributor for the Bullets, but Washington used the 1986 pick on Anthony Jones; the 76ers could have selected Scott Skiles or Mark Price at that slot and obtained a point guard to succeed Maurice Cheeks.

The other half of the 76ers draft day fiasco occurred because the Cleveland Cavaliers—no longer under Ted Stepien's ownership—made the 76ers an offer for the number one selection that Williams thought was too good to refuse. The Cavs did not have a coach or a general manager, but Wayne Embry was about to take the GM job and recommended offering forward Roy Hinson to the 76ers for the top pick. "Roy Hinson was a good player," Embry recalled two years after the trade, "[b]ut he's a small forward. I felt that if you're going to build a team, you need a center. And I felt that Brad was going to be a great one." Cleveland also agreed to throw in \$800,000 in cash.

The day after the deal, Goukas was pleased with the transactions, saying: "Yesterday morning, when I went into work, the forward rotation seemed to be Brad Daugherty, Charles Barkley and Terry Catledge. Today, it's Roy Hinson, Cliff Robinson and Charles Barkley. You don't have to be a scientist to realize that's a better group." But fans quoted in Philadelphia papers were more skeptical, not understanding how they could pass up Daugherty.

Once Ruland went down, the impact of this mistake was magnified because 76ers did not have a legitimate center, and were forced to play Tim McCormick who averaged 12 points and 7 rebounds but was not nearly the presence of a Malone, or even a healthy Ruland, under the boards. Hinson's game shrank as he deferred to Charles Barkley, and while Robinson was effective as an outside shooter, he was unable to stay healthy and played just 55 games in 1986-87. These transactions also help prove the cliché that past performance is not an indicator of future success. If Ruland and Malone are removed from the equation, the result of the trades is a swap of Daugherty and Catledge for Robinson and Hinson. Using points per game and rebounds per game as a measurement, albeit an imperfect one, a comparison of Daugherty's and Catledge's statistics *after* the trades with Robinson's and Hinson's numbers *before* the trades shows that the duos posted almost identical marks (32.4/16.2 vs. 31.2/16.4). But obviously, that was not what the 76ers had in mind.

Terry Catledge

Yr	Age	Team	G	GS	PPG	RPG
86	22	76ers	64	7	7.7	4.3
87	23	Bullets	78	77	13.1	7.2
88	24	Bullets	70	40	10.7	5.7
89	25	Bullets	79	77	10.4	7.2
90	26	Magic	74	72	19.4	7.6
91	27	Magic	51	38	14.6	7.0
92	28	Magic	78	67	14.8	7.0
93	29	Magic	21	1	4.7	2.2
After 1986			451	372	13.4	6.7
Career			515	379	12.7	6.4

Brad Daugherty

Yr	Age	Team	G	GS	PPG	RPG
87	21	Cavs	80	80	15.7	8.1
88	22	Cavs	79	78	18.7	8.4
89	23	Cavs	78	78	18.9	9.2
90	24	Cavs	41	40	16.8	9.1
91	25	Cavs	76	76	21.6	10.9
92	26	Cavs	73	73	21.5	10.4
93	27	Cavs	71	71	20.2	10.2
94	28	Cavs	50	50	17.0	10.2
Career			548	546	19.0	9.5

Roy Hinson

Yr	Age	Team	G	GS	PPG	RPG
84	22	Cavs	80	61	5.5	6.2
85	23	Cavs	76	75	15.8	7.8
86	24	Cavs	82	82	19.6	7.8
Thru 1986			238	218	13.6	7.3
87	25	76ers	76	58	13.9	6.4
88	26	76ers-Nets	77	57	15.3	6.7
89	27	Nets	82	39	16.0	6.4
90	28	Nets	25	19	15.0	6.9
91	29	Nets	9	0	4.6	2.1
After 1986			269	173	14.7	6.4
Career			507	391	14.2	6.8

Cliff Robinson

Yr	Age	Team	G	GS	PPG	RPG
80	19	Nets	70		13.6	7.2
81	20	Nets	63		19.5	7.6
82	21	Kings-Cavs	68	59	18.5	9.0
83	22	Cavs	77	75	18.0	11.1
84	23	Cavs	73	70	17.8	10.3
85	24	Bullets	60	37	16.7	9.1
86	25	Bullets	78	78	18.7	8.7
Thru 1986			489	319	17.6	9.1
87	26	76ers	55	30	14.8	5.6
88	27	76ers	62	51	19.0	6.5
89	28	76ers	14	13	15.1	5.4
92	31	Lakers	9	0	3.2	2.1
After 1986			140	94	16.0	5.8
Career			629	413	17.2	8.3

The ultimate indictment of these trades is that the 76ers missed the playoffs entirely in 1988 and did not return to the Eastern Conference Finals until 2001. In an ironic twist, the Hinson deal helped turn around the fortunes of the Cleveland Cavaliers, giving their fans a bit of revenge for the Stepien era. Cleveland had dealt away its number one picks from 1981 through 1983 and watched as the 76ers and Lakers turned them into Lionel Hollins, James Worthy and Moses Malone, but now the Cavs had *acquired* a pick from the 76ers and used it to obtain Daugherty, a cornerstone of their revived franchise.

Sadly, the day turned out to be even more tragic for Celtics fans, who never got to see Len Bias wear his number 30 Celtics jersey on the court. Two days after the draft, Bias died from a cocaine overdose, and the Celtics started a slow downhill slide. It would be twenty-two years before the Celtics won another championship.

Chapter Six

Sounds of the Game

Fans follow their favorite teams through the eyes of the men (and in a few cases, women) who broadcast and commentate on the action on the floor. Their voices become part of the fabric that binds together a legion of fanatics, and they can become legends themselves. The 80s Era was no different.

Network Television

The NBA had broadcast games on network television since 1954 with varying success; Dumont, NBC and ABC had each taken their shot on the league, and in 1973 it was CBS's turn. ABC had the right of first refusal to continue their broadcasts for the 1973-74 season, but the NBA demanded that under the next contract their games would be broadcast on Saturday afternoons in the fall. CBS offered \$27 million for three years while ABC (who had been paying the NBA only \$5.6 million a year) was unable to match due to their college football obligations on those weekends. In response, ABC took the league to court, claiming that the NBA had changed the terms to circumvent the right of first refusal clause and negotiate a better deal with CBS. By August the suit was dismissed, clearing the way for CBS to begin their broadcasts.

Over the next five years (CBS renewed its contract in 1976, spending \$21 million for two seasons) ratings fell off. Part of the problem was the fallout from the contentious 1973 negotiations, as Roone Arledge of ABC aggressively counter-programmed against the CBS telecasts. But the level of violence in the game (exemplified by the Kermit Washington-Rudy Tomjanovich fight in 1977), the lack of dominant teams in top media markets like New York, Los Angeles and Boston, and the absence of high-profile rivalries to showcase also hurt. The finale of the 1978 Finals, the conclusion of the worst-rated Finals series of CBS's tenure so far, ranked 422nd in the prime time ratings for the year ending August 31, 1978; by comparison, the Super Bowl, the NFC Championship, and Game 6 of the World Series all finished in the top

ten, dramatizing the NBA's plight. In response, CBS signed a new contract that gave the NBA \$74 million over four years, but with a clause that allowed them to air playoff games on tape delay to protect their prime time ratings during the critical May sweeps period.

As the 80s Era began, television ratings for the Finals continued to slump, reaching a low of a 24 share in 1979 and a 6.7 rating in 1981, when four of the six Finals games were shown on tape delay to most of the country (outside of Boston and Houston, where live feeds were available). Even the deciding Game 6 of the 1980 Finals was shown on tape delay in most markets, as CBS gave local affiliates the choice of broadcasting the game or the regular CBS Friday night lineup. CBS also preferred to show West coast games live at 11:30pm Eastern time, so their normal prime-time programming would air in as many media markets as possible. Despite these challenges, the league was able to secure their first cable television contract in 1979, signing a three-year deal with the USA network for \$1.5 million. It was a modest amount but gave the NBA unprecedented prime-time exposure on Thursday nights during the regular season, plus an alternative home for early round playoff games not picked up by CBS. Then in 1981, the NBA agreed to push back the start of the regular season by three weeks, which would move the Finals into June and out of the sweeps period. The 1981 Finals had taken place from May 5 to May 14; in 1982, they would be held from May 27 to June 8, and CBS broadcast all of the games live. That series was a rematch of the 1980 Finals, pitting Los Angeles against Philadelphia, but with all games broadcast live coast-to-coast, the ratings soared from an 8.0 to a 13.0, the highest figure since 1974. The ratings fell off slightly the next two years but then rose, reaching a record peak of 16.7 in 1987. Overall, NBA ratings on network television were now outperforming every other major sport, rising 18 percent from 1979 to 1985 while the others saw their ratings *decline*. It was no surprise when CBS agreed to a record \$173 million contract in 1985, even though it represented more money than the previous two CBS contracts combined.

CBS NBA Television Contracts in the 80s Era

Seasons	Network	\$(mil)	Years
1978-79 thru 1981-82	CBS	74	4
1982-83 thru 1985-86	CBS	91.9	4
1986-87 thru 1989-90	CBS	173	4

Cable NBA Television Contracts in the 80s Era

Seasons	Network	\$(mil)	Years
1979-80 thru 1981-82	USA	1.5	3
1982-83 thru 1983-84	USA / ESPN	11	2
1984-85 thru 1985-86	TBS	20	2
1986-87 thru 1987-88	TBS	25	2

CBS employed a relatively stable group of broadcasters. Brent Musburger, a former columnist with the *Chicago American* newspaper, took over as the lead play-by-play man in 1974-75, replacing Pat Summerall. He continued in that role through the 1979-80 season, calling the Finals that year, including Game 6, in which he used his already traditional "You are looking live..." intro at the start of the broadcast despite the fact that most of the country would be watching the game on tape. After that season, Musburger, who was also the host of *The NFL Today* pregame show, was demoted to CBS's second broadcast team while serving as host for the All-Star Game and Finals games for the rest of the 80s Era. Gary Bender held the top play-by-play spot in 1980-81, but was then replaced by Dick Stockton, who would hold the position until CBS lost its rights to the NBA telecasts in 1990.

Stockton's given name was Richard Stokvis, but he changed his last name to Stockton in the mid-1960's while working for WKYW in Philadelphia. After a brief stay in Pittsburgh, he then settled in Boston. He served as a sports anchor for WBZ Channel 4 and worked with Bob Cousy on Celtics broadcasts for the station during the 1974-75 season, then Stockton left WBZ and was hired by WSBK Channel 38 to broadcast Boston Red Sox games. When the Red Sox reached the World Series in 1975, NBC used local announcers from Boston and Cincinnati alongside either Curt Gowdy or Joe Garagiola with Tony Kubek, and Stockton drew the nod in Games 1 and 6; his call of Carlton Fisk's legendary home run in the latter game brought Stockton national attention. After calling NFL games on NBC for two years beginning in 1976, he was hired as a full-time member of the CBS football broadcasting team in 1978. Stockton began calling NBA games for CBS during the 1980-81 season, paired with Kevin Loughery, and was at the mike for the conclusion of the Celtics-76ers Eastern Conference Finals series.

Stockton had dreamed of becoming the next Howard Cosell, but found that aggressive criticism and bombastic commentary was not his style, and he toned down his almost hyper over-analysis of basketball action as his tenure at CBS progressed. In 1985 he told William Taaffe of *Sports Illustrated*, "Now I realize it's a frenetic game and you've got to give people a chance to breathe." However, Stockton did have one unfortunate habit, as he seemed incapable of letting his color commentary partner get the last word on a piece of analysis. But this may have been a product of circumstance. It was Stockton's misfortune to be teamed with a pair of former Boston Celtics on his basketball telecasts throughout the 80s Era, beginning with Bill Russell, and then Tom Heinsohn from 1983-84 through 1986-87. Russell preferred to measure his comments rather than talk incessantly, which forced Stockton to draw him into the telecast and amplify his points at times. Heinsohn often wore his Celtics' pride on the air, providing commentary that generally showed his affection for his former team; even when criticizing the Celtics, which he did quite frequently on CBS, Heinsohn would seem to be pleading for the team to do better, and his praise for the opposition seemed tinged with a bit of regret. Still, media critics and even opposing players would watch tapes of Heinsohn calling Celtics games on a local Boston cable television station, hear his more enthusiastic

support of the Celtics on those broadcasts, and find any claims of his neutrality to be baseless. The overall impact was that the telecasts came to be viewed by critics as “Boston” telecasts because Stockton had also spent time in the city. Stockton’s team called most of the regional telecasts of regular season games involving the Celtics, Lakers and 76ers during the 80s Era because the teams were worthy of being showcased by CBS using their number one broadcast tandem, though in the playoffs there were inevitable scheduling conflicts that pushed selected games to a backup crew.

CBS’s production quality for these games seems primitive today, but the most durable version of the “NBA on CBS” opening theme music, which debuted during the 1983 Finals, became part of the sports soundtrack of the 80s Era. The opening graphics montage included computerized graphics (similar in style to contemporary video games) that included images of a television camera and a basketball arena; the arena featured a yellow balcony and a green outline around the court, which bore a resemblance to the Boston Garden, though the court also had red and blue-colored free throw lanes and center circle, and lacked a parquet floor. Looking back, the most significant feature about the graphics during the games themselves is the *lack* of graphics. The score and time are shown very infrequently early in the decade, and even by 1987 they were only flashed on the screen momentarily after made baskets, free throws and timeouts. There was never a “crawl” on the bottom of the screen to distract from the action. Halftime production quality was inconsistent; a lowlight occurred during Game 6 of the 1980 Finals, when Brent Musburger “interviewed” Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (who was back in Los Angeles with a sprained ankle) over the telephone. Musburger was shown on camera holding an actual desk phone receiver to his ear while viewers caught about every fifth word that Abdul-Jabbar was saying. Still, CBS managed to field four broadcast teams in most seasons, providing regional coverage during the regular season on Sunday afternoons and during the playoffs, even in the early rounds. Hubie Brown, Doug Collins, Billy Cunningham and even James Brown worked as color commentators on the backup broadcasting teams, and a young Jim Nantz took a turn at play-by-play beginning in 1985.

Many of the CBS broadcasters also worked on the cable broadcasts. After being let go by CBS, Russell worked conference finals games on TBS from 1985 through 1987, and even teamed up with Rick Barry (who did play-by-play) on a pair of Christmas Day games. It was a remarkable pairing, considering that during a 1981 Finals broadcast on CBS, Barry referred to Russell as having a “watermelon grin” while the network showed a photo of Russell with the 1956 United States Olympic basketball team. (CBS fired Barry after the series, but Russell accepted his apology for the not-so-subtle racist remark.) Hubie Brown worked for both CBS and USA during the 1981-82 season, when he was in between coaching jobs with the Hawks and Knicks, and Brown also worked playoff games for USA the next year after the Knicks were eliminated. But the cable broadcasts were not available as widely as CBS—the author recalls that his hometown in a rural part of Rhode Island was not equipped with cable television

until the early 1990's—so CBS remained the primary vehicle for following the NBA on a national coast-to-coast basis. However, for true die-hard fans, the network announcers would always pale in comparison to their own local announcers.

Boston Celtics

Radio

Listeners to Celtics games on the radio in the 80s Era were entertained by the same man who had broadcast games during the Russell Era, and even the pre-Russell Era. Johnny Most grew up in New York, played football and basketball for Brooklyn College, and was a pilot in the Air Force during World War II. He began his broadcasting career doing play-by-play for the New York Knicks in 1950, but was looking for a new job two years later when the Knicks former announcer returned from military service. Most was hired by the Boston Celtics and stayed for 37 years, broadcasting games from “high above courtside” in the upper balcony of the Boston Garden. Most brought a simple style to his broadcasts: the Celtics players were always in the right and their opponents were always in the wrong. He called Bob Cousy “Rapid Robert” and praised him; Guy Rodgers, one of Cousy’s peers and a similarly flashy point guard, drew Most’s ire for “showboating.” Jim Loscutoff, who never shied away from contact, was “Jungle Jim,” defender of Cousy and other Celtic innocents, while Rudy LaRusso of the Lakers, who committed far fewer fouls per minute played during his career than Loscutoff, was labeled “Roughhouse Rudy.” The practice continued into the 80s Era, even as vanilla announcers become commonplace. Most would refer to Jeff Ruland and Rick Mahorn of the Bullets as “McFilthy and McNasty” and even took the time one night, just prior to tipoff, to say, “Mrs. Ruland, if you’re listening somewhere in Connecticut, I advise you to turn your radio off; you’re not going to like what I say about your boy Jeff.” Most was unapologetic in the face of critics, telling *Sports Illustrated* in 1985 that, “[s]ome professor sits back in a university somewhere and says, ‘Thou shalt not be prejudiced.’ I wanna know why not? Why can’t I be? You can’t be with a bunch of guys day in day out, year in year out, and not have affection for them. And if you don’t broadcast that way, you’re lying.” He had a series of on-air partners over the decades, and developed a good relationship with Glenn Ordway, who served as color commentator beginning with the 1982-83 season and eventually succeeded him as play-by-play man by the end of the decade.

In the 1965 playoffs, Most made his signature call, “Havlicek Stole The Ball!” in the closing moments of Game 7 of the Eastern Conference Finals against the 76ers. The call became the centerpiece of a record album of Most’s greatest hits, and over the next two decades he leant his voice to countless compilations and highlight videos; in the 1980’s you could even pay to

have him record a customized play-by-play call with you as the star of the action. As the years went on, Most began to break down physically, a victim of too many cigarettes and nights on the road. A stroke in February 1983 cost him the full use of his right hand and arm, but his voice remained as strong and distinctive as ever. Many fans still turned down the volume on the television to listen to Most on the radio. The highlight of his final decade of calling Celtics games came during the 1987 Eastern Conference Finals against the Pistons. Bill Laimbeer and Dennis Rodman were playing their typical brand of solid, physical basketball, but since they were doing it against Larry Bird and the Celtics, Most was incensed. After one particularly hard foul in a game at Detroit, Most shrieked, "A completely unnecessary foul by Laimbeer and Laimbeer got walloped... now Rodman wants Bird and Larry throws Rodman away... now Thomas is coming over... oh, the yellow, gutless way they do things here. This is a typical disgusting display by Rodman, Laimbeer and Thomas." Then in Game 5, Most gleefully reported Robert Parish's take down of Bill Laimbeer, and in the final seconds, made a call reminiscent of his 1965 classic, as Larry Bird stole Isiah Thomas's inbounds pass and fed Dennis Johnson for the game-winning basket.

Television

At the beginning of the 80s Era, the Celtics broadcast about half of their games, including selected home games, on the over-the-air station WBZ Channel 4. When the station first acquired the rights in 1973-74, they simply used radio announcers Johnny Most and Len Berman as the soundtrack for the games. A year later, the station hired their own team, featuring Dick Stockton and Bob Cousy, whose disappointing tenure as coach of the Kansas City-Omaha Kings had ended in November 1973. Cousy's distinctive nasally voice earned him critics, and limited his national broadcasting work to a short stint with ABC in the 1960's, but Cousy brought a point guard's sensibility to the telecasts. In 1979-80 Roger Twibell did the play-by-play, but for the next nine seasons Gil Santos of WBZ-AM radio teamed with Cousy. Santos's smooth voice was perfect for play-by-play work, earning him numerous awards during his career. He was well-known to Boston sports fans as the New England Patriots radio voice throughout most of the 1970's, but when WBZ-AM lost the Patriots rights in 1980, Santos turned to other work, including filling in for Johnny Most for some Celtics games on the radio. The Santos-Cousy team stayed with Channel 4 through the 1984-85 season, then moved to WLVI Channel 56 as WBZ became unwilling to preempt NBC's prime-time lineup.

The shift to Channel 56 also coincided with the end of over-the-air broadcasts of games from Boston Garden. Beginning with the 1981-82 season, the Celtics added cable broadcasts on the PRISM New England channel, which was affiliated with the original PRISM station that was based in Philadelphia. The initial audience for the premium channel was small—estimated at 15,000—but represented the Celtics first move into cable television. Mike

Gorman was a television sports reporter in Providence, Rhode Island and had worked with Tom Heinsohn on Providence College basketball telecasts; the duo was selected to work 30 Celtics games, starting a partnership that has continued for thirty years. Gorman's style was (and is) thoroughly professional, with far less of a slant in favor of the Celtics than Heinsohn. Gorman, like Heinsohn, also worked other broadcasting jobs in parallel with the Celtics games, including regional coverage of Big East basketball. PRISM New England was sold to Cablevision in 1983 and renamed SportsChannel. Two years later, SportsChannel became the exclusive home for Celtics home games that were not picked up by CBS or TBS.

P.A.

Andy Jick was 27 years old in 1979 when he took over as the public address announcer for the Boston Celtics. His voice was usually understated, befitting his day job as an office manager, but he would stretch out the occasional word for emphasis, such as "Threeee points for Larry Bird," and Jick would frequently add an extra "r" or two (or three or four) to Bird's first name after a particularly dramatic basket. But Jick did not engage in overt tactics such as introducing the team as "Your Boston Celtics" that were sometimes used in other cities to add an additional layer of homerism. The P.A. job was not Jick's first basketball-related job. He had graduated from Lexington (Massachusetts) High School where he served as team manager for the basketball team, coached by future Villanova head coach Rollie Massimino. Later, he called basketball games while earning a degree at Brandeis University. Jick was moonlighting as a statistician for the Celtics when public address announcer Steve Smith missed John Havlicek Day in 1978 with an illness. Jick filled in, then two years later began an 18-year stint behind the microphone.

Los Angeles Lakers

Radio/TV

Francis "Chick" Hearn joined the Lakers in 1961 and stayed for over forty years. A native of Buda, Illinois and the son of an Irish railroad worker, Hearn earned his nickname in 1938 when his AAU teammates replaced his basketball shoes with a chicken; when Hearn blindly reached into his shoe box he ended up with a handful of poultry instead of his shoes. After a stint with Armed Forces Radio during World War II, and a series of broadcasting jobs in the Midwest, Hearn was hired by CBS Radio in 1955 to broadcast USC football and basketball games. Six years later, Lakers owner Bob Short, desperate to generate more interest in his newly relocated team, called Hearn on the day of Game 5 of the Western

Conference Finals to ask him to travel to St. Louis to broadcast the game against the Hawks. The Lakers defeated the Hawks to take a 3-2 lead in the series, which they eventually lost in seven games, but the publicity generated by the broadcast appeared to have worked: the Lakers drew 14,840 fans in Game 6 back in Los Angeles, as opposed to fewer 10,000 paying customers *combined* for Games 3 and 4 at home.

Hearn was more even-handed—and even-keeled—than Johnny Most, but admitted in 1984 that “[a]nybody who doesn’t think I want the Lakers to win is a fool. But I’m no homer.” He is credited with inventing many of the phrases that are staples today, including “unanswered points”, “slam dunk”, and “air ball”. Hearn also cherished being the center of attention, and clashed with many of the color commentators that were “forced” on him over the years, including a 22-year-old Al Michaels, whose stint with the Lakers ended after just six games in 1967 when Hearn, who refused to let Michaels offer any commentary during games, complained that Michaels spent too much time reading scores and statistics during halftime. (Two decades later, Michaels was still upset by being fired, which had taken place at the Los Angeles airport as the team prepared to depart on a road trip. Michaels told Franz Lidz of *Sports Illustrated*, “I’ve been told that Chick says he gave me my break. The truth is he almost broke my spirit. Here I was at 22 ascending to a position that had seemed unascendable and—boom—it blows up in my face.”) But the fans loved Hearn, and therefore, ownership generally supported him. Jack Kent Cooke even made him an assistant general manager in 1972, an example of Cooke’s eccentric respect for Hearn’s basketball knowledge (the title was revoked when Cooke sold the team to Jerry Buss).

During the 80s Era, Hearn continued to be the voice of the Lakers on their television and radio networks, which included well over a dozen stations. Pat Riley served as color commentator in the late 1970s (Hearn actually sought Riley out to replace Lynn Shackelford) until he became an assistant coach in November 1979 after Jack McKinney’s bicycle accident elevated Paul Westhead to interim head coach. Hearn helped convince Riley to take the coaching job, knowing that his extensive preparations for broadcasts would serve him well. And Riley had acquired that trait by watching Hearn prepare for games. After Riley had become head coach, he said that, “I think a lot of what I do now comes from watching Chick prepare for a broadcast.” Keith Erickson, a former player for the Lakers and UCLA who had worked some NBA games for CBS television, replaced Riley and stayed by Hearn’s side for the rest of the 80s Era.

P.A.

John Ramsey was the original voice of the Lakers when they moved to Los Angeles in 1960, but he was also the public address announcer for the Dodgers (since *their* move in 1958) and soon added the Kings, Angels, Rams, Raiders and college work to his resume. With so

many commitments, conflicts were inevitable, so Ramsey regularly recruited backup help. In 1975, Dennis Packer began to fill that role, and when Ramsey relinquished his Lakers and Kings duties in 1979, Packer replaced him. Packer and Ramsey shared a deep voice and an “articulate, unruffled and deliberate” style of announcing.

Their successor at the Forum had similarly resonant pipes but a California cool style, which drew the attention of Lakers owner Jerry Buss in 1982. Lawrence Tanter had been a Jazz radio station disk jockey from his days at the University of Dubuque in Iowa, where he hosted the “The L.T. Jazz Show” and then worked professionally at a series of stations, eventually settling in Los Angeles in 1971. The 6’7” Tanter was also a basketball fan; he had been a forward on his high school basketball team in Chicago which won the state title. Tanter had just one game of basketball public address announcing experience when he tried out for the Lakers job in 1982, and was thrilled when he got it. Tanter’s smoothness helped add to the “Showtime” atmosphere at the Forum, but Tanter knew who the real stars were. “I think I’m different than a lot of guys in other cities because I’m not a screamer,” Tanter said in 2001. “My feeling was, years ago, that people paid money to come and see the Lakers, not to hear some clown on the PA. I use enthusiasm when the appropriate time comes, but I’m not a cheerleader and I don’t want to be.” But Tanter did appreciate cheerleaders of another sort. His drawn out, sensuous yet classy, rendition of “the Laker Grrrrrrls” at the conclusion of their routines was the perfect complement to the dance team’s image. Amidst a menagerie of Hollywood stars, Dancing Barry, and fast break baskets that took center stage at the Forum, Tanter served as a retro cool host for the evening’s activities.

Philadelphia 76ers

Radio/TV

The 76ers typically used two broadcast teams, one for home games on PRISM (which stood for Philadelphia Regional In-home Sports and Movies), the cable network which debuted in 1976, and one for selected road games on an over-the-air television station; the latter team would also do all the radio broadcasts, both on the road and at home. Jim Barniak, an original PRISM employee, was sports director during the 80s Era and was a regular in the broadcast booth, either as play-by-play man, with past and future NBA coaches such as Chuck Daly (a former 76ers assistant coach, doing color commentary in between his stops with Cleveland and Detroit) and Gene Shue, or as a color commentator alongside Andy Musser. Musser had broadcast 76ers games back in the late 1960’s, and in 1976 began a 25-year career as the Philadelphia Phillies play-by-play man.

In the fall of 1979 WCAU radio picked up the team's radio rights after a five-year absence and a reversal of their self-imposed "news only" policy. At the start of the 80s Era Don Henderson and Steve Fredericks did the play-by-play while former Sixers such as Matt Guokas and Doug Collins handled the color (Guokas left the booth in December 1981 to replace Daly as an assistant coach when Daly left for Cleveland; Guokas would become head coach in 1985, completing a journey that was similar to Pat Riley's in Los Angeles). WKBS Channel 48 televised road games while simulcasting the WCAU audio. In 1982 the rights shifted to WFIL radio and WPHL Channel 17 who employed different announcers but used the same simulcast formula for road games. Neil Funk took over the play-by-play role, a position he had held back in 1976-77 before leaving for a similar job with the Kansas City Kings. Funk worked alongside Daly for the 1982-83 season and then John Nash in 1983-84, who was also the team's assistant general manager (Nash would become the 76ers general manager in the summer of 1986.) The following season Funk was teamed with Doug Collins, but in June 1985 Funk was replaced with Andy Musser for the WPHL television broadcasts, while remaining as the play-by-play man on the radio, which brought an end to the long-time simulcast strategy. Musser also continued to offer color commentary on PRISM for home games until Gene Shue succeeded him for the 1986-87 season.

P.A.

Dave Zinkoff had the most distinctive voice of the public address announcers in the league. Philadelphia fans loved him; opponents appreciated him, though his style of over-emphasizing nearly every other syllable for dramatic effect could get tiring (Johnny Most would frequently refer to him as "Hysterical Harry"). No one else put as many "R's" in "Julius Er-r-r-r-r-r-ving" or as much "ING" in Billy "Cunn-ING-ham," and Zinkoff was just as creative with the names of opponents (for example, saying "That Counts" for a basket by Mel Counts), providing at least a bit of balance. But Zinkoff reserved his most creative phrases such as "Dipper Dunk" (for Wilt Chamberlain) and "Collins Mixer" (for a basket by Doug Collins, assisted by Steve Mix) for the home team.

A native of Russia who immigrated to the United States with his family and settled in Philadelphia as a youngster, Zinkoff had been an announcer since his days as a student at Temple University, and his first big break came when he filled in during the 1935 Sugar Bowl between Temple and Tulane. Soon he was calling basketball games for Eddie Gottlieb's Philadelphia SPHAs, and quickly became a friend of the promoter. When Gottlieb secured the Philadelphia Warriors BAA franchise in 1946, he brought his friend along. Zinkoff did not follow the Warriors to San Francisco in 1962, but when the 76ers were born a year later, he resumed his career. He was still behind the microphone in 1980 when he was unceremoniously fired by new Sixers president Lou Scheinfeld, who was hired to improve the

team's financial bottom line. The move was a public relations disaster; when Zinkoff was invited back for a tribute night for the 1967 76ers championship team, the fans gave him a two minute standing ovation. "I was trying to announce," Zinkoff recalled in 1984, "but the tears were running down my cheeks. And those rascals—I would introduce them and they would come over and hug me. Wilt even picked me up." When Fitz Dixon bought the 76ers (a month after Scheinfeld had resigned) he brought back Zinkoff, giving him the opportunity to be part of the 76ers playoffs runs in 1982 and 1983 and their second championship in franchise history. Sadly, Zinkoff passed away on Christmas Day 1985, following heart surgery for a valve condition discovered after a game in mid-November. CBS paid tribute to him during their telecast of the Celtics-Knicks game that day. The 76ers hired Jim Wise, a radio sports director and reporter in Atlantic City, to fill Zinkoff's position, but to Philadelphia fans, there was no one who could replace Zink.

Chapter Seven

Celtics vs. 76ers

1979-80

November 10, 1979

Philadelphia 95, Boston 94

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	30	4-6	6-8	9	0	2	14	Erving	37	14-32	9-12	10	8	1	37
Bird	32	10-17	1-2	7	3	4	22	C. Jones	47	4-10	2-2	17	2	4	10
Cowens	42	6-17	2-2	14	4	2	14	Dawkins	35	4-12	0-0	14	1	3	8
Archibald	39	3-9	3-6	2	9	2	9	Cheeks	28	1-5	2-2	3	3	4	4
Ford	21	0-5	0-0	4	2	1	0	Collins	41	9-22	0-0	5	4	2	18
Robey	18	6-12	1-3	8	0	4	13	Bibby	21	3-4	2-2	0	4	4	8
Carr	16	5-9	0-0	5	1	3	10	B. Jones	19	2-6	4-4	2	1	1	8
Henderson	12	3-6	0-0	3	1	3	6	Spanarkel	5	0-1	0-0	1	0	1	0
Fernsten	6	0-2	0-0	0	1	0	0	Mix	7	0-3	2-2	0	0	0	2
Judkins	19	2-4	2-2	2	3	4	6								
Chaney	5	0-4	0-0	1	1	0	0								
TOTALS		39-91	15-23	62	25	25	94	TOTALS		37-95	21-24	59	23	20	95
Team Rebounds: 7 3-point FG: 1-1 (Bird 1-1). Blocks: 4 (Maxwell 2, Bird, Cowens). Steals: 8 (Maxwell 3, Bird 2, Cowens 3). Turnovers: 16 (Maxwell, Bird 4, Cowens 3, Archibald 3, Ford, Carr, Henderson, Judkins).								Team Rebounds: 7 3-point FG: 0-1 (Erving 0-1). Blocks: 10 (Erving, C. Jones 6, Dawkins 3). Steals: 8 (C. Jones, Dawkins 3, Cheeks 3, Bibby). Turnovers: 17 (Erving 4, C. Jones 4, Dawkins 2, Collins 3, Bibby 3).							
Attendance: 18776. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Bill Saar.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	21	30	14	29	94
Philadelphia 76ers	23	35	18	19	95

Larry Bird's first regular season game against Julius Erving took place at the Spectrum. Boston entered the game at 10-2 and riding a six-game winning streak, beginning with four wins in a row at the end of a grueling six-game road trip. A year earlier, the Celtics had not won their tenth game until December 13, and at that time resided in last place in the Atlantic Division

at 10-18. The final score was indicative of the closeness of the matchup. It was the first time since opening night that the 76ers had won a game while scoring less than 100 points; the opening victory had also been by one point, 93-92, on the road in Washington against the defending Eastern Conference champions. So far this season, the Celtics had averaged 118 points in regulation, the 76ers 109, so this game was an aberration.

December 19, 1979

Boston 112, Philadelphia 89

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	32	9-15	2-2	3	4	3	20	Maxwell	35	6-9	9-9	12	3	2	21
C. Jones	33	1-4	1-2	12	2	2	3	Bird	40	10-18	3-3	9	4	2	24
Dawkins	31	4-13	1-1	2	1	5	9	Cowens	34	3-13	1-2	2	4	3	7
Richardson	31	4-13	3-4	4	1	4	11	Archibald	39	7-12	5-6	2	9	3	19
Cheeks	37	2-5	0-0	3	8	2	4	Ford	35	4-9	0-1	6	3	2	9
B. Jones	26	4-7	2-2	5	1	2	10	Chaney	10	3-4	0-0	1	2	3	6
Bibby	21	3-10	2-2	3	2	3	8	Robey	20	4-10	0-0	5	2	5	8
Mix	21	7-10	6-6	7	1	0	20	Carr	9	2-4	0-0	0	2	2	4
Toone	5	0-3	0-0	2	0	0	0	Henderson	9	3-4	0-0	0	1	0	6
Spanarkel	3	1-1	2-2	0	0	0	4	Judkins	6	3-4	1-2	1	0	0	8
								Fernsten	3	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		35-81	19-21	45	20	21	89	TOTALS		45-88	19-23	50	30	22	112
Team Rebounds: 4 3-point FG: 0-2 (Richardson 0-1, Toone 0-1). Blocks: 4 (Dawkins 2, Richardson, B. Jones). Steals: 10 (Erving 4, Dawkins, Cheeks 2, Bibby, Mix 2). Turnovers: 29 (Erving 3, C. Jones 5, Dawkins 4, Richardson 4, Cheeks 3, B. Jones 3, Bibby 2, Mix 4, Spanarkel).								Team Rebounds: 12 3-point FG: 3-7 (Bird 1-1, Ford 1-5, Judkins 1-1). Blocks: 3 (Bird, Ford, Fernsten). Steals: 18 (Maxwell, Bird 4, Cowens 2, Archibald 2, Ford 2, Robey 2, Carr 2, Judkins 3). Turnovers: 20 (Maxwell 4, Bird 5, Cowens 2, Archibald 4, Ford, Robey, Carr 2, Judkins).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Leroy Alexander.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	18	26	25	20	89
Boston Celtics	22	38	23	29	112

Philadelphia entered this contest with several factors working against them. First, guard Doug Collins had suffered a stress fracture in his right foot and had not played since December 8; since then, the 76ers were 2-2, including dropping a home-and-home against Atlanta on consecutive nights. Those losses also snapped a nine-game winning streak, which would prove to be their longest of the year. The 76ers first visit to the Boston Garden this season was also the final game of a three-game road trip that started in Atlanta, and had continued in Detroit the evening before. Meanwhile, the Celtics had been resting for two days. Boston led by as many as twenty-one points in the second quarter (56-35) and coasted the rest of the way.

December 22, 1979

Philadelphia 126, Boston 113

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	35	6-13	4-5	6	3	4	16	Erving	41	17-25	3-5	5	7	0	37
Bird	38	10-17	2-2	12	6	4	23	C. Jones	41	2-5	3-4	16	4	2	7
Cowens	42	10-19	0-0	8	2	5	20	Dawkins	33	10-13	3-5	3	1	4	23
Archibald	43	9-15	3-5	2	10	3	21	Richardson	28	9-12	0-0	1	4	1	18
Ford	29	6-10	0-0	1	2	2	14	Cheeks	37	3-6	2-2	2	13	4	8
Robey	19	5-9	4-6	4	0	2	14	Bibby	21	2-5	2-4	2	3	2	6
Carr	14	1-3	0-0	1	2	2	2	B. Jones	24	5-7	5-6	2	1	3	15
Henderson	10	0-1	3-5	0	2	1	3	Mix	15	5-8	2-2	3	3	0	12
Chaney	10	0-3	0-0	1	2	2	0								
TOTALS		47-90	16-23	43	29	25	113	TOTALS		53-81	20-28	43	36	16	126
Team Rebounds: 8 3-point FG: 3-7 (Bird 1-3, Cowens 0-1, Ford 2-3). Technical Fouls: Bird. Blocks: 1 (Maxwell). Steals: 13 (Maxwell 2, Bird 3, Archibald 2, Ford 4, Carr, Henderson). Turnovers: 21 (Maxwell 2, Bird 7, Archibald 3, Ford, Robey 2, Carr 2, Henderson).								Team Rebounds: 9 3-point FG: 0-1 (Bibby 0-1). Blocks: 7 (Erving, C. Jones 5, B. Jones). Steals: 8 (Erving 2, Cheeks 2, Bibby 2, B. Jones, Mix). Turnovers: 19 (Erving 5, C. Jones, Dawkins 3, Richardson 2, Cheeks 2, Bibby 4, B. Jones, Mix).							
Attendance: 18011. Referees: Earl Strom, Ralph Lembo.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	24	31	38	20	113
Philadelphia 76ers	30	29	34	33	126

The Celtics return trip to Philadelphia was not as enjoyable. Despite double-doubles from Bird (23/12) and Archibald (21 with 10 assists), and a tie score at 93-93 entering the fourth, the 76ers poured it on from there and won going away. Erving matched his total of 37 points from the game against the Celtics on November 10, and it was the third time in his last four games that he had reached that mark (37 against Detroit on the 18th, and then 39 against Houston on the 21st); the lone exception was the previous game against the Celtics, when he was held to 20.

February 6, 1980

Boston 129, Philadelphia 110

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	36	13-23	10-14	10	5	1	36	Maxwell	35	5-7	9-9	13	0	5	19
C. Jones	40	2-5	0-0	10	3	5	4	Bird	38	12-27	8-8	11	4	3	32
Dawkins	28	5-11	4-5	1	2	5	14	Robey	39	10-17	2-2	9	5	2	22
Richardson	18	1-2	0-0	2	0	1	2	Archibald	35	6-14	6-6	1	11	4	18
Cheeks	28	8-10	4-4	3	3	4	20	Ford	34	4-9	2-3	1	4	1	11
Bibby	35	4-10	1-2	1	5	0	9	Carr	21	4-4	2-4	1	1	4	10
B. Jones	23	3-5	1-3	6	0	4	7	Henderson	13	1-2	1-1	0	5	2	3
Spanarkel	10	1-3	2-3	1	2	2	4	Chaney	10	1-4	1-1	1	1	2	3
Mix	16	6-8	0-0	3	3	2	12	Fernsten	13	4-7	0-0	4	0	1	8
Skinner	5	0-1	0-0	0	0	1	0	Judkins	2	1-3	0-0	0	0	0	3
Toone	1	1-1	0-0	1	0	0	2								

TOTALS		44-79	22-31	46	23	25	110	TOTALS		48-94	31-34	47	31	24	129
Team Rebounds: 8 3-point FG: 0-1 (Erving 0-1). Technical Fouls: Cunningham, Trainer Al Domenico 2 (ejected). Blocks: 7 (Erving 2, Dawkins 2, B. Jones 2, Mix). Steals: 5 (Erving, Dawkins, Cheeks 2, B. Jones). Turnovers: 26 (Erving, C. Jones 6, Dawkins 3, Cheeks 4, Bibby 2, B. Jones 4, Spanarkel 2, Mix 3, Skinner).								Team Rebounds: 6 3-point FG: 2-3 (Ford 1-2, Judkins 1-1). Technical Fouls: Fitch. Blocks: 3 (Maxwell, Bird, Archibald). Steals: 15 (Maxwell 2, Robey, Archibald 2, Ford 5, Henderson 3, Fernsten 2). Turnovers: 15 (Maxwell 3, Robey 4, Archibald 3, Ford, Carr, Henderson, Chaney, Fernsten).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Bernie Fryer.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	25	34	26	25	110
Boston Celtics	31	16	41	41	129

By the end of this game it was difficult to believe that the 76ers had outscored the Celtics 40-20 during a ten minute portion of the first half, or that Philadelphia had a 59-47 lead at halftime as Julius Erving closed out the second quarter with three dunks. The Celtics, starting Rick Robey at center in place of an injured Dave Cowens, who missed his fifth straight game with an injured left foot, responded with a second half that Bill Fitch later compared to Bo Derek (a "10"). Not only were bodies flying all over court, they were flying out of it; *Boston Globe* columnist Leigh Montville included Archibald, Carr and Henderson in his list of players whose heroics required venturing beyond the baselines after loose balls. Plenty of action was taking place under the boards too: "There was one time, I locked arms with Dawkins and he just whirled me around," Robey said after the game. "We were really having some fun out there tonight. Weren't we?"

In the third quarter, the Celtics were led by Archibald's 12 points (after being shutout in the first half), 11 by Maxwell and 10 by Bird, who had been ill before the game and had to ask to be taken out eight minutes into the first period when his symptoms flared up. Steve Mix summarized the 76ers' plight in the third: "We stopped checking out on the boards, and we stopped running as a result. There was no way we could maintain our style of play if they were getting second and third shots." But the fourth quarter was even more implausible, as a Celtics surge turned a 90-90 tie into a 106-92 advantage with little-used Eric Fernsten at center alongside the other starters.

March 7, 1980

Boston 111, Philadelphia 92

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	40	16-28	4-4	13	5	1	36	Maxwell	37	7-10	6-8	9	0	3	20
C. Jones	30	0-0	0-0	6	1	6	0	Bird	36	11-21	5-7	8	4	2	27
Dawkins	32	6-11	1-1	8	2	5	13	Robey	35	8-16	2-2	12	3	2	18
Hollins	33	6-14	2-2	2	3	0	14	Archibald	29	4-10	3-3	0	9	2	11
Cheeks	37	3-8	0-0	5	3	2	6	Ford	21	1-7	0-0	6	0	0	2
B. Jones	28	1-10	1-2	5	1	3	3	Cowens	21	2-7	0-0	4	2	3	4

Collins	21	3-9	0-0	1	1	1	6	Carr	29	4-9	0-0	5	2	4	8
Mix	14	3-8	3-4	2	1	1	9	Henderson	17	3-6	0-0	0	3	1	6
Bibby	4	1-4	2-2	0	0	0	5	Maravich	10	4-7	4-4	1	0	2	13
Richardson	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Judkins	3	0-2	0-0	0	0	1	0
								Fernsten	2	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS		39-92	13-15	57	17	19	92	TOTALS		45-96	20-24	53	23	20	111
Team Rebounds: 15 3-point FG: 1-2 (Bibby 1-2). Blocks: 9 (Erving, C. Jones 2, Dawkins 2, Hollins 2, B. Jones, Collins). Steals: 7 (Erving, Cheeks, B. Jones 3, Mix, Bibby). Turnovers: 26 (Erving 5, C. Jones 2, Dawkins 2, Hollins 4, Cheeks 6, B. Jones 3, Collins, Mix 3).								Team Rebounds: 8 3-point FG: 1-7 (Bird 0-2, Ford 0-2, Carr 0-1, Maravich 1-1, Judkins 0-1). Blocks: 6 (Bird 2, Robey, Ford, Henderson, Fernsten). Steals: 15 (Maxwell 2, Bird 2, Archibald 2, Ford 3, Carr 3, Henderson 3). Turnovers: 15 (Maxwell, Bird 2, Robey 5, Archibald 4, Cowens, Maravich 2).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Tom Nunez.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	16	18	24	34	92
Boston Celtics	21	26	25	39	111

As the regular season ground towards a conclusion, neither team was in perfect health. Cowens had returned but was still coming off the bench, easing himself back into action, while Archibald was dealing with a sore foot and an on-going hip injury. The 76ers Lionel Hollins, obtained from Portland as insurance for Doug Collins's surgically repaired feet two days after being blown out in Boston in February, had sprained an ankle two nights before, and Caldwell Jones had spent four days in bed with the flu. All would play in this game, the stakes heightened by the fact that both teams were on long winning streaks: eight for Boston, seven for Philadelphia.

However, Julius Erving's teammates spent much of the night watching him perform while providing little help. After shooting just 1 for 7 in the first quarter, he shot 15 for 21 the rest of the way, and scored 24 of the 76ers 28 points during one stretch from the third quarter into the fourth. When he departed with 3:30 remaining in the game, Erving was responsible for 36 of the 76ers 75 points. With the rest of Philadelphia's finest shooting just thirty-six percent from the floor, the Celtics pulled ahead 66-42 in the third before Erving heated up. Bird scored 19 in the second half, nearly matching Erving shot-for-shot early in the fourth quarter, but the Celtics lead melted to 82-70; the margin would have been a lot closer if not for Boston's rookie star. "Doc is playing better than anybody in the league right now," Bird said after the game, "but no one man can beat us the way we're playing." Pete Maravich ended the scoring with a thirty-five-foot three pointer at the buzzer.

March 30, 1980

Philadelphia 116, Boston 110

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Carr	11	3-3	25	C. Jones	7	2-2	16

Bird	4	2-3	10	Mix	9	4-5	22
Robey	8	3-4	19	Dawkins	5	4-7	14
Archibald	5	2-2	12	Hollins	1	2-4	4
Ford	2	0-0	4	Bibby	9	2-2	20
Maravich	5	0-0	10	B. Jones	4	1-1	9
Henderson	4	0-0	9	Spanarkel	7	5-6	19
Fernsten	4	2-2	10	Toone	2	2-2	6
Judkins	4	2-3	11				
TOTALS	47	14-17	110	TOTALS	46	24-31	116
3-point FG: 2 (Henderson 1, Judkins 1).				Attendance: 18276.			

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	32	26	24	28	110
Philadelphia 76ers	31	26	27	32	116

The two teams ended the regular season with a meaningless game at the Spectrum. Boston had already clinched the Atlantic Division title and a first-round bye, while Philadelphia had clinched no worse than the third seed in the playoffs weeks ago (Houston would finish at 41-41 to claim the fourth slot in the East). Both teams rested several starters with various injuries that were not expected to affect their availability for the playoffs: Cowens sat with a hyperextended left big toe, Maxwell a sprained left ankle, Erving a sprained right foot, and a "slight head injury" kept Cheeks on the bench too. The Celtics even resorted to using a frontline of Bird, Robey and Fernsten at times, who in addition to combining for 39 points also added 25 rebounds (10, 8 and 7, respectively). Bibby scored eight of the 76ers first ten points, while rookie Jim Spanarkel established a new career high for himself with 19.

April 18, 1980

Eastern Conference Finals Game 1

Philadelphia 96, Boston 93

[illegible]

Turnovers: 20 (Erving, C. Jones, Dawkins 2, Hollins 5, Cheeks 4, B. Jones 2, Bibby 5).	Carr, Robey). Turnovers: 16 (Maxwell 2, Bird 2, Cowens, Archibald 7, Ford, Maravich, Robey, Henderson).
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Joe Gushue, Ed Middleton.	

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	22	22	32	20	96
Boston Celtics	25	27	20	21	93

The Celtics rolled into the series with a convincing 4-0 sweep of the Houston Rockets, while the 76ers dispatched the Bullets 2-0 in their opening round miniseries before beating the Hawks in five games. In the first half, Boston built a 52-44 lead behind the play of Cedric Maxwell, who scored 14 points and used a variety of moves and up-fakes to help get Darryl Dawkins and Caldwell Jones in foul trouble. Philadelphia was lucky to be that close, getting 10 unexpected points in the second quarter by Bibby, including two on a questionable foul call on Maxwell at the halftime buzzer, but could have been three points closer if Jeff Judkins had not had the presence of mind to pounce on a loose ball (created by a Cheeks poke check on Archibald) and heave it toward the basket from just inside halfcourt with the shot clock about to expire; the shot inexplicably found the bottom of the net with ten seconds remaining in the half.

But the second half belonged to Erving and Dawkins. Erving scored ten points in a row to rally Philadelphia from a 58-48 deficit to tie the game in the third quarter. Then in the fourth, after a pair of flamboyant blocks, Dawkins would hit three straight shots over Robey to break an 88-88 tie and give the 76ers the lead for good. The wunderkind with a penchant for thunderous dunks (and the ability to create humorous nicknames to describe them) had accumulated just 36 points and 11 rebounds in his first three games at the Garden that season; this night he dropped a 23/10 double-double on the Celtics. "We take what the other team is giving us," Dawkins said after the game, "and many times I happened to get the ball in a position where I could score or get a rebound. But I worked for that position."

April 20, 1980

Eastern Conference Finals Game 2

Boston 96, Philadelphia 90

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	35	9-17	6-6	5	4	3	24	Maxwell	38	6-9	5-10	15	4	2	17
C. Jones	30	2-5	1-2	10	1	5	5	Bird	46	15-30	1-1	12	2	4	31
Dawkins	40	7-14	2-4	11	3	5	16	Cowens	46	6-14	0-0	6	4	4	12
Hollins	37	3-13	2-2	4	5	0	8	Archibald	42	3-9	5-5	0	8	2	11
Cheeks	35	1-6	0-0	4	3	2	2	Ford	40	5-7	1-2	3	2	5	11
B. Jones	26	6-10	1-2	4	1	3	13	Maravich	12	4-5	0-0	1	1	2	8
Bibby	24	4-11	0-0	2	3	3	10	Carr	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	2	0
Mix	13	6-10	0-0	0	0	2	12	Robey	11	2-4	2-4	1	0	2	6
								Judkins	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0

								Fernsten	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
								Henderson	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		38-86	12-16	46	20	23	90	TOTALS		41-78	14-22	51	21	23	96
Team Rebounds: 6 3-point FG: 2-5 (Dawkins 0-1, Cheeks 0-1, Bibby 2-3). Technical Fouls: Dawkins. Blocks: 7 (Erving, C. Jones, Dawkins 3, B. Jones 2). Steals: 11 (Erving 2, C. Jones 4, Dawkins, Cheeks, B. Jones 3). Turnovers: 16 (Erving 3, C. Jones, Dawkins 3, Hollins 3, Cheeks 3, B. Jones 2, Bibby).								Team Rebounds: 13 3-point FG: 0-1 (Bird 0-1). Blocks: 5 (Maxwell, Bird, Cowens, Robey 2). Steals: 4 (Bird, Cowens 2, Archibald). Turnovers: 21 (Maxwell 3, Bird 8, Cowens 2, Archibald 3, Ford, Maravich 2, Carr 2).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Jack Madden, Lee Jones.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	22	28	14	26	90
Boston Celtics	29	25	20	22	96

The Celtics managed a split of the first two games at home as Larry Bird continued his hot shooting that had begun in the second half of Game 1. Fitch had told Bird to stop passing so much and to shoot more, and the rookie obliged, making 15 of 30 en route to 31 points and 12 rebounds in his first playoff victory. "If you put your hand up in his face, he would just step back and shoot the ball over you," Bobby Jones said later, and Cunningham added that "the thing that makes Bird so dangerous is that he is also such an excellent passer that the minute you put two men on him, he instantly creates something for the open man." Bird had 21 of the Celtics first 47 points as Boston built a fifteen point lead, and if not for an 0 for 7 streak later in the game Bird and the Celtics might have coasted to victory.

But Philadelphia rode the hot hands of Bobby Jones and Steve Mix (18 points combined in the second quarter) to get within four at the half, and tied the game at 62-62 in the third. The Celtics regrouped to close the period on a 12-2 run, and with under four minutes left in fourth were back up by thirteen, 90-77. All that was left was to play out the string, but Rick Robey ensured the game would end on a memorable note by standing in the middle of a 76ers supposedly impromptu huddle during an injury timeout with six seconds remaining on the clock. "I was telling them that the game wasn't over," Robey explained. "They weren't allowed to talk strategy during an injury timeout. Everything mattered."

April 23, 1980

Eastern Conference Finals Game 3

Philadelphia 99, Boston 97

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Maxwell	6	5-7	17	Erving	13	2-3	28
Bird	9	1-2	22	C. Jones	4	0-0	8
Cowens	3	2-2	8	Dawkins	6	2-8	14
Archibald	7	4-7	18	Hollins	8	0-0	16
Ford	4	1-2	10	Cheeks	7	0-0	14
Carr	3	0-2	6	B. Jones	4	1-3	9

Robey	1	0-0	2		Bibby	2	4-5	8
Maravich	5	1-1	12		Mix	1	0-0	2
Henderson	1	0-0	2					
TOTALS	39	14-23	97		TOTALS	45	9-19	99
3-point FG: 5 (Bird 3, Ford 1, Maravich 1).								
Attendance: 18276.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	28	19	19	31	97
Philadelphia 76ers	26	19	33	21	99

On the same day that University of Virginia star center Ralph Sampson turned down the overtures of Red Auerbach and owner Henry Mangurian to turn pro, the Celtics lost a more important contest at the Spectrum. Victimized by twenty-five turnovers, the Celtics still had a chance to tie the game in the final seconds until Maurice Cheeks poked the ball out of M.L. Carr's hands; instead of a potential game-tying layup, there was only disappointment as Boston headed to the locker room. "We were guilty of careless ball-handling," Fitch explained to reporters. "We got back in the game a little on fast breaks, but we had killed ourselves earlier on them. The key to our demise was our ball-handling on the break, because the break is supposed to give you your easy points."

For Philadelphia, the star of the night was Julius Erving, whose 28/11/7 statistics line was only part of the story. "In the first two quarters, I didn't feel right," Erving related after the game. "There was no rhythm on my shots. Nothing. ... [at halftime I] thought it all over. What I decided was to just go out and give it my best shot. Be a little stronger with my shots, stronger with my drives. Play with some reckless abandon and see what happened." Erving began gaining confidence in the third quarter, then in the fourth put on an exhibition of some gravity-defying moves, including a reverse layup past Bird that featured Erving gliding under and behind the backboard, and later, a thunderous flying dunk in which Erving soared over Bird, Cowens *and* Robey. When M.L. Carr tried to slow Erving down with a firm hip check that sent him toward the stands—nearly starting a fight—Erving responded with three straight baskets. Boston trailed 90-76 with 6:09 left but their furious rally fell short when Cheeks forced the Celtics final turnover.

April 25, 1980

Eastern Conference Finals Game 4

Philadelphia 102, Boston 90

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Maxwell	6	6-6	18	Erving	9	11-15	30
Bird	6	7-8	19	C. Jones	2	0-0	4
Cowens	4	2-2	10	Dawkins	7	3-3	17
Archibald	5	4-5	14	Hollins	4	5-6	13
Ford	1	0-0	2	Cheeks	2	5-6	9

Robey	2	0-0	4		B. Jones	6	2-2	14
Carr	6	3-4	15		Bibby	1	4-4	7
Henderson	2	2-2	6		Mix	3	2-2	8
Maravich	1	0-0	2					
TOTALS	33	24-27	90		TOTALS	34	32-38	102
				3-point FG: 2 (Erving 1, Bibby 1).				
Attendance: 18276.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	21	31	22	16	90
Philadelphia 76ers	28	31	27	16	102

After three relatively close games, the 76ers made a statement in Game 4, or more accurately, a defensive statement. Leading virtually from start to finish, Philadelphia was in front by twelve in the second quarter. And the key was defense, particularly on Larry Bird. As Bobby Jones explained: "I tried to deny him the ball and we had some guys popping out on Bird, cutting off the pass. Lionel Hollins would help deny him the ball and Darryl Dawkins was helping on the cuts off the high post. They seemed confused by what we were doing..." Bird was held to 19 points and the Celtics began to avoid driving to the hoop as the 76ers blocked fifteen of their shots.

At the start of the third quarter Boston closed to within 59-56, but Philadelphia then clamped down and went on a 17-5 run that put them ahead to stay. Amazingly, the 76ers then survived a wretched 2 for 23 shooting performance in the fourth quarter, which allowed the Celtics to get back within five with 3:12 remaining. But Philadelphia proceeded to extend their lead to sixteen before Boston got closer in garbage time to make the final margin more respectable. Following the game, a locker room mirror fell on M.L. Carr, producing a fourteen-inch gash in his right shoulder. It was a fitting postscript to a bad three days in Philadelphia for the Celtics.

April 27, 1980

Eastern Conference Finals Game 5

Philadelphia 105, Boston 94

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	37	4-10	6-9	9	4	4	14	Maxwell	41	7-11	3-8	13	4	4	17
C. Jones	37	5-9	2-2	9	2	4	12	Bird	42	5-19	2-2	14	4	5	12
Dawkins	34	5-10	8-11	9	1	3	18	Cowens	41	10-21	2-2	10	0	5	22
Hollins	38	8-14	8-11	4	7	2	24	Archibald	42	8-14	6-7	1	9	3	22
Cheeks	35	3-8	0-2	2	4	2	6	Ford	13	1-2	0-0	0	0	4	2
Bibby	21	1-5	1-3	4	3	3	3	Carr	25	2-7	1-2	2	3	4	6
B. Jones	18	8-10	3-4	5	1	4	19	Maravich	17	2-8	0-0	1	0	4	4
Mix	17	3-7	3-3	4	2	2	9	Henderson	10	2-5	3-5	2	1	1	7
Toone	1	0-2	0-0	1	0	0	0	Robey	7	0-0	0-2	1	1	1	0
Richardson	1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	Fernsten	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0
Spanarkel	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Judkins	1	1-2	0-0	2	0	0	2

TOTALS		37-76	31-45	61	24	24	105	TOTALS		38-89	17-28	54	22	31	94
Team Rebounds: 14 3-point FG: 0-2 (Toone 0-1, Richardson 0-1). Technical Fouls: Bibby. Blocks: 2 (Erving, Dawkins). Steals: 9 (Erving 2, C. Jones, Dawkins, Hollins 2, Cheeks 2, B. Jones). Turnovers: 19 (Erving 6, C. Jones 3, Dawkins, Hollins 4, Cheeks, Bibby, B. Jones 2, Mix).								Team Rebounds: 7 3-point FG: 1-6 (Bird 0-1, Ford 0-1, Carr 1-1, Maravich 0-1, Henderson 0-1, Judkins 0-1). Technical Fouls: Cowens. Blocks: 6 (Maxwell 2, Bird 2, Cowens 2). Steals: 7 (Maxwell 2, Bird 2, Archibald, Carr, Maravich). Turnovers: 18 (Bird 6, Cowens 3, Archibald 7, Maravich, Henderson).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Earl Strom, Wally Rooney.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	30	28	25	22	105
Boston Celtics	28	24	21	21	94

The 76ers ended the Celtics season with a convincing victory at Boston Garden. Larry Bird shot 5 for 19, and, symbolic of the Celtics' shooting woes, missed six layups while also having a defensive rebound slip through his fingers and bounce off the backboard for a 76ers basket. His disgust was evident after the game: "We had the best record in the NBA and they put us away like nothing. We never played one good game, not even the one we won."

Bird's feelings aside, this game was over by late in the third quarter, mainly because the 76ers supporting cast bailed out the unusually quiet Erving. "The Celtics did hold Julius to 14 points," Cunningham said after the game, "but they couldn't stop the other guys. Lionel Hollins, Bobby [Jones], Steve [Mix]. They got the points [52]. But everybody contributed. We've played eight players all year along, and they've all made contributions." Hollins' 24 points were two shy of his season high with the 76ers, and represented the fifth-best playoff performance of his entire career. If Hollins wasn't abusing Carr, then Erving was torching an aging Pete Maravich (who was playing in his final NBA game). A Mix free throw on a Cowens technical foul gave the 76ers a 75-65 lead late in the fourth, and Boston only got within single digits on two brief occasions after that. Philadelphia moved on to the Finals to face the Los Angeles Lakers.

1980-81

November 1, 1980

Philadelphia 117, Boston 113 (ot)

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Maxwell	6	5-7	17	Erving	16	13-17	45
Bird	14	7-8	36	C. Jones	0	0-0	0
Parish	4	1-2	9	Dawkins	8	8-12	24
Archibald	8	3-4	19	Cheeks	0	5-6	5
Ford	4	2-2	10	Collins	4	3-3	11
Robey	2	2-3	6	B. Jones	2	5-10	9

McHale	2	0-0	4		Hollins	3	0-0	6
Henderson	3	0-0	6		Toney	1	2-4	4
Fernsten	1	1-2	3		Mix	4	5-6	13
Kreklow	1	0-0	3					
TOTALS	45	21-28	113		TOTALS	38	41-58	117
3-point FG: 2 (Bird 1, Kreklow 1). Technical Fouls: Fitch.								
Attendance: 13716. Referees: Earl Strom, Bruce Alexander.								

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Boston Celtics	29	27	26	21	10	113
Philadelphia 76ers	29	23	17	34	14	117

The 76ers trailed by thirteen entering the fourth quarter and had lost the services of Maurice Cheeks, who had suffered a sprained ankle early in the second half. But Philadelphia rallied behind Julius Erving's NBA career-high 45 points to win in overtime. The stars of the last sixteen seconds of regulation were Bird (a career-high 21 rebounds), who made a deep two pointer from the right corner to give Boston a 103-101 lead, and Darryl Dawkins, who redirected an errant Doug Collins shot down through the hoop with nine seconds left. Boston's fate may have been sealed in the first half when Philadelphia had a 29-9 advantage in free throw attempts in the first half; plagued by foul trouble the remainder of the night, the Celtics eventually lost the services of Maxwell, Parish, Archibald and McHale with six fouls each. In overtime, Erving scored six straight points to break a 106-106 tie to give the Sixers the lead for good.

January 28, 1981

Boston 104, Philadelphia 101

PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Erving	15	5-7	35		Maxwell	5	8-10	18
C. Jones	3	2-2	8		Bird	11	2-2	24
Dawkins	5	3-3	13		Parish	9	3-4	21
Cheeks	1	0-0	2		Archibald	5	8-8	18
Toney	7	0-2	14		Ford	3	0-0	7
B. Jones	7	0-0	14		Henderson	1	0-0	2
Hollins	3	1-6	7		Robey	0	1-2	1
Richardson	2	0-0	4		Carr	0	0-0	0
Johnson	2	0-0	4		McHale	6	1-1	13
TOTALS	45	11-20	101		TOTALS	40	23-27	104
					3-point FG: 1 (Ford 1).			
Attendance: 15320.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	24	24	29	24	101
Boston Celtics	27	25	29	23	104

On December 7 the Celtics had lost to the Washington Bullets 113-103, in a game played at their home-away-from-home in Hartford, Connecticut. The loss dropped Boston's record to 18-8, four behind Philadelphia in the loss column, and five-and-a-half games back overall. Boston then proceeded to win twelve in a row, a streak that was snapped by a 121-106 loss at Golden State on January 2 which coincided with the only shutout of Larry Bird's career. The Celtics then began a *thirteen* game winning streak two days later in Portland. This game against the 76ers would top off the latter streak and move the Celtics into first place.

Bird scored 24 points despite having to head to the locker room late in the first quarter after being accidentally kneed in the left thigh by Dawkins; he would return with 7:42 remaining in the half despite numbness in that leg. Archibald added 10 assists and rookie Kevin McHale scored seven points and blocked two shots (including one by Erving) early in the fourth to help the Celtics extend their lead to 90-83. Bobby Jones figured prominently in the final seconds, hitting a bank shot with sixteen seconds left to bring the 76ers within one, and then fouling Parish, whose two free throws provided the final margin of victory. Erving praised the Celtics draft day addition after the game, saying that "[t]he big guy in the middle makes them complete. He takes the game right to our big guy and we've got to respond in kind... Parish gives Boston the inside thrust they didn't have last year, and Darryl will have to take it to him inside like he did to us." Steve Mix, who had scored 13 points to help Philadelphia win their previous meeting with Boston, missed the game with a sprained ankle.

February 4, 1981

Philadelphia 107, Boston 104

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Maxwell	7	3-3	17	Erving	14	5-6	33
Bird	4	3-3	11	C. Jones	3	9-11	15
Parish	3	3-6	9	Dawkins	2	2-2	6
Archibald	5	12-16	22	Cheeks	6	2-2	14
Ford	0	0-0	0	Toney	4	4-6	12
Robey	3	4-10	10	Hollins	3	3-4	9
McHale	7	2-3	16	B. Jones	0	2-3	2
Henderson	7	2-6	16	Johnson	5	6-7	16
Carr	0	0-0	0	Richardson	0	0-0	0
Duerod	1	0-0	3	Mix	0	0-0	0
TOTALS	37	29-47	104	TOTALS	37	33-41	107
3-point FG: 1 (Duerod 1). Technical Fouls: Archibald, Robey.				Technical Fouls: Cunningham.			

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	20	31	27	26	104
Philadelphia 76ers	27	29	30	21	107

Boston's euphoria lasted less than 24 hours. The Celtics had not yet lost two games in a row all season, but were smoked in Chicago on January 29, 108-85, then waited five days to play

in Philadelphia. In a game that Bob Ryan of the *Boston Globe* described as a “mess,” Boston shot 5 for 21 in the first quarter, and Bird scored just 11 (with 12 rebounds) as his left leg was still troubling him. Caldwell Jones contributed 15 points and 20 rebounds while playing the entire forty-eight minutes due to his teammates’ foul troubles in a tightly officiated game which also led to Parish and McHale fouling out in relatively few minutes (21 and 22, respectively). “In the four years I’ve been coaching here, this was the toughest game I’ve ever had to coach with regard to foul trouble,” said Cunningham after the game. McHale’s dismissal was particularly impactful, since his 16 points off the bench were critical to keeping the game close. The plethora of fouls also led to some anomalies in the box score; Archibald led the Celtics in scoring for just the third time that season, and Ollie Johnson added 16, ending an excellent stretch of basketball for the nine-year veteran. Johnson would score in double-digits just two more times in his career.

The Celtics then lost in Milwaukee the next night to complete an 0-3 road trip, but would not lose back-to-back games again in the regular season.

March 1, 1981

Boston 114, Philadelphia 107

PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Erving	6	7-8	19		Maxwell	4	2-5	10
C. Jones	2	2-2	6		Bird	10	4-7	24
Dawkins	10	6-6	26		Parish	9	7-8	25
Cheeks	6	1-1	14		Archibald	4	8-11	16
Toney	4	5-8	13		Ford	4	4-5	14
Hollins	4	0-0	8		Robey	5	1-3	11
Mix	2	3-5	7		McHale	2	4-6	8
B. Jones	5	4-4	14		Carr	2	0-0	4
Johnson	0	0-0	0		Henderson	0	2-2	2
Richardson	0	0-0	0					
TOTALS	39	28-34	107		TOTALS	40	32-47	114
3-point FG: 1 (Cheeks 1). Technical Fouls: Philadelphia illegal defense.					3-point FG: 2 (Ford 2). Technical Fouls: Fitch 2, Boston assistant Rodgers 2, Boston illegal defense.			
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Jack Madden, Wally Rooney.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	29	25	29	24	107
Boston Celtics	33	29	24	28	114

As Boston and Philadelphia continued to battle for first place, they both looked forward to meeting three times in 29 days in March, including the final two Sundays of the regular season. The opening act in Boston featured the nearly simultaneous ejections of both Bill Fitch and assistant Jimmy Rodgers by referee Jack Madden for arguing illegal defense calls, and a rousing comeback by the 76ers that fell short. Philadelphia trailed by 14 in the third

quarter but a quick 6-0 run in fifty-three seconds in the fourth tied the game at 103-103 with three minutes left. But Parish drew a foul while driving on the left baseline, and after sinking both free throws, he deflected a Julius Erving bounce pass, which Tiny Archibald turned into a three-point play at the other end to give Boston a 108-103 lead that they never relinquished.

Dawkins led Philadelphia with 26 points, and the 76ers needed those points as Erving was held to 19, his fewest points in a regular season game against the Celtics in two years (he scored just 12 and 14 in back-to-back games against Boston in March 1979). "Max and I decided that if he [Erving] was going to beat us," McHale told reporters afterwards, "it would have to be from the outside. We did the same thing last time and he still killed us, but it makes no difference. You've got a better chance when he's shooting outside than when he's got his elbow over the rim on a house call."

March 22, 1981

Philadelphia 126, Boston 94

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Maxwell	5	3-4	13		Erving	11	2-2	24
Bird	8	3-4	19		C. Jones	3	2-3	8
Parish	6	3-4	15		Hollins	3	4-4	10
Archibald	5	5-6	15		Cheeks	7	4-4	18
Ford	0	0-0	0		Dawkins	8	1-1	17
Robey	5	1-1	11		B. Jones	4	7-7	15
Carr	2	2-2	6		Toney	5	2-2	12
McHale	5	1-1	11		Mix	5	4-5	14
Henderson	1	0-2	2		Richardson	0	0-0	0
Duerod	0	0-0	0		Cureton	3	2-2	8
Fernsten	1	0-0	2		Johnson	0	0-0	0
TOTALS	38	18-24	94		TOTALS	49	28-30	126
Technical Fouls: Robey.								
Attendance: 18276.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	21	20	34	19	94
Philadelphia 76ers	35	25	38	28	126

The 76ers entered the contest a half-game behind the Celtics in the standings and tied in the season series 2-2. The home team had won each of those four games, and with the two teams slated to meet again in Boston Garden to end the season, this was a must-win for Philadelphia. A 19-4 run gave the 76ers an early 31-15 lead, and Boston got no closer than nine points the rest of the way. Trailing 88-79 with 10:40 remaining in the game, the Celtics promptly surrendered six straight points, and the ballgame.

Maurice Cheeks drew the most positive postgame reviews. His baskets had been timely, preventing the Celtics from making any significant runs, and he made his last seven shots of the afternoon. "Cheeks is a good penetrator and a good passer [9 assists]," said Bird. "He can

also shoot very well, and he doesn't take bad shots. He really got off to a good start, and that hurt us."

March 29, 1981

Boston 98, Philadelphia 94

PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Erving	9	1-1	19		Maxwell	6	0-0	12
C. Jones	3	2-4	8		Bird	11	2-2	24
Dawkins	2	3-4	7		Parish	8	8-9	24
Cheeks	3	0-0	7		Archibald	4	5-8	13
Hollins	2	0-2	4		Ford	7	0-0	16
B. Jones	3	6-9	12		McHale	1	1-4	3
Toney	13	8-9	35		Robey	0	0-0	0
Mix	0	0-0	0		Carr	2	2-2	6
Richardson	1	0-0	2		Henderson	0	0-0	0
TOTALS	36	20-29	94		TOTALS	39	18-25	98
3-point FG: 2 (Cheeks 1, Toney 1).					3-point FG: 2 (Ford 2).			
Attendance: 15320.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	23	20	16	35	94
Boston Celtics	29	25	25	19	98

In the final week of the season, the 76ers rolled past the Pistons and Cavaliers by a total of sixty points, while the Celtics narrowly defeated the Knicks and Nets before losing to the same Pistons by twenty-five at the Garden. As a result, the 76ers had a one game lead, but the winner of this game would take the Atlantic Division title; a Celtics victory would tie the season series, and Boston would claim a better record within the division (19-5 vs 15-9) and get a first-round bye in the playoffs as a reward.

The meeting the week before clearly factored into preparations. "We did spend some time this week going over the loss Sunday in Philadelphia," Fitch said afterwards. "It was embarrassing but it taught us a few things. For one thing, yesterday we knew how to prepare for Darryl Dawkins. We didn't know he was going to be there until the last minute last Sunday [due to an injury]. There are some things we thought we could do against him. There were some things we felt we could do against Maurice Cheeks and their guards who were penetrating from the wings and down the middle." The strategy changes worked, as Dawkins and Cheeks scored just seven points each. Cheeks sensed trouble from the start: "You knew right away that it was going to be tough. Darryl had a lot of success inside against Parish in last week's game because he was pinning the Celtic centers to the base line. The middle was wide open each time we drove. This time, Parish was fronting him, and getting help on the inside from Maxwell and then McHale. Every time I went inside there was somebody there."

Bird led the Celtics with 24 points, 10 rebounds, 7 assists and 6 steals, but the player of the game was 76ers rookie guard Andrew Toney, who shot an eye-popping 13 for 19 in 33 remarkably productive minutes, and scored 15 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter. In that stanza, the 76ers rallied from a twenty-two point deficit early in the quarter and a fourteen point disadvantage with 2:58 remaining, closing to within 96-91 with thirty-seven seconds left before Tiny Archibald hit two free throws to ice the game.

April 21, 1981

1981 Eastern Conference Finals Game 1

Philadelphia 105, Boston 104

PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Erving	8	9-9	25		Maxwell	4	2-3	10
C. Jones	3	2-4	8		Bird	14	5-5	33
Dawkins	5	0-0	10		Parish	8	1-4	17
Hollins	5	0-0	10		Archibald	8	4-6	20
Cheeks	4	0-0	8		Ford	3	2-4	8
B. Jones	7	3-5	17		McHale	3	0-2	6
Toney	8	9-10	26		Robey	0	0-0	0
Mix	0	0-0	0		Carr	1	3-4	5
Richardson	0	1-2	1		Henderson	2	1-2	5
TOTALS	40	24-30	105		TOTALS	43	18-30	104
3-point FG: 1 (Toney 1).								
Attendance: 15320.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	24	31	22	28	105
Boston Celtics	32	22	25	25	104

On paper Boston had the home-court advantage and a significant rest advantage; the Celtics had been off for nine days after sweeping the Bulls, while the 76ers had a quick 48-hour turnaround after finishing off the Bucks in seven games. The Celtics got off to a quick start, powered by a 7 for 10 start by Larry Bird, and led by eight after the first quarter. But Philadelphia's defense then woke up, and when Caldwell Jones hit a jump hook with just under three minutes left in the second quarter, the 76ers had their first lead at 49-48. The third quarter was a series of runs: Philadelphia took a six point lead, but then Boston sprinted to an 18-7 run and threatened to put the game away.

However, Andrew Toney, who had played just two minutes in the finale against the Bucks, erupted in the fourth quarter, scoring eleven points as the 76ers pulled ahead 100-91 with 3:35 to play. "We needed somebody to pull us up," Bobby Jones said afterward, "sort of snap us out of our situation and he was the guy to do it." The Celtics then ripped off an 11-1 run to move back in front—but Henderson missed a second free throw that could have made it 12-1—and after an exchange of free throws, Toney's two foul shots with two seconds left sealed

it for the 76ers. After the game, Fitch was simmering but already looking ahead to Game 2 the next night. "We looked a half-step slow," Fitch said. "I'm not happy with the play of two or three guys tonight." Philadelphia saved its praise for their rookie guard. "The man is fearless," said Lionel Hollins. "I mean, if he has it going, there is absolutely no man in this league that he is afraid to go after... Toney is fearless." For the second straight year, the Celtics had yielded the home-court advantage to the 76ers by dropping the series opener.

April 22, 1981

1981 Eastern Conference Finals Game 2

Boston 118, Philadelphia 99

PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Erving	5	2-3	12		Maxwell	6	2-2	14
C. Jones	2	0-0	4		Bird	14	6-7	34
Dawkins	4	0-0	8		Parish	8	1-2	17
Hollins	5	1-1	11		Archibald	5	9-9	19
Cheeks	1	1-2	3		Ford	1	0-0	2
B. Jones	5	0-0	10		McHale	10	0-0	20
Toney	11	13-14	35		Robey	1	0-0	2
Mix	2	0-0	4		Carr	2	0-0	4
Richardson	4	0-0	8		Henderson	3	0-0	6
Cureton	1	0-2	2		Fernsten	0	0-0	0
Johnson	1	0-0	2		Duerod	0	0-0	0
TOTALS	41	17-22	99		TOTALS	50	18-20	118
Technical Fouls: Mix, Cunningham, Philadelphia illegal defense.								
Attendance: 15320.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	22	25	26	26	99
Boston Celtics	30	36	25	27	118

To accommodate CBS, who wanted Game 4 played on a Sunday afternoon so it could be broadcast live, the first two games of the series were played on back-to-back nights, a fact that sparked a score of complaints from both sides before the series had even started. The Celtics grabbed an early 8-0 lead, then scored fourteen in a row in the second quarter to break open a 45-41 game. "We talked a lot about the second quarter before the game," Fitch told reporters afterwards, referring to his team's struggles in Game 1. "They were going to be under the microscope a little more. This time they came through..."

Bird played the entire first half without a break, scoring 23 points while shooting 10 for 12 and contributing off the boards and in the passing game (16 rebounds and 5 assists overall for the night). "I played as hard as I could and worked as hard as I have all year," Bird said later. "I knew that there would be a lot of pressure on the team because this was a game that

we had to win. But the thing I said to myself is that I wasn't going to think about any of that pressure. All I was going to do was go out and play my game."

In the second half the 76ers never got closer than 14 points, the last time at 93-79 when Toney, whose 35 points were nearly triple his nearest teammates' production, hit yet another jumper. But Boston struck back with an 8-0 run that included a pair of twenty foot jumpers by Bird, and both sides started looking forward to Game 3. Fitch was even able to rest his starters—all but Bird played fewer than thirty minutes—as reserves such as Kevin McHale (14/5 in the fourth quarter alone) outplayed the 76ers bench.

April 24, 1981

1981 Eastern Conference Finals Game 3

Philadelphia 110, Boston 100

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Maxwell	3	7-7	13		Erving	9	4-4	22
Bird	8	6-7	22		C. Jones	4	1-4	9
Parish	1	4-4	6		Dawkins	4	7-9	15
Archibald	8	5-8	21		Hollins	6	4-4	16
Ford	3	2-4	8		Cheeks	2	2-3	6
Robey	1	2-5	4		B. Jones	6	4-4	16
Carr	1	3-3	5		Toney	6	7-8	19
McHale	6	3-4	15		Mix	1	5-6	7
Henderson	3	0-0	6		Richardson	0	0-0	0
Duerod	0	0-0	0		Johnson	0	0-0	0
Fernsten	0	0-0	0		Cureton	0	0-0	0
TOTALS	34	32-42	100		TOTALS	38	34-42	110
Attendance: 18276.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	20	27	26	27	100
Philadelphia 76ers	31	31	27	21	110

The Celtics had not won in the Spectrum since January 1979, and the 76ers ended any suspense early. A 13-1 run gave the hosts a 21-10 lead and it was off to the races from there, as the Philadelphia defense took control and held the Celtics to a .378 field goal percentage for the game. The 76ers performance drew a rueful review from Fitch after the game: "They played it the way a home team should in the playoffs." Only a 19-8 run by Boston in the fourth, which reduced a nineteen point deficit to six with four minutes left, made the final margin respectable, which Philadelphia ensured would be in their favor by promptly scoring six quick points to restore order.

Cunningham's adjustments included giving Erving the primary defensive assignment on Bird, after Caldwell Jones had been torched in the games in Boston. After the game Erving claimed that the move took the Celtics by surprise, but Fitch dismissed that suggestion, stating that Cunningham did the same thing in Game 3 a year earlier. Bird also downplayed

the switch, claiming that “I never worry about who is guarding me, I just go out and play basketball. To tell you the truth, when Julius overplays me, it gives me more options. ... Give Philadelphia credit for going out and playing good team defense. It wasn’t just Erving.” But the real truth was that Erving successfully denied Bird the ball on dozens of trips on the floor, which contributed mightily to the 76ers defensive revival.

April 26, 1981

1981 Eastern Conference Finals Game 4

Philadelphia 107, Boston 105

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Maxwell	8	4-4	20		Erving	8	4-6	20
Bird	7	4-5	18		C. Jones	6	1-2	13
Parish	5	0-2	10		Dawkins	4	6-8	14
Archibald	7	4-5	18		Cheeks	3	2-4	8
Ford	8	0-0	16		Toney	5	7-9	17
Robey	4	1-3	9		B. Jones	5	8-9	18
McHale	2	0-0	4		Hollins	5	1-1	11
Carr	5	0-0	10		Mix	3	0-0	6
TOTALS	46	13-19	105		TOTALS	39	29-39	107
Technical Fouls: Fitch.								
Attendance: 18276.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	27	21	31	26	105
Philadelphia 76ers	34	31	17	25	107

The calendar said 1981 but it sure felt like 1980 all over again. “If they (Boston) don’t win on Sunday, I’d say they’re in trouble,” Cunningham said the day before the game. “I don’t see how they could expect to defeat us three straight times.” The first half again belonged to Philadelphia, who outshot Boston 58 to 41 percent en route to a commanding seventeen point halftime advantage. “Give Philadelphia credit for the first half,” Fitch lamented in the locker room. “They were doing a good job of trapping and overplaying. We weren’t making that one extra pass to the open man. We forced some shots, and when we missed they took off on some fast breaks.”

Boston regrouped in the third, cutting the deficit to 78-77 with 1:30 left, and the fourth quarter remained tight throughout. With seven seconds remaining, and the 76ers clinging to a 107-105 lead, Bobby Jones missed a jumper, then Maxwell grabbed the rebound and handed off the ball to Archibald. Fitch wanted a timeout, but Archibald streaked up the court instead. “I should have stopped and called time out,” Archibald said after the game, “I just didn’t know how much time was left.” Archibald saw Bird driving to the basket, but Jones anticipated the play, and intercepted Archibald’s pass with two seconds remaining to clinch the game for the

Sixers. "I was open for a second," Bird said later. "But it was a long pass, and Bobby had time to get back while it was in the air."

After the game, Cunningham wisely backed off his comments from Saturday. "People were saying at halftime that the series is over if we go 3-1. Well, nobody knows better than I that 3-1 is not insurmountable. I sat on the bench here one year [1968 vs. the Celtics] with a broken hand and saw it all turn around with us leading 3-1."

April 29, 1981

1981 Eastern Conference Finals Game 5

Boston 111, Philadelphia 109

PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Erving	9	3-4	21		Maxwell	4	8-8	16
C. Jones	0	0-0	0		Bird	11	10-10	32
Dawkins	6	9-10	21		Parish	4	2-2	10
Hollins	11	1-1	23		Archibald	8	7-7	23
Cheeks	0	0-0	0		Ford	5	1-2	11
B. Jones	3	11-14	17		McHale	5	2-3	12
Toney	6	8-8	20		Robey	0	0-0	0
Mix	0	0-0	0		Carr	1	5-7	7
Richardson	3	1-2	7		Henderson	0	0-0	0
TOTALS	38	33-39	109		TOTALS	38	35-39	111
Attendance: 15320.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	22	37	26	24	109
Boston Celtics	24	25	35	27	111

Boston sent the series back to Philadelphia by scoring the final eight points of the game to erase a six point deficit in a hectic two minutes. The rally was fueled by a pair of blocks by Parish, on Celtics villain and Sixers hero Andrew Toney no less, along with two rebounds and three free throws by Carr to close out the game. Bobby Jones, the hero of the final seconds of the previous game, had a final minute to forget: he fumbled away a sure layup, then failed to handle a low pass from Erving, and missed a potential game go-ahead jumper at 110-109. He capped off his evening with an errant inbounds pass with one second left that was intercepted by Parish.

The second quarter belonged to the 76ers again, despite losing Maurice Cheeks early in the period to a severe migraine headache, as Clint Richardson scored seven points and helped Philadelphia build a ten point lead. Boston climbed back in the third, but the 76ers still led 83-82 and remained in front until Carr's clutch free throws.

May 1, 1981

*1981 Eastern Conference Finals Game 6***Boston 100, Philadelphia 98**

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Maxwell	5	7-8	17	Erving	5	6-7	16
Bird	10	5-6	25	C. Jones	3	0-0	6
Parish	5	11-15	21	Dawkins	9	6-7	24
Archibald	7	5-6	19	Hollins	2	3-5	7
Ford	1	0-0	2	Cheeks	3	0-0	6
Robey	0	1-3	1	Toney	4	1-2	9
McHale	2	1-1	5	B. Jones	5	3-3	13
Carr	3	0-0	6	Mix	3	3-3	9
Henderson	1	2-2	4	Richardson	4	0-0	8
TOTALS	34	32-41	100	TOTALS	38	22-27	98

Attendance: 18276. Referees: Jack Madden, Paul Mihalak.

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	18	24	28	30	100
Philadelphia 76ers	31	20	22	25	98

After the first quarter, with the 76ers leading by 13 and the Celtics reeling, it looked like Philadelphia's home winning streak against Boston was secure, especially as their lead swelled to seventeen at 37-20 in the second. But then the Celtics assembled an 18-6 run that temporarily saved their season. The Sixers extended their halftime lead to fifteen early in the third, courtesy of six points from Dawkins, but then Larry Bird heated up, overcoming a 2 for 10 first half to score 11 in the third; he would finish with 25 points and a game-high 16 rebounds. Boston was within three, 73-70, as the period ended.

Meanwhile, Julius Erving was expending so much energy against Bird on defense that his own shooting touch left him, missing 12 of 17 shots. Cheeks returned to play 20 minutes in spite of continued headaches, but Parish was the star supporting actor, shaking off back trouble to score 21 with 10 big rebounds. When Parish fouled out with 1:44 left and the Celtics leading by one, McHale replaced him. He denied Dawkins on a layup, and then, after Bird and Toney exchanged long jumpers, McHale blocked a shot by Hollins—and grabbed possession of the ball—with two seconds left to clinch the victory.

Philadelphia fans who did not make the trip to the Spectrum were forced to watch the game on tape delay; local CBS affiliate WCAU preferred to broadcast "Dallas" and the rest of the network's regular Friday night lineup, a decision that CBS regularly left in the hands of local affiliates in the early 1980's.

May 3, 1981

*1981 Eastern Conference Finals Game 7***Boston 91, Philadelphia 90**

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	37	11-21	1-2	8	5	5	23	Maxwell	39	9-12	1-5	6	2	1	19
C. Jones	47	6-7	0-0	15	2	1	12	Bird	43	8-17	6-7	11	5	1	23
Dawkins	27	7-12	2-3	4	0	5	16	Parish	30	7-17	2-2	8	0	5	16
Hollins	33	1-9	0-0	3	5	3	2	Archibald	38	3-14	7-11	1	7	1	13
Cheeks	42	3-8	6-7	5	7	4	12	Ford	27	3-10	1-2	4	3	2	7
B. Jones	25	5-10	3-3	6	2	5	13	Robey	14	1-5	2-4	7	1	1	4
Toney	21	4-9	0-0	1	2	3	8	Carr	17	1-6	0-0	3	2	2	2
Mix	8	2-4	0-0	3	0	1	4	McHale	15	0-4	1-2	2	2	3	1
								Henderson	10	2-4	2-2	4	1	1	6
								Fernsten	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
TOTALS		39-80	12-15	45	23	27	90	TOTALS		34-89	22-35	46	23	18	91
Blocks: 9 (Erving 4, C. Jones 5). Steals: 7 (Erving, Hollins 2, Cheeks 3, Toney). Turnovers: 22 (Erving 6, C. Jones 3, Dawkins 3, Hollins 4, Cheeks 3, B. Jones 2, Toney).								3-point FG: 1-2 (Bird 1-1, Ford 0-1). Technical Fouls: Bird. Blocks: 7 (Maxwell, Bird 2, Parish 3, Ford). Steals: 14 (Maxwell 2, Bird 5, Parish 2, Archibald, Ford 2, Carr, Henderson). Turnovers: 13 (Maxwell 3, Bird, Parish 5, Archibald 2, Ford, Henderson).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Jake O'Donnell.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	31	22	22	15	90
Boston Celtics	26	22	23	20	91

For Celtics fans, this game ranks as one of the best non-Finals playoff games in team history, but no one who watched it, on either side, could claim that it was not an “instant classic,” the culmination of a comeback from a 3-1 series deficit which featured Boston rallies from double-digit deficits in each of the three closing games. Add in the fact that the Celtics won the three games by a total of five points and it had been a memorable five days indeed.

The game got off to a very fast pace in the opening six minutes, but the tempo slowed down after that. There were no offensive superstars in this game, but plenty of solid performances, as nine players finished in double-digits in the face of outstanding defense on both sides. Fitch singled out Maxwell after the game, saying “if I had to give out a game ball today, it would go to Maxwell for his job on The Doctor. Someone had to be the defensive expert and nobody is going to stop Julius completely. But Maxwell did a great job in containing him, thanks to a little help from his teammates.” Still, with the Sixers leading 69-58 in the third, the Garden crowd was restless, but the Celtics began to energize them with a 13-2 run to close the quarter.

And it took just over a minute in the fourth period for them to be brought to their feet again, cheering cheers that grew louder as Parish made two baskets to tie the game at 75-75, followed by a Tiny Archibald jumper to give the Celtics their largest lead of the game. Carr then beat the 24-second clock from just inside the three point line, and Boston led by four. Then came two of the most memorable stretches of defensive basketball ever seen.

First up were the Sixers, who held the Celtics without a basket for nearly seven minutes during a 14-3 run (including ten points from a resurgent Julius Erving) that produced an 89-

82 Philadelphia lead and a much quieter Garden crowd. But then the game turned 180 degrees. The Celtics began double-teaming Erving on every trip down the floor, and the 76ers offense collapsed while the officials permitted the physical play to continue. "I understand that in a playoff game like this one," said Cunningham afterwards, smoldering over a 27-18 foul disadvantage, "that you have to let the players play. And what we were trying to do is go inside with the ball to get some fouls. Then I see bodies flying all over the place and no calls. I don't understand ..." After Maxwell made one of three free throws (the "three-to-make-two" rule was still in effect until the end of this season), Philadelphia turned the ball over on three of four consecutive possessions, each resulting in two points for Boston, and ultimately, an 89-89 tie with 2:45 remaining. The last two points were free throws by Bird, who had been held without a basket up to that point in the quarter. Following an exchange of missed shots, Bird grabbed the rebound off a wild shot by Dawkins and proceeded to dribble nearly the length of the court before pulling up for a leaning jumper that banked in off the glass with 1:03 remaining to give Boston a 91-89 lead.

On the 76ers subsequent possession, Carr picked off an ill-advised cross-court pass by Erving with forty-seven seconds left, but Hollins kept Philadelphia alive by stealing the ball back. Then Cheeks ran into Carr and was awarded two free throws, giving the 76ers a chance to tie. But Cheeks missed the first free throw, made the second, and it was 91-90 with twenty-nine seconds remaining. Boston then worked the 24-second clock; Carr missed a jumper just before it expired, and Parish lost the rebound to Bobby Jones during a scramble for the ball. Jones called timeout with one second left, but his subsequent attempt to lob an inbounds pass towards the hoop sailed uselessly off the top of the backboard, sending Celtics fans rushing onto the court in delirium.



Lineup Analysis

Researching the 80s Era involves watching a lot of old games, either in full or in part. To get some insight into the actual matchups on the floor and the substitution patterns employed by the coaches, information which is difficult to obtain elsewhere, I began to chart the lineups of both teams as a game progressed. This is more challenging than it sounds, for a variety of reasons. I decided early on that trying to list every defensive switch or attempting to illustrate how each individual fast break was defended would be a tedious task, if not impossible due to the lack of multiple camera angles. It would also not be very enlightening; for example, defensive coverage on a fast break is likely to be determined by happenstance rather than design. I wanted to see how the teams lined up in the majority of the trips down the floor, and provide a breakdown of how the score changed while a particular group was on the floor. But

during the 1980's, especially the first few years, television broadcasts did not consistently show the time remaining on the screen; in the charts that follow, any "Time left" figure that is shown in *italics* is approximate, based on my unofficial counting of the time in between the substitution and when the clock was next shown (or previously shown) on the screen. (Larry Bird once related that he did something similar during games at the Boston Garden when the shot clocks on the floor were inevitably blocked from his view.)

First Quarter Game 7 1981 Eastern Conference Finals

Celtics ball	C. Jones	Erving	Erving	C. Jones
	Erving	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones
	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins
	Cheeks	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins
	Hollins	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Boston	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell
	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird
	Parish	Parish	Robey	Robey
	Ford	Ford	Ford	Ford
	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald
76ers ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	B. Jones
	C. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	C. Jones
	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins
	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Time left	12:00	4:15	2:09	0:19
Score	0-0	17-13	25-19	31-24

The center row shows the Celtics lineup as the quarter progressed. The top row, labeled "Celtics ball" shows how the 76ers matched up against the Celtics while Boston had possession. Conversely, the bottom row, labeled "76ers ball" shows how the Celtics matched up against the 76ers when the 76ers had the ball. For example, at the start of this game, Cedric Maxwell was guarding Julius Erving, but Erving was responsible for defending Larry Bird.

A few other explanations:

1. "Time left" and "Score" reflects the time remaining in the quarter, and the score, when this particular combination of players *began* playing on the floor. The score is color coded to match the team that is holding the lead. No color coding is used for ties.
2. A name listed in **bold** has just entered the game; this highlighting is omitted at the start of the first quarter but is used at the beginning of subsequent periods.
3. If a substitution is made while a player is shooting free throws, any made attempts are counted in the score listed in the chart.
4. If no lineup is listed for a particular sequence, it means that that team never had possession of the ball during that period of time.

Bobby Jones picked up Bird once he entered the game at the 4:15 mark. This was a departure from earlier games when Erving had continued to guard the Celtics superstar. The backcourt matchups varied as Hollins and Cheeks would alternate guarding Archibald.

Second Quarter Game 7 1981 Eastern Conference Finals

Celtics ball		C.Jones	Mix	Erving	Erving	Erving	B. Jones	
		B. Jones	B. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	Erving	
		Mix	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones	
		Hollins	Toney	Toney	Toney	Hollins	Hollins	
		Toney	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	
Boston	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Bird	Bird	Bird	Maxwell	Maxwell
	Bird	Bird	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale	Bird	Fernsten
	Robey	Robey	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish
	Carr	Carr	Carr	Carr	Ford	Ford	Ford	Ford
	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson
76ers ball	Erving	B. Jones	B. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	Erving	Erving
	B. Jones	Mix	Mix	Erving	Erving	Erving	B.Jones	B. Jones
	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins
	Hollins	Hollins	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Time left	12:00	11:30	9:12	6:41	5:15	3:00	1:03	0:10
Score	31-26	31-26	37-30	41-34	46-35	47-40	51-44	53-48

Both teams began substituting more freely in the second quarter. Dawkins picked up an offensive foul on the 76ers first possession, his second foul of the game, and was immediately pulled by Cunningham. The Celtics kept at least two of their frontcourt starters on the floor, with Bird generally guarding the worst 76ers offensive big man, which left McHale on Erving for five minutes. At the end of the quarter the Celtics had a foul to give, so the little-used Eric Fernsten was inserted and promptly fouled Julius Erving with two seconds left; the 76ers did not score off the subsequent inbounds play.

Third Quarter Game 7 1981 Eastern Conference Finals

Celtics ball	C. Jones	C. Jones	B. Jones	C. Jones	Erving	C. Jones	B. Jones
	Erving	Erving	Erving	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	Mix
	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones	Dawkins	C. Jones	Mix	C. Jones
	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Hollins	Hollins	Cheeks
Boston	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Bird
	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	McHale
	Parish	Robey	Robey	Robey	Robey	Robey	Robey
	Ford	Ford	Ford	Ford	Ford	Ford	Carr
	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Henderson
76ers ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	B. Jones	Erving	B. Jones	Mix
	C. Jones	C. Jones	B. Jones	C. Jones	B. Jones	Mix	B. Jones
	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Hollins	Hollins	Cheeks
Time left	12:00	8:00	7:31	5:58	4:40	3:18	1:45
Score	53-48	61-54	63-56	69-62	69-66	71-68	73-68

Foul trouble began to be a factor in the third. The departures of Parish, Dawkins and Erving all coincided with the acquisition of their fourth foul. Fitch chose to stick with Rick Robey at center, whose defense on Dawkins and Caldwell Jones was sufficient to keep the Celtics in the game. McHale did not return until the final two minutes, while the rest of the Boston starters, outside of Parish, played nearly the entire quarter together on the floor. Carr replaced Ford

to provide more defense, and the latter would not return to the game. Cunningham relied heavily on his bench, mixing in Andrew Toney, Bobby Jones and Steve Mix.

Fourth Quarter Game 7 1981 Eastern Conference Finals (Part one)

Celtics ball	B. Jones	B. Jones	Erving	Erving	B. Jones	B. Jones
	Mix	C. Jones	C. Jones	B. Jones	Erving	Erving
	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Boston	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	Maxwell	Maxwell
	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale	Bird	Bird
	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	McHale	McHale
	Carr	Carr	Carr	Carr	Carr	Carr
	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Archibald	Henderson
76ers ball	Mix	C. Jones	C. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones
	B. Jones	B. Jones	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving
	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Time left	12:00	11:00	10:45	9:20	8:50	8:16
Score	75-71	75-75	77-75	79-77	80-79	81-80

Parish's two baskets tied the game for the first time since 13-13, then Boston briefly moved in front. When Parish picked up his fifth foul, Fitch left McHale in the game instead of bringing in Robey as he had earlier. Bird began to guard Erving, and McHale had a slightly easier matchup after Dawkins was whistled for his fifth foul and departed for Caldwell Jones.

Fourth Quarter Game 7 1981 Eastern Conference Finals (Part two)

Celtics ball	Erving	B. Jones	Erving	B. Jones	Erving
	B. Jones	Erving	C. Jones	Erving	B. Jones
	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins
	Toney	Hollins	Hollins	Cheeks	Cheeks
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Hollins	Hollins

76ers ball

1981-82

Boston 111, Philadelphia 103

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	27	23	26	27	103
Boston Celtics	31	32	19	29	111

The Celtics and 76ers squared off for the first time this season with the division lead in the balance. With M. L. Carr out injured—he would not play his first game until the day after Christmas—Bill Fitch was occasionally using Larry Bird in the backcourt, including eight minutes in the fourth quarter of this game, with Kevin McHale joining Maxwell and Parish up front. It provided matchup problems in both directions, which was particularly apparent tonight as Andrew Toney scored 24 points in 26 minutes, partly at the expense of Bird. Early on, the Celtics rode Chris Ford's hot outside shooting (including 3 for 3 from three-point range) and by the opening moments of the third quarter they led by fifteen, 65-50.

Then the Sixers responded with a 10-0 run in the next two minutes, and kept the pressure on through the end of the period. With 5:42 left in the game Philadelphia had cut their deficit to 94-93 but could never pull ahead. Boston scored the next eight points, including six by McHale, to effectively settle the outcome. The 76ers were short-handed inside as Darryl Dawkins was still recovering from a hyperextended right knee that had kept him on the bench for two games.

During an appearance on the local television broadcast in Philadelphia, 76ers owner Harold Katz admitted that assistant coach Chuck Daly would be leaving the team to become the head coach of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

December 19, 1981

Philadelphia 123, Boston 118 (ot)

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	36	4-8	1-2	7	1	6	9	Erving	46	15-25	6-9	13	3	4	36
Bird	45	12-24	4-4	15	5	5	28	B. Jones	36	5-12	3-3	2	3	4	13
Parish	44	8-15	4-4	11	3	4	20	Dawkins	38	3-10	6-8	11	3	5	12
Archibald	41	5-14	5-8	1	11	5	15	Hollins	33	5-10	1-4	0	4	5	11
Ford	24	4-8	2-4	3	2	2	10	Cheeks	36	5-8	2-2	4	9	4	12
Henderson	31	5-9	6-8	5	2	5	16	Toney	29	14-24	2-2	5	3	5	30
McHale	24	5-8	1-1	2	0	3	11	C. Jones	33	2-3	1-2	10	1	3	5
Robey	9	3-6	1-1	2	0	1	7	Mix	6	2-2	0-0	4	1	0	4
Ainge	9	1-4	0-0	0	3	1	2	Richardson	8	0-2	0-0	1	2	0	0
Bradley	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0								
Duerod	1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0								
TOTALS		47-97	24-32	46	27	32	118	TOTALS		51-96	21-30	50	29	30	123
3-point FG: 0-4 (Bird 0-2, Ford 0-1, Duerod 0-1). Blocks: 10 (Maxwell, Bird, Parish 7, Ford).								Blocks: 14 (Erving 2, B. Jones 4, Dawkins 3, Cheeks, C. Jones 4).							
Attendance: 18364. Referees: John Vanak, Jess Kersey.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Boston Celtics	30	24	26	32	6	118
Philadelphia 76ers	27	36	28	21	11	123

Erving and Toney dominated the game with their shooting, propelling Philadelphia to a 77-60 lead four minutes into the third quarter, but the 76ers would still need overtime to keep their regular-season winning streak alive against the Celtics. Boston was within ten at 103-93 midway through the fourth, then, with Bird on the bench in foul trouble, rallied to tie the game at 111-111 with forty-two seconds left. Philadelphia missed three chances to retake the lead, and when Maxwell was fouled by Erving and made one of two free throws with nineteen seconds on the clock, Boston had their first lead since 35-34. Erving was then fouled by Henderson, and although he missed the first he made the second to re-tie the score; Erving then redeemed himself for the miss by blocking Henderson's attempt at a game-winning jumper.

In the extra session, Erving scored the first five points for Philadelphia and Toney contributed the last four, a fitting conclusion to the evening. Danny Ainge, playing in just his sixth NBA game and first against the 76ers, added three assists while marveling at Toney's shooting exhibition; after the game, Ainge asked reporters: "Does he do this to everybody?"

January 9, 1982

Boston 96, Philadelphia 90

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	33	9-18	1-1	5	4	2	20	Maxwell	42	8-17	4-6	11	1	3	20
B. Jones	32	3-10	3-4	5	0	3	9	Bird	47	6-22	0-0	13	6	4	12
C. Jones	39	1-7	3-5	15	3	3	5	Parish	26	6-12	6-8	20	1	6	18
Cheeks	42	10-16	1-2	3	6	3	21	Archibald	39	7-22	0-0	4	5	2	14
Hollins	33	4-15	2-2	3	4	4	10	Carr	24	4-10	2-2	4	1	2	10
Mix	15	2-4	7-8	2	0	1	11	Ford	18	1-4	0-0	1	0	2	2
Cureton	14	4-6	0-0	2	0	3	8	McHale	17	4-8	2-3	6	1	0	10
Richardson	13	0-1	0-0	1	2	2	0	Henderson	15	4-8	1-1	2	2	2	9
Dawkins	11	2-4	0-0	3	0	1	4	Robey	12	0-2	1-2	4	0	4	1
Edwards	8	1-5	0-0	3	1	0	2								
TOTALS		36-86	17-22	42	20	22	90	TOTALS		40-105	16-22	65	17	25	96
3-point FG: 1-3 (Erving 1-1, Cheeks 0-1, Hollins 0-1). Blocks: 6 (Erving 2, C. Jones, Hollins, Edwards 2).								Technical Fouls: Fitch. Blocks: 5 (Bird, Parish, Carr 2, McHale).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Jack Madden, Mike Mathis.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	22	19	23	26	90
Boston Celtics	26	11	29	30	96

Injuries were a key story line in this contest. M.L. Carr had missed the first two meetings of the season between the two clubs, but played a season-high twenty-four minutes and moved ahead of Chris Ford in the shooting guard rotation. Meanwhile, Toney sat out with a sprained ankle, while tendonitis in his left knee sent Dawkins to the bench late in the first half, never to return. But Maurice Cheeks led the Sixers with 21 points—a season-high on the road, and

the first of just three times that Cheeks would lead Philadelphia in scoring during the year—to offset a terrible shooting performance by Lionel Hollins (4 for 15).

Parish nearly had a double-double in the first quarter with ten points and nine rebounds but then the 76ers held the Celtics to a season-low eleven points in the second to hold the lead at halftime. Official Jack Madden pulled his right hamstring in the second quarter but continued on after Philadelphia trainer Al Domenico taped him up during an eighteen minute delay in the action. In the fourth, Bird shook off a poor shooting game to score eight points during a 22-10 run that broke a 68-68 tie and put the Celtics in front to stay. “I really didn’t get upset about his missing, or even realize he was missing that much,” Fitch said afterwards, “because he was taking shots I’d want him to take.”

March 21, 1982

Boston 123, Philadelphia 111

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	27	3-9	2-3	1	1	6	8	Erving	36	12-25	4-5	7	3	4	28
McHale	32	4-8	6-7	8	1	2	14	B. Jones	24	3-9	3-4	6	1	4	9
Parish	41	16-27	5-9	21	1	3	37	C. Jones	40	1-6	0-0	12	0	6	2
Henderson	35	6-9	1-2	5	6	2	13	Cheeks	39	5-15	0-0	5	10	3	10
Carr	39	6-12	5-6	1	3	6	17	Hollins	37	6-9	3-3	2	3	1	16
Bird	36	12-14	5-5	9	8	3	29	Toney	26	13-27	8-9	1	2	4	38
Archibald	13	1-3	0-0	1	5	2	2	Bantom	18	3-6	1-1	4	1	5	7
Ford	8	1-2	0-0	1	1	2	2	Cureton	8	0-2	1-1	2	0	1	1
Robey	6	0-1	0-0	1	0	0	0	Mix	8	0-4	0-0	2	0	0	0
Fernsten	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Richardson	4	0-1	0-0	2	0	1	0
Ainge	1	0-0	1-2	0	0	0	1								
TOTALS		49-85	25-34	48	26	26	123	TOTALS		43-104	20-23	43	20	29	111
Blocks: 14 (McHale 7, Parish 5, Henderson, Bird).								3-point FG: 5-9 (Hollins 1-2, Toney 4-7). Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 6 (Erving 2, B. Jones, C. Jones, Cheeks, Mix).							
Attendance: 18364. Referees: Lee Jones, Paul Mihalak.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	25	30	37	31	123
Philadelphia 76ers	15	33	18	45	111

Boston won a regular-season game in Philadelphia for the first time in three years as the Celtics frontline controlled the contest from the start, beginning with three blocks by McHale in the first five minutes of the game, continuing with a masterful performance by Parish, and then yet another dominant shooting performance by Bird, who was now 63 for 100 from the floor in seven games as Sixth Man after suffering an eye injury courtesy of Harvey Catchings’ elbow. “The rest helped me,” Bird said after the game, and explained why he was willing to come off the bench: “I’m hardly ever tired anymore, and I don’t have those bumps and bruises

I used to. This is as consistent a shot as I've had at any time in my career, college included. ... I've got it going now, and I just hope it keeps going."

Philadelphia stayed close in the first half, but their defense collapsed in the third quarter as Boston scored on nineteen of their twenty-two possessions. McHale later told reporters that the period "was the culmination of our intensity level, tough defense and poise on offense, the culmination of everything we've been working for during the past month—and it couldn't have come at a better time." Boston's lead reached 96-66 early in the fourth, and it took a Spectrum-record 25 points by Toney (who began the game just 3 for 13 from the floor) in the quarter to make the final margin respectable. The victory was the Celtics fifteenth straight win, tying the third longest streak in team history (March-November 1957).

March 28, 1982

Philadelphia 116, Boston 98

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	34	9-18	3-4	7	4	5	21	Bird	35	5-16	2-2	9	2	4	12
B. Jones	33	9-14	1-1	9	4	1	19	Maxwell	31	3-7	1-2	6	1	5	7
C. Jones	35	2-4	6-6	6	1	3	10	Parish	32	7-16	4-7	10	0	3	18
Cheeks	21	2-5	0-0	3	6	4	4	Carr	25	2-6	1-2	1	1	1	5
Hollins	35	7-13	3-3	0	7	3	17	Henderson	21	2-6	0-2	0	2	2	4
Bantom	28	4-8	2-5	9	3	2	10	McHale	41	8-14	3-6	15	1	2	19
Toney	26	11-20	1-1	6	4	4	23	Archibald	30	6-12	10-10	1	8	0	22
Dawkins	13	3-5	0-0	3	0	4	6	Bradley	8	0-2	2-2	0	1	1	2
Richardson	13	2-4	0-0	0	2	2	4	Ainge	7	1-3	0-0	1	2	2	2
Cureton	1	1-2	0-0	0	0	0	2	Robey	6	2-4	1-1	3	0	0	5
Edwards	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Fernsten	2	0-0	2-2	1	0	0	2
								Ford	2	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		50-93	16-20	43	31	28	116	TOTALS		36-87	26-36	47	18	20	98
Blocks: 5 (Erving 2, B. Jones, Bantom, Dawkins).								3-point FG: 0-2 (Henderson 0-1, Archibald 0-1).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Hugh Evans.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	26	31	29	30	116
Boston Celtics	15	29	26	28	98

Two days earlier, the Celtics had defeated the Pistons 125-104 to establish a team-record 18 game winning streak, breaking their previous record of 17 set from November to December 1959. Only the 1971-72 Lakers (33), the 1948-49 Capitols (20) and the 1970-71 Bucks (20) had won more consecutive games. Now Boston looked to extend their streak in a nationally televised Sunday afternoon game. But afterwards Robert Parish claimed that the Celtics were doomed from the start. "I could tell even before the game we were in trouble. The atmosphere in the locker room just wasn't right. Too relaxed."

There were many factors working against Boston. When their streak began on February 24, the Celtics trailed the 76ers by one-and-a-half games in the Atlantic Division; now they

were comfortably six-and-a-half ahead. Philadelphia had endured two three-game losing streaks during this stretch, and had barely snapped their most recent skid at Cleveland on Friday night, scratching out a 115-111 victory. "We'd lost big leads in losing to New Jersey and Detroit. We also lost a big lead before coming back to beat Cleveland," Bobby Jones said later. "We're a club that plays in spurts, and lately we haven't had all that many good spurts." Boston had also won nine in a row at home over Philadelphia, and had blown them out at the Spectrum seven days earlier. Sensing that this game could be a turning point, the Sixers decided to hold a players-only meeting at their hotel in Boston on Saturday morning for the first time all season.

The result was a decisive Philadelphia victory, sparked by a tremendous first quarter defensive performance. The 76ers led by twenty-two in the second quarter and were never seriously challenged. McHale's career-high fifteen rebounds were a rare positive highlight for Boston. Andrew Toney summed up the value of the victory: "This win was just good for the soul."

Players Association team representatives Chris Ford and Lionel Hollins briefly considered having both teams sit out the high profile game in protest of the Kansas City Kings refusal to pay deferred compensation to retired players Oscar Robertson and Lucius Allen. The issue was resolved prior to the game when the Kings promised to pay the two players by Monday.

April 11, 1982

Boston 110, Philadelphia 109 (ot)

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Bird	40	7-22	6-6	15	7	4	20	Erving	43	9-19	13-16	11	3	4	31
Maxwell	35	11-19	3-3	6	3	4	25	B. Jones	34	6-11	4-5	6	4	3	16
Robey	35	5-13	3-5	10	3	5	13	C. Jones	32	1-2	0-0	9	2	5	2
Ford	29	3-8	0-0	2	4	3	7	Cheeks	42	8-11	0-2	3	10	3	16
Archibald	16	1-4	1-2	4	3	3	3	Hollins	34	9-13	6-9	3	5	0	24
McHale	41	10-17	0-0	12	1	3	20	Toney	30	5-11	1-2	1	4	4	11
Henderson	28	3-10	0-0	4	6	0	6	Bantom	29	3-8	1-2	5	2	1	7
Ainge	13	0-1	2-2	2	1	0	2	Dawkins	21	1-7	0-1	3	2	4	2
Bradley	12	3-7	2-2	0	0	3	8								
Carr	8	2-4	0-0	2	1	0	4								
Fernsten	8	1-4	0-0	3	0	2	2								
TOTALS		46-109	17-20	60	29	27	110	TOTALS		42-82	25-37	41	32	24	109
3-point FG: 1-2 (Bird 0-1, Ford 1-1). Blocks: 8 (Bird 2, McHale 6).								Blocks: 17 (Erving, B. Jones 5, C. Jones 6, Bantom 2, Dawkins 3).							
Attendance: 17582. Referees: Jack Madden, Jess Kersev.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Boston Celtics	22	23	36	18	11	110
Philadelphia 76ers	26	32	23	18	10	109

The Celtics had already clinched both the Atlantic Division title and the best overall record in the league, so this game had no impact on the standings, but these two rivals put on a pretty good show for the fans in Philadelphia. Two obvious signs of the lack of interest in the outcome were the absence of Robert Parish, who was resting a collection of nagging injuries, and Lionel Hollins, who was nursing a broken left pinky finger that would plague him throughout the upcoming playoffs. The Sixers sprinted to a 12-2 start, and maintained a fifteen point edge for much of the second quarter as Erving scored eighteen points. It was not until Danny Ainge made the second of two free throws late in the third that the Celtics took their first lead at 78-77. Philadelphia held a small advantage for much of the fourth, but Boston scored the last four points of regulation on a pair of Bird free throws and a McHale tip-in of a Henderson miss. In overtime, the Celtics led by five with 2:18 remaining, but then the 76ers ripped off six in a row to retake the lead. Bird's put back of another Henderson miss closed the scoring, and gave Boston a 4-2 edge in the season series between the teams.

May 9, 1982

Eastern Conference Finals Game 1

Boston 121, Philadelphia 81

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	27	5-9	2-2	6	1	2	12	Bird	41	10-23	4-4	15	10	2	24
B. Jones	21	0-5	0-0	7	3	2	0	Maxwell	19	4-6	0-1	5	2	5	8
C. Jones	12	0-2	0-0	3	0	6	0	Parish	29	10-16	4-6	14	2	2	24
Cheeks	34	5-13	2-3	3	4	1	12	Carr	32	5-13	0-0	3	3	3	10
Toney	32	5-12	5-6	3	1	3	15	Archibald	26	1-6	1-2	1	6	1	3
Richardson	25	3-10	0-0	7	0	1	6	McHale	25	6-14	4-5	11	1	4	16
Cureton	24	5-15	2-5	7	0	5	12	Robey	19	7-11	5-5	6	1	4	19
Bantom	24	2-9	3-8	7	1	3	7	Henderson	18	4-7	0-0	6	5	1	8
Dawkins	17	3-9	1-2	2	0	3	7	Ford	14	2-5	0-0	0	3	2	4
Mix	15	1-4	4-6	3	2	1	6	Bradley	7	1-3	0-2	3	1	2	2
Edwards	9	1-5	2-2	2	1	0	4	Ainge	6	0-5	1-2	3	0	2	1
								Fernsten	4	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS		30-93	21-34	50	13	27	81	TOTALS		51-110	19-27	67	34	28	121
Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 3 (Erving 2, Bantom).								3-point FG: 0-3 (Bird 0-2, Ainge 0-1). Blocks: 11 (Bird, Maxwell 2, Parish 7, Archibald).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Ed Rush, Hugh Evans.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	24	21	11	25	81
Boston Celtics	30	32	31	28	121

It was dubbed the "Mother's Day Massacre" by the end of the third quarter. Unlike the Bullets, who had succumbed to the Celtics in the semifinals by dropping back-to-back overtime games, the Sixers were unable to control their hosts' running game. "It felt good to get running

again," Bird said after he had finished off his second career playoff triple-double. "Both teams like to run, and it was just a great feeling to play in a game like this."

With Dawkins (aftereffects of broken right leg in January) still playing limited minutes and Hollins out due to injuries, Philadelphia kept it close early, but during an eight minute stretch encompassing the latter stages of the first and the start of the second quarter, Boston held the Sixers to just two field goals during a decisive 23-10 run. The third period was even more of a nightmare for the visitors, as the Sixers made more turnovers (6) than field goals (5). When it was over, Boston led by 37, and the margin peaked at an eye-popping 110-62 score early in the final period. The postgame discussion featured a mixture of cautious optimism from Fitch and talk of resiliency from Cunningham. But Cedric Maxwell provided more than a touch of bravado: "If we play on all the cylinders we did today, I don't think we can be beaten. And that's not only Philadelphia, but any team in the world. If you want to write something for controversy, that will start it."

But Bob Ryan offered a cautionary tale in his postgame notes in the *Boston Globe*, reminding his readers that in 1973 an equally impressive Celtics team had defeated the Knicks in the Eastern Conference Finals by 26 points in Game 1, only to lose the next game 129-96. Ryan omitted the fact that the Celtics eventually lost the series after John Havlicek suffered a separated right shoulder.

May 12, 1982

Eastern Conference Finals Game 2

Philadelphia 121, Boston 113

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	38	8-21	4-4	5	8	4	20	Bird	45	9-20	0-1	14	4	4	18
B. Jones	32	3-4	4-4	7	1	2	10	Maxwell	29	4-7	6-6	5	4	5	14
C. Jones	36	8-15	6-6	11	2	4	22	Parish	36	8-18	3-6	10	2	4	19
Cheeks	40	7-15	4-4	0	14	3	18	Carr	28	4-10	5-6	6	3	3	13
Toney	28	13-22	4-6	4	5	5	30	Archibald	46	8-14	8-8	3	13	2	24
Richardson	28	4-8	2-2	7	0	3	10	McHale	26	8-13	4-4	7	1	5	20
Dawkins	19	5-8	1-1	3	0	4	11	Ford	11	1-3	0-0	1	0	1	3
Bantom	19	0-3	0-2	3	2	2	0	Henderson	11	1-3	0-0	0	0	3	2
								Robey	8	0-0	0-0	2	0	3	0
TOTALS		48-96	25-29	40	32	27	121	TOTALS		43-88	26-31	48	27	30	113
3-point FG: 0-1 (Cheeks 0-1). Blocks: 4 (Erving 2, B. Jones, Dawkins).								3-point FG: 1-8 (Bird 0-1, Carr 0-1, Archibald 0-3, Ford 1-3). Blocks: 9 (Bird, Parish 6, McHale 2).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Earl Strom, Paul Mihalak.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	31	31	26	33	121
Boston Celtics	29	27	34	23	113

Caldwell Jones scored 22 points, a season high and two off his career high, as the Sixers rallied to tie the series, seize the homecourt advantage, and most importantly, wash the distaste of the first game out of their collective mouths. Speaking after the game, a relieved Julius Erving said, "We could have survived a loss—a loss like the Celtics had tonight—but we couldn't have survived another loss like Sunday. We didn't have to win, but we had to play well."

Philadelphia built a small first half lead with help from sixteen Boston turnovers, but the Celtics erased a six point halftime deficit with six unanswered points in the first 1:11 of the third quarter. The rest of the period was a tense back-and-forth affair, featuring fourteen lead changes, including exchanges on eight consecutive possessions. However, after Boston took a 100-99 lead with 7:20 left, Clint Richardson hit a jumper to put the 76ers back in front, then Bobby Jones blocked a shot by McHale and was fouled by the sophomore at the other end. Jones's two free throws put the Sixers ahead by three, and the Celtics never got any closer. The other Jones scored ten of his points in the decisive final quarter. An appreciative Billy Cunningham knew that he would bounce back from being shutout in Game 1 (0 for 2 from the floor in 12 minutes before fouling out). "[T]onight Caldwell knew that he had to be involved in the offense," Cunningham said, "and the best way to be sure Caldwell is involved is to get him the ball."

May 15, 1982

Eastern Conference Finals Game 3

Philadelphia 99, Boston 97

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Bird	44	6-16	3-7	13	11	4	15	Erving	37	7-15	4-6	7	3	4	19
Maxwell	35	8-15	2-4	10	2	5	18	B. Jones	34	6-12	6-7	4	5	3	18
Parish	32	3-8	8-12	7	1	3	14	C. Jones	42	3-9	2-2	12	0	3	8
Carr	24	3-8	2-2	4	1	3	8	Cheeks	41	7-12	4-6	4	10	5	18
Archibald	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0	Toney	26	8-14	0-1	2	5	5	16
Henderson	42	6-15	4-4	4	5	5	16	Richardson	29	4-5	0-1	3	4	4	8
McHale	29	7-10	2-2	10	0	5	16	Bantom	16	0-2	0-2	1	1	1	0
Ainge	17	3-8	0-0	1	1	1	6	Dawkins	15	5-9	2-2	2	0	5	12
Ford	12	2-4	0-1	1	0	1	4								
Robey	4	0-0	0-0	0	1	1	0								
TOTALS		38-84	21-32	51	22	28	97	TOTALS		40-78	18-27	35	28	30	99
3-point FG: 0-2 (Carr 0-1, Ford 0-1). Technical Fouls: Fitch. Blocks: 8 (Bird, Maxwell 2, Parish 4, McHale).								3-point FG: 1-1 (Erving 1-1). Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 11 (Erving 3, B. Jones 3, C. Jones 2, Toney, Bantom, Dawkins).							
Attendance: 18364. Referees: Jack Madden, Wally Rooney.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	28	19	23	27	97
Philadelphia 76ers	24	25	31	19	99

The game and the series turned in the opening minute when Tiny Archibald dislocated his left shoulder while diving to stop a fast-break basket by Cheeks. "The thought came through my head when I saw Tiny just lying there on the floor," Maxwell told reporters. "I said, 'Oh-oh, things have changed.'" Still, Boston led by as many as nine points in the quarter, before Philadelphia rallied to take the lead at the half. Bobby Jones scored eight of his points in the third period to help extend the Sixers advantage, which grew to 84-70 early in the fourth.

Trailing by ten with 3:26 left, Boston closed the game on a 10-2 run that fell short when Maxwell was unable to convert three chances to tie the game. The sequence began when McHale blocked Erving with twenty-one seconds left. Maxwell saved the ball to Ainge, who passed to Bird; he proceeded to miss a twenty-two footer. Maxwell got the rebound, missed a layup, and controlled the rebound again but was then blocked by Erving while trying to avoid a similar fate at the hands of Caldwell Jones. Finally, after collecting his *third* rebound of the possession, he was stripped by Cheeks, providing a fitting conclusion to the afternoon's festivities for the Sixers.

And thanks to television (CBS's upcoming broadcast of the "Marco Polo" miniseries) Game 4 was scheduled for the following afternoon, giving the Celtics only hours to regroup.

May 16, 1982

Eastern Conference Finals Game 4

Philadelphia 119, Boston 94

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Bird	37	8-16	0-0	9	5	4	17	Erving	32	6-11	5-11	9	3	3	17
Maxwell	35	7-13	2-3	5	4	1	16	B. Jones	25	6-9	1-1	3	3	3	13
Parish	33	8-15	2-3	6	1	4	18	C. Jones	29	3-8	4-5	11	2	3	10
Carr	18	1-6	1-2	1	3	2	3	Cheeks	32	4-9	0-0	8	11	2	8
Henderson	38	3-10	3-3	0	7	1	9	Toney	42	14-21	11-12	4	6	3	39
McHale	29	6-8	2-3	6	1	1	14	Dawkins	30	7-10	2-2	6	2	3	16
Ford	23	2-8	4-4	2	3	3	9	Bantom	24	1-2	0-0	1	1	6	2
Ainge	15	4-5	0-0	0	1	5	8	Richardson	17	1-3	2-2	4	2	1	4
Robey	7	0-2	0-0	3	0	2	0	Edwards	3	2-2	0-0	0	1	0	4
Bradley	3	0-1	0-0	0	0	3	0	Hollins	3	2-2	0-0	0	0	1	4
Fernsten	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Cureton	3	1-3	0-0	2	0	0	2
TOTALS		39-84	14-18	32	25	26	94	TOTALS		47-80	25-33	48	31	25	119
3-point FG: 2-3 (Bird 1-1, Ford 1-2). Technical Fouls: Ainge. Blocks: 9 (Bird 2, Parish 4, McHale 2, Ford).								3-point FG: 0-1 (Toney 0-1). Blocks: 14 (Erving 3, B. Jones 3, C. Jones 4, Dawkins 4).							
Attendance: 18364. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Paul Mihalak.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	20	28	25	21	94
Philadelphia 76ers	32	23	30	34	119

Celtics team physician Dr. Thomas Silva declared Archibald out for the series, leaving the Celtics point guard chores in the hands of Gerald Henderson and rookie Danny Ainge. The

Celtics were 12-2 in games Archibald had missed during the regular season, including when the veteran missed nearly a month with an injured right wrist suffered in February; Henderson had replaced him as the starter and didn't yield his position until early April, a span in which the Celtics rolled to a 25-3 record. But those were regular season games with plenty of practice time available to make adjustments. No such luxury was forthcoming for Boston before Game 4.

Philadelphia began the afternoon on a 30-13 run and threatened to duplicate Game 1, albeit in the other direction. "There is no question," Bobby Jones said afterwards, "that without Tiny Archibald pushing the ball up the floor we can play defense with a little more intensity. We can pack it in and don't have to gamble as much...." But when Boston started making some outside shots, it took less than ten minutes for them to tie the game at 44-44. The Sixers salvaged the half by scoring the final four points to restore a reasonable seven point lead at intermission. Then the game turned into another edition of the Andrew Toney Show, as the resilient guard bounced back from a pedestrian outing the day before to score 25 of his 39 points in the second half, a figure made more remarkable by the fact that no other player on either side scored more than 18. Four of Toney's points came during a 6-0 run that extended the 76ers lead to 82-69, and the Celtics never got closer than ten points the rest of the way.

For the third straight year, the Celtics were returning home for the fifth game of the Eastern Conference Finals trailing three games to one.

May 19, 1982

Eastern Conference Finals Game 5

Boston 114, Philadelphia 85

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	22	15	27	21	85
Boston Celtics	33	24	28	29	114

The Celtics won this game with their defense. They pitched a shutout for seven consecutive possessions in the first quarter, a 10-0 run that set the tone. Philadelphia shot 4 for 26 in the second quarter as the Boston reserves tightened the screws, and the Celtics led by twenty at the half. Besides the defensive intensity, which took the 76ers backcourt out of the game, Fitch made a strategic adjustment of playing Parish in the high post, opening up the inside for Maxwell and sparking Parish to use his array of offensive skills en route to a 26/10 performance. "Facing up helps me. They don't know if I'm going to drive or shoot the jumper," Parish explained, "and it puts more pressure on the defense."

Boston's lead remained comfortable throughout the second half, and the Garden crowd began to chant "See You Sunday," brashly assuming that the Friday night contest at the Spectrum would have a similar outcome, and there would be a Game 7 back in Boston for the second straight year. Cheeks tried to explain the reversal of fortune for the Sixers from the previous three games: "I felt we came out tight, and they came out aggressive and they took control of the game from the start. It was an uphill climb from there on in and we never got there. Tonight we didn't do anything; we didn't hit the boards, we didn't shoot, we didn't get it up court."

May 21, 1982

Eastern Conference Finals Game 6

Boston 88, Philadelphia 75

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	27	3-5	3-3	4	1	3	9	Erving	45	8-20	8-9	11	4	2	24
Bird	45	6-19	2-2	17	4	4	14	B. Jones	28	5-7	4-5	4	0	5	14
Parish	34	6-17	2-2	13	3	5	14	C. Jones	42	3-7	4-5	17	1	4	10
Carr	23	2-7	1-2	2	1	2	5	Cheeks	45	6-19	3-4	3	7	4	15
Henderson	33	5-10	3-6	4	3	3	13	Toney	31	1-11	1-2	0	3	3	3
Ainge	32	2-12	0-0	6	7	5	4	Dawkins	20	1-4	2-3	1	0	3	4
McHale	28	5-8	7-8	8	1	2	17	Hollins	13	1-5	1-2	1	0	1	3
Robey	10	2-4	0-0	4	1	3	4	Richardson	8	1-1	0-0	0	0	1	2
Ford	8	4-5	0-0	1	1	0	8	Bantom	8	0-0	0-0	3	0	0	0
TOTALS		35-87	18-23	59	22	27	88	TOTALS		26-74	23-30	40	15	23	75
Technical Fouls: Henderson. Blocks: 7 (Parish 2, McHale 4, Robey).								3-point FG: 0-4 (Erving 0-1, Cheeks 0-2, Toney 0-1). Blocks: 9 (Erving 3, C. Jones 3, Cheeks, Dawkins 2).							
Attendance: 18364. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Jack Madden.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	20	22	19	27	88
Philadelphia 76ers	26	22	16	11	75

Philadelphia appeared to break out of their shooting slump early in this one, taking a 25-10 lead after the first eight minutes, but they would score only 50 points over the rest of the game. Boston took their first lead early in the fourth, ripping off a twelve unanswered points while Parish continued to play (and grab seven rebounds) despite having already picked up five fouls. The Celtics later led 74-73, before finishing the game by outscoring the 76ers 14-2.

Bird struggled again from the floor. "My shooting hasn't been what it should have been in this series," he said. "But I know I can shoot at the Garden ... it's a great feeling to know we get our chance to win the fourth at the Garden where the fans will be there to back us."

Erving tried to lighten the mood after the game in the Sixers locker room. "It's good that we're playing the final game in Boston. We'd better get out of town before the people [in Philadelphia] run us out of town," he said, before adding more soberly, "we have to go and win another game on the road in Boston Garden. That will be very, very tough . . . we'll have to play near perfect basketball to do that."

May 23, 1982

Eastern Conference Finals Game 7

Philadelphia 120, Boston 106

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	42	10-21	9-9	4	5	4	29	Maxwell	26	3-6	1-3	5	0	4	7
B. Jones	31	4-11	9-10	4	2	4	17	Bird	44	7-18	6-8	11	9	4	20
C. Jones	38	3-7	0-0	10	0	4	6	Parish	42	8-21	7-8	14	0	2	23
Cheeks	33	8-15	3-4	2	11	5	19	Carr	19	3-8	1-1	2	3	2	7
Toney	43	14-23	6-8	3	6	4	34	Henderson	37	5-12	1-3	4	7	5	11
Richardson	19	1-4	0-0	2	0	1	2	Ainge	28	4-7	7-8	2	2	5	17
Bantom	19	1-3	0-0	6	0	5	2	McHale	31	9-15	2-5	6	2	5	20
Dawkins	13	3-4	0-0	4	0	5	6	Ford	7	0-1	0-0	1	0	0	0
Edwards	1	1-1	2-2	0	0	0	5	Robey	4	0-1	0-0	0	0	1	0
Cureton	1	0-1	0-0	0	1	1	0	Fernsten	1	0-0	1-2	1	0	0	1
								Bradley	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		45-90	29-33	35	25	33	120	TOTALS		39-89	26-38	46	23	28	106
3-point FG: 1-2 (Toney 0-1, Edwards 1-1). Blocks: 5 (Erving 3, B. Jones, C. Jones). Steals: 13 (Erving 3, B. Jones, Cheeks 4, Toney 2, Richardson 2, Bantom). Turnovers: 15 (Erving 5, B. Jones 2, C. Jones, Toney 2, Richardson, Bantom, Dawkins 3).								3-point FG: 2-4 (Henderson 0-1, Ainge 2-3). Blocks: 8 (Maxwell, Bird 2, Parish 3, Henderson, McHale). Steals: 4 (Maxwell, Bird 2, Carr). Turnovers: 22 (Maxwell, Bird 3, Parish 6, Carr, Henderson 3, Ainge 3, McHale 3, Ford 2).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Jack Madden.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	30	22	31	37	120
Boston Celtics	28	21	22	35	106

Unlike a year earlier, both teams quickly settled into a half-court game early, but by halftime, Philadelphia held a three point lead reminiscent of their five point edge in 1981. However, Boston trailed nearly from start to finish, and never led after a 32-31 advantage early in the

second quarter. Curiously, Kevin McHale never got off the bench in the third, despite torching the 76ers several times in the opening half, and Boston was outscored 31-22 to fall into a hole that was too deep to get out of. Fitch deflected criticism after the game, saying, “There were enough bad passes and missed free throws to knock out any theories about coaching being responsible. If you look at the errors from the guard position, we did everything except draft a guard from the stands.”

The impact of Archibald’s injury was clearly felt in that third quarter. Henderson picked up his fourth foul on the first possession of the half on an ill-advised attempt to out-hustle Caldwell Jones for a steal, but Fitch left him in the game. Five minutes later, he was whistled for his fifth, forcing Fitch to pull him for Ainge. Ainge promptly threw the ball away on two consecutive fast breaks, part of a decisive 6-0 Philadelphia run that turned a 64-62 lead into a much more comfortable 70-62 edge for the visitors, and quieted the Garden crowd in the process. “Those two turnovers might have been the key to defeat,” Ainge admitted to reporters afterwards. “We had just gotten into the game. On the first one, [Maxwell] was open, but I threw it too far ahead. The second one [intended for Carr] was just a bad pass.”



Lineup Analysis

A key storyline in this game was the absence of Tiny Archibald, which led to some interesting lineup decisions by Bill Fitch.

First Quarter Game 7 1982 Eastern Conference Finals

Celtics ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	B. Jones	B. Jones
	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	C. Jones	Bantom	Bantom
	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Richardson
Boston	Maxwell	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird
	Bird	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale
	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish
	Carr	Carr	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge
	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson

76ers ball	Erving	B. Jones	B. Jones	C. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones
	B. Jones	Erving	Erving	Erving	Bantom	Bantom
	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Richardson
Time left	12:00	6:49	4:39	3:30	0:45	0:18
Score	0-0	14-12	21-14	22-18	28-26	30-27

Second Quarter Game 7 1982 Eastern Conference Finals

Celtics ball	B. Jones	B. Jones	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	B. Jones
	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom	B. Jones	B. Jones	Erving
	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Toney	Cheeks	Richardson	Cheeks	Toney	Toney	Cheeks	Toney
	Richardson	Richardson	Cheeks	Richardson	Cheeks	Cheeks	Toney	Richardson
Boston	Bird	Bird	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Bird
	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale	Bird	Bird	Bird	McHale
	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	McHale	McHale	McHale	Parish
	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	Ford	Ford	Ford	Ford	Ford
	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	Henderson	Henderson
76ers ball	B. Jones	B. Jones	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	B. Jones
	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom	C. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	Erving
	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones	Bantom	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Toney	Richardson	Richardson	Richardson	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Richardson	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Richardson
Time left	12:00	10:00	8:45	8:00	6:00	4:45	4:00	2:38
Score	30-28	32-31	35-32	35-34	41-38	43-40	46-40	50-42

Unlike Game 7 in 1981, Erving guarded Bird for second half of the first quarter, as the insertion of McHale for Maxwell made it unrealistic for Erving to pick up anyone else on the Celtics frontline. But Erving went back to covering Maxwell in the second period. Also note

that Henderson, the only playmaker that Fitch truly trusted with the ball, was not immediately removed after his second foul, and played sixteen minutes before his first rest. When he returned later in the quarter, Henderson almost immediately picked up his third foul in a scramble for a loose ball.

Third Quarter Game 7 1982 Eastern Conference Finals

Celtics ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving
	B. Jones	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom
	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Richardson
Boston	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell
	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird
	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish
	Carr	Carr	Carr	Carr
	Henderson	Henderson	Ainge	Ainge
76ers ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving
	B. Jones	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom
	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Richardson
Time left	12:00	8:06	7:45	2:56
Score	52-49	62-54	62-54	76-68

Fitch left Henderson in the game after his fourth foul, but was forced to remove him when he picked up his fifth personal. In the next few moments, Ainge threw the ball away twice after the Celtics had closed to within 64-62, and the Celtics never seriously challenged the Sixers again. McHale sat out the entire quarter after having played over eighteen consecutive minutes in the first half. Unlike Game 7 in 1981, the 76ers rarely used Dawkins and Caldwell Jones at the same time, preferring to use Mike Bantom against McHale or Bird.

Fourth Quarter Game 7 1982 Eastern Conference Finals (Part One)

Celtics ball	Erving	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones
	Bantom	Bantom	C. Jones	Erving	Erving
	Dawkins	Dawkins	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Richardson	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Toney	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Boston	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	McHale	Bird
	McHale	McHale	McHale	Robey	McHale
	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Robey
	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	Ainge
	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson
76ers ball	Erving		B. Jones	Erving	B. Jones
	Bantom		C. Jones	B. Jones	Erving
	Dawkins		Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Toney		Toney	Toney	Toney
	Richardson		Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Time left	12:00	9:42	9:27	8:30	7:19
Score	83-71	87-78	87-78	92-80	96-80

The 76ers pulled away while the Celtics played Bird in the backcourt against Toney rather than using Carr or Ainge, or Ford, who sat out the entire second half. The Bird, McHale, Robey, Parish combination was the tallest possible lineup the Celtics could assemble at those four positions.

Fourth Quarter Game 7 1982 Eastern Conference Finals (Part Two)

Celtics ball	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	Richardson
	Erving	Erving	Erving	Cureton
	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Toney	Toney	Edwards	Edwards
	Richardson	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks

Boston	Bird	Bird	Bradley	Bradley	
	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale	
	Parish	Parish	Fernsten	Fernsten	
	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	
	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	
76ers ball	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	Richardson	
	Erving	Erving	Erving	Cureton	
	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	
	Toney	Toney	Edwards	Edwards	
	Richardson	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	
Time left	5:08	2:25	0:48	0:30	0:00
Score	102-85	104-93	112-99	117-102	120-106

Both sides emptied their benches in the final minute. Ironically, Henderson played the entire quarter without picking up his sixth foul.



The game ended with the Garden crowd chanting “Beat LA” which moved Cunningham to start his postgame remarks by saying that he “just wanted to thank the Boston Celtics’ fans, the way they responded at the end of the game. That truly showed me a great deal of class.” It was a welcome contrast to the booing that had accompanied their loss in Game 6 at home.

1982-83

November 7, 1982

Philadelphia 119, Boston 115 (2ot)

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	27	5-10	3-4	4	3	4	13	Erving	46	12-21	4-7	7	4	5	28
Bird	50	10-23	0-0	19	7	5	21	Iavaroni	19	2-4	0-2	3	1	3	4
Parish	41	10-18	5-5	10	3	6	25	Malone	56	9-17	10-14	19	1	4	28
Archibald	50	4-15	5-6	2	10	3	13	Cheeks	52	4-8	3-4	4	15	3	11
Ainge	18	0-3	0-0	1	2	3	0	Toney	49	11-24	2-4	5	3	4	24
Buckner	40	6-16	2-2	10	3	5	14	Jones	29	2-6	5-6	5	1	6	9
McHale	34	7-9	4-5	7	1	3	18	Schoene	21	4-7	2-3	8	0	2	10
Robey	15	2-4	2-2	1	1	4	6	Edwards	16	2-3	1-2	0	1	2	5
Bradley	9	1-3	0-0	1	0	1	2	Cureton	2	0-0	0-0	2	0	0	0

Carr	5	1-1	1-2	0	0	0	3									
Henderson	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0									
TOTALS		46-102	22-26	55	30	34	115	TOTALS		46-90	27-42	53	26	29	119	
3-point FG: 1-3 (Bird 1-2, Buckner 0-1). Technical Fouls: Bird, Henderson. Blocks: 5 (Parish 2, McHale 2, Bradley).								Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 8 (Erving 3, Iavaroni, Malone 3, Jones).								
Attendance: 18482.																

	1	2	3	4	OT	OT2	F
Boston Celtics	22	23	33	15	11	11	115
Philadelphia 76ers	23	24	26	20	11	15	119

Fittingly, the first meeting of the season between the two teams that had split the three previous Eastern Conference titles needed extra time to settle the outcome. The Celtics led by ten, 72-62, with three-and-a-half minutes remaining in the third, and also led by the same margin early in the fourth. But Julius Erving and Andrew Toney helped the 76ers whittle away the Celtics lead. Toney made two jumpers late in the quarter to bring Philadelphia within two, then rebounded a Parish miss in the final minute that led to a game-tying jumper by Erving to force overtime.

Moses Malone, in his first game against the Celtics wearing the Sixers red, white and blue, scored 28 points and added 19 rebounds while playing fifty-six minutes. He also got Robert Parish into foul trouble, which became significant when Parish (a game high 25 for Boston with 10 boards) was whistled for number six with 2:40 left in the first overtime. But Bird hit a three-pointer at the top of the key to tie the game with fourteen seconds left, and when the Sixers missed two chances to win it, the game moved to a second overtime.

Celtics guard Quinn Buckner, acquired (or extorted, depending on your point-of-view) from Milwaukee for the rights to the formerly-retired Dave Cowens before the season, claimed after the game that "fatigue wasn't really a factor this early in the year," and he certainly had the stats to back up his point. Playing forty minutes, he contributed 14 points and 10 rebounds in what would prove to be one of his best games as a Celtic, and hit a jumper with forty-seven seconds left in the second overtime to put the Celtics ahead 115-114. However, Philadelphia scored the next four points, and when Buckner slipped and fell with seven seconds left, fumbling away the ball in the process, Boston squandered their last chance to tie the game.

December 10, 1982

Boston 123, Philadelphia 97

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	36	7-15	8-10	5	2	4	22	Maxwell	39	5-10	7-7	12	2	0	17
Iavaroni	15	0-3	0-0	3	1	3	0	Bird	34	13-21	7-8	14	2	5	33
Malone	37	8-13	4-6	12	0	3	20	Parish	42	8-14	2-2	13	0	4	18
Cheeks	27	5-11	5-7	2	4	3	15	Buckner	25	5-15	0-1	3	6	4	10
Toney	28	6-13	7-9	2	2	5	19	Ainge	16	3-8	1-2	3	3	4	7

Jones	27	2-5	0-0	5	3	6	4	Henderson	28	6-8	2-4	3	4	5	14
Richardson	21	2-8	2-2	0	1	4	6	Archibald	23	3-11	2-2	2	8	2	8
Edwards	20	2-7	3-3	1	2	2	7	McHale	19	5-7	2-3	9	1	4	12
Schoene	14	0-2	0-0	3	2	0	0	Bradley	6	1-3	0-0	3	0	2	2
Cureton	11	1-4	0-0	0	0	1	2	Carr	4	1-4	0-0	2	0	0	2
Anderson	4	1-2	0-0	0	0	0	2	Robey	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
								Tillis	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		34-83	29-37	33	17	31	97	TOTALS		50-101	23-29	64	26	31	123
Technical Fouls: Erving, Malone, Cunningham. Blocks: 3 (Erving 2, Malone).								3-point FG: 0-2 (Bird 0-1, Ainge 0-1). Technical Fouls: Fitch. Blocks: 6 (Maxwell, Parish 3, McHale, Bradley).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Jim Capers, Wally Rooney.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	27	26	22	22	97
Boston Celtics	30	38	24	31	123

Two nights after defeating the Hawks by the eye-popping score of 132-85 (the rout was on after a 40-11 first quarter), the 76ers traveled to Boston and got blown out in the second half. The game was tight early, and the Celtics led by just a point at 44-43 with seven minutes left in the second quarter. But a 14-2 run over the next four-and-a-half minutes by the home team gave them a comfortable advantage. Bird had 24 of his points in the first half, and Parish, who had sprained his left ankle two nights earlier (and was held scoreless while Boston thrashed Cleveland by 20) added fourteen points and ten rebounds before heading to the locker room early for some extra halftime treatment.

December 21, 1982

Philadelphia 122, Boston 105

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	28	1-5	0-0	4	1	4	2	Erving	39	7-16	5-6	10	3	3	19
Bird	34	4-11	5-6	12	5	2	13	Iavaroni	17	1-3	2-4	5	1	4	4
Parish	20	3-10	4-4	4	1	5	10	Malone	46	11-24	11-15	19	1	4	33
Buckner	22	5-9	5-6	5	2	3	15	Richardson	36	6-10	6-8	4	3	3	18
Ainge	28	8-16	1-2	5	3	2	17	Cheeks	33	9-15	4-5	1	9	4	22
McHale	29	6-12	1-2	6	1	3	13	Edwards	27	6-8	1-2	3	4	4	13
Archibald	26	6-9	2-2	1	3	0	14	Jones	25	2-7	3-5	5	5	3	7
Henderson	20	7-12	2-4	1	3	5	16	Schoene	15	3-3	0-0	5	1	1	6
Carr	19	2-7	0-0	1	0	2	4	Cureton	2	0-1	0-0	0	0	1	0
Robey	9	0-0	1-2	2	0	4	1								
Bradley	5	0-0	0-0	3	0	0	0								
TOTALS		42-91	21-28	44	19	30	105	TOTALS		45-87	32-45	52	27	27	122
3-point FG: 0-3 (Ainge 0-2, Carr 0-1). Blocks: 5 (Bird, Parish 3, Ainge).								Blocks: 7 (Erving, Iavaroni, Malone 2, Cheeks, Jones 2).							
Attendance: 18482. Referees: Hugh Evans, Lee Jones.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	28	26	23	28	105
Philadelphia 76ers	32	35	24	31	122

Boston had lost two of three games heading into this meeting at the Spectrum, and proceeded to play poorly throughout. "The best thing for us to say is let's forget it," Kevin McHale said afterwards. "They outplayed us in every phase of the game tonight. ... We had a slump like this last year and the year before that. ... Tonight we just showed that we can't continue to play the way we've been playing." Perhaps the absence of Andrew Toney with a bruised right shoulder, caused by a collision with the Bullets Rick Mahorn three nights earlier, gave the Celtics a false sense of confidence, but they yielded 15 first half points to fill-in Clint Richardson, double his season's average. Moses Malone controlled the game inside with 19 rebounds and 33 points. And Boston got anemic performances from Bird (4 for 11) and a quiet Maxwell (two points in twenty-eight minutes).

The game was decided by a 23-7 Sixers run that spanned five minutes beginning late in the first quarter and spilled over into the second. Parish, Bird and Buckner sat out the fourth quarter to rest for a game back home against Chicago the next night. The Celtics returned to Boston with a 20-7 record, just two behind the 21-5 76ers in the loss column. But this victory was the start of a fourteen-game winning streak for the 76ers that allowed them to build a four game lead over the Celtics in the Atlantic Division.

March 4, 1983

Boston 115, Philadelphia 110

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	29	11-17	1-2	4	3	6	23	Maxwell	33	6-12	7-8	3	1	1	19
Iavaroni	28	2-6	2-2	9	2	1	6	Bird	44	13-25	6-7	11	9	1	32
Malone	44	10-19	6-8	14	1	2	26	Parish	39	5-23	1-2	17	3	3	11
Cheeks	27	1-5	4-4	0	6	2	6	Ainge	38	5-7	0-0	1	4	4	10
Toney	29	7-13	6-12	5	5	4	21	Henderson	25	6-12	0-1	4	5	2	12
C. Johnson	25	5-8	0-0	7	0	6	10	Archibald	25	3-8	2-2	1	8	3	8
Richardson	21	3-5	0-0	4	1	0	6	McHale	24	10-11	1-1	4	1	4	21
Edwards	20	5-8	1-1	0	3	2	11	Carr	8	0-1	2-2	2	0	3	2
R. Johnson	13	0-3	1-2	2	0	3	1	Robey	4	0-0	0-0	1	1	3	0
Cureton	4	0-0	0-0	2	0	1	0								
TOTALS		44-84	21-31	47	21	27	110	TOTALS		48-99	19-23	44	32	24	115
3-point FG: 1-3 (Iavaroni 0-1, Toney 1-2). Blocks: 2 (Cheeks, C. Johnson).								Technical Fouls: Boston illegal defense. Blocks: 4 (Maxwell 2, Parish, McHale).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: John Vanak, Tom Nunez.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	35	24	23	28	110
Boston Celtics	33	27	22	33	115

This game had a little less riding on it than most observers would have imagined back in December. The 76ers had won 30 of 32 games dating back to their previous encounter, and had pulled eight games ahead of the Celtics in the standings with a 50-7 overall record. Still, the Celtics had a better record than anyone else in the league, a game ahead of the Lakers, and

they had their pride. After holding serve in the head-to-head season series, Parish told reporters, "What was important was that we show them that they're beatable and not unbeatable," while Bird, who played despite an infected little toe that held him out of practice all week, was more direct: "There's no doubt Philly don't like us and we don't like them. That's the way it is. ... Your season is not fulfilled unless you beat Philly in the end."

The game featured a very tense second half in which the lead see-sawed but rarely went above four points. A bad pass by Marc Iavaroni with 15 seconds left led to a Gerald Henderson basket for the final margin. Despite the loss, Clint Richardson was particularly defiant/honest after the game. "We don't like to lose to them. It's not as much them, but their fans," he said. "They try to intimidate us. ... But [in light of the 76ers victory in Game 7 the previous spring] the Celtics don't awe us anymore. We can beat them now. We're not rattled or intimidated here anymore."

March 16, 1983

Philadelphia 105, Boston 100

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	22	6-8	2-2	4	2	2	14	Iavaroni	19	2-3	0-0	4	0	1	4
Bird	46	15-25	0-0	11	8	0	30	R. Johnson	29	7-9	0-1	6	2	1	14
Parish	40	7-16	4-5	13	1	2	18	Malone	42	13-20	2-4	15	2	2	28
Buckner	27	2-8	2-2	1	6	4	6	Toney	41	13-24	7-13	5	8	4	33
Ainge	38	6-12	4-5	4	1	4	16	Edwards	19	4-11	2-2	1	4	5	10
McHale	27	3-7	1-2	5	0	3	7	Richardson	35	3-8	0-0	3	6	3	6
Archibald	13	2-4	1-2	0	2	4	5	Jones	32	3-5	2-2	4	2	2	8
Henderson	11	1-3	2-2	0	5	1	4	C. Johnson	23	1-5	0-0	7	1	3	2
Robey	8	0-2	0-0	0	0	0	0								
Carr	7	0-1	0-2	0	0	1	0								
Wedman	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0								
TOTALS		42-86	16-22	38	25	21	100	TOTALS		46-85	13-22	45	25	21	105
3-point FG: 0-1 (Bird 0-1). Blocks: 4 (Parish, Ainge, McHale 2).								Blocks: 5 (Iavaroni 2, R. Johnson 2, Malone).							
Attendance: 18482. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Dick Bavetta.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	31	25	24	20	100
Philadelphia 76ers	26	28	25	26	105

While the owners and players met in New York for collective bargaining talks, working towards either an agreement or a players strike by April 2, the Celtics continued to stumble, dropping their fourth straight game for the first time in four years. The Sixers division lead was now eleven games, prompting Bobby Jones to remark that games against the Celtics were a little less intense. "I don't think for the players it's that much different, but maybe there is less excitement for the fans and maybe some of that is transferred to the players." Tiny Archibald was limited to thirteen minutes while recovering from sinus trouble, but the 76ers

were without Julius Erving (right wrist) and Maurice Cheeks (tonsillitis). Boston led by nine late in the first, weathered a Philadelphia comeback, and then opened up a 76-70 lead early in the third by hitting ten of their first eleven shots after the halftime break. Three minutes into the fourth quarter, the Celtics led 88-81 and appeared on their way to the their first win in Philadelphia since Game 6 of the 1982 Eastern Conference Finals, but Andrew Toney sparked a 10-3 Sixers run that quickly tied the score. Then Toney made a driving layup to give the 76ers a 95-93 lead with 5:17 left that they never relinquished. Philadelphia would extend their lead to five, but when Boston's nemesis missed one of two free throws with sixteen seconds left, the Celtics had the ball, down 103-100, and called a timeout to setup a three-point play for Bird. But the Sixers were ready. "We knew it would be Larry," said Bobby Jones. "He put us into overtime once here this year with that shot. I was picked on the play and ended up behind him. Clint (Richardson) ended up in front of him." Surrounded, Bird's shot caromed off the rim and into the hands of Moses Malone for the latter's fifteenth rebound. Malone's two free throws ended the scoring.

April 17, 1983

Boston 114, Philadelphia 101

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	23	8-14	4-4	8	2	1	20	Maxwell	29	7-14	3-4	4	1	4	17
C. Johnson	21	3-7	0-0	6	0	3	6	Bird	41	6-19	1-2	12	7	4	13
McNamara	14	1-5	2-6	4	1	6	4	Parish	35	6-17	1-4	17	1	1	13
Cheeks	26	3-8	4-4	4	7	0	10	Ainge	26	4-6	0-0	4	3	4	9
Toney	26	5-13	3-4	3	3	2	13	Henderson	22	4-10	2-2	3	4	1	10
Richardson	26	7-15	0-0	7	2	3	14	McHale	31	8-16	11-12	6	1	2	27
R. Johnson	26	3-8	3-3	5	2	2	9	Archibald	25	4-9	4-5	2	3	2	12
Cureton	25	2-10	0-0	4	1	2	4	Buckner	15	3-6	1-2	4	3	1	7
Edwards	18	3-6	0-0	0	1	2	6	Robey	13	2-5	0-0	3	4	2	4
Iavaroni	18	1-2	3-4	6	3	1	5	Wedman	2	1-2	0-0	1	0	0	2
Jones	17	4-7	2-2	5	1	2	10	Bradley	1	0-0	0-2	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		40-95	21-27	52	23	24	101	TOTALS		45-104	23-33	56	27	21	114
Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 7 (Erving 4, Cheeks, Iavaroni 2).								3-point FG: 1-4 (Bird 0-2, Ainge 1-1, Archibald 0-1). Blocks: 13 (Maxwell, Bird 2, Parish 5, McHale 4, Archibald).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Bob Rakel, Lee Jones.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	23	33	27	18	101
Boston Celtics	26	33	19	36	114

The final day of the regular season was meaningless in terms of the standings. The 76ers were locked in as the top seed and had earned home-court advantage throughout the playoffs; the Celtics would be seeded third, and would not have a first-round bye for the first time in the

80s Era. Boston would, however, have the home-court advantage in any playoff series not involving the 76ers or Lakers.

But there were some interesting subplots. Philadelphia had a chance to tie the 1971 Bucks for the third-most wins in a season, even though the 76ers franchise record of 68 set in 1967 was already out of reach. Both teams had coasted as the season wound down, and Billy Cunningham treated this game in the same way, allowing Moses Malone to miss his fourth straight game to rest his balky right knee. But Fitch wanted to see his team geared up for the playoffs. Larry Bird had missed a week due to a groin injury, but was in the starting lineup for the finale. "I knew my timing would be off," Bird said after a 13/12/77 effort in forty-one minutes. "But the more I play, the better I'll feel. It's a little sore now, but I'll be ready for the playoffs. I feel a lot better now than I did two days ago." Robert Parish also started and played thirty-five minutes despite missing practice the day before with an illness. "We played this one like we were playing a regular game," Fitch said afterwards.

Boston led through most of the first half, but with Philadelphia still playing their starters throughout the third, the 76ers pulled ahead 83-78 with twelve minutes left in the regular season. But Cunningham left the fourth quarter up to the likes of Mark McNamara, Reggie Johnson and Earl Cureton, who were overwhelmed by the Celtics regulars down the stretch.

1983-84

November 19, 1983

Philadelphia 92, Boston 91

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	42	5-8	5-5	6	3	0	15	Erving	39	7-25	4-7	5	3	1	18
Bird	40	7-18	4-4	8	5	2	18	Iavaroni	26	3-5	4-4	5	3	3	10
Parish	31	8-15	1-2	11	3	2	17	Malone	36	7-13	1-3	15	1	3	15
D. Johnson	40	3-13	4-4	7	5	5	11	Cheeks	37	10-16	0-1	3	5	3	20
Henderson	29	3-9	0-0	4	6	3	6	Toney	29	8-16	3-4	3	3	5	19
McHale	31	6-10	3-3	8	0	5	15	Richardson	26	1-2	0-0	3	3	2	2
Buckner	18	4-6	1-1	3	2	2	9	C. Johnson	22	1-4	0-0	7	2	2	2
Ainge	8	0-0	0-0	1	0	1	0	Williams	21	3-7	0-0	2	1	4	6
Wedman	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Edwards	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		36-79	18-19	48	24	20	91	TOTALS		40-88	12-19	43	21	23	92
3-point FG: 1-2 (D. Johnson 1-2). Technical Fouls: Boston illegal defense. Blocks: 4 (Bird, Parish 3).								Technical Fouls: Philadelphia illegal defense. Blocks: 6 (Erving, Malone 2, C. Johnson 2, Williams).							
Attendance: 17921. Referees: Joe Borgia, Bernie Fryer.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	23	23	26	19	91
Philadelphia 76ers	26	34	18	14	92

The first meeting of the regular season took place roughly a month after the teams played a pair of preseason games, one at Boston Garden and another in Chattanooga, Tennessee. It was during the exhibition game in Boston that one of the signature moments of the Celtics-Sixers rivalry in the 80s Era took place. Just a few minutes into the game, Malone and Maxwell got physical under the boards, then Maxwell threw the ball off Malone's left shoulder, and the two proceeded to wrestle each other to the floor under the basket as the benches emptied. Then, a minute later, Bird and Iavaroni squared off following the latter's hard foul on Maxwell. Bird eventually turned his invective on Cunningham, whose sports jacket split open in the back as he entered the fray; Andrew Toney eventually held Cunningham back as his coach ranted and raved on the court. Then, the referees (who were replacements working in place of the regular officials who had walked off the job) ejected Bird and Iavaroni.

Red Auerbach, incensed that Malone, who had earned only a personal foul for his earlier actions (Maxwell had picked up a technical), had not been thrown out too, came down from his seat in the stands to argue the point with the referees and a still smouldering Cunningham. "I went down there [on the court] to stop Philly from taking over the game," Auerbach told reporters:

I do not blame the referees for what happened. They were new guys and Philly was trying to take advantage of the situation. ... I went on the court to help the officials get things under control, then they [the Sixers] all start mouthing off. When I went down on the floor I told the officials that if they were going to throw Bird out, they should throw Malone out as well.

Ultimately, Auerbach and Cunningham both looked a little foolish allowing themselves to get so out of control during *an exhibition game*. The game eventually continued—with extra police protection in place for the Sixers bench—as Boston won 99-86.

The defending champion 76ers entered their first regular season game against the Celtics at 7-3 and there were already murmurs that they were going to have trouble getting their hands back on the NBA championship trophy. Erving shrugged off that talk. "Let's put it this way. When it's time, it will happen. That's the confidence we have. We know it's not going to be the result of us awakening and suddenly it's there. It will be the result of continuing to do the things that are good and eliminating the things that are not so good." Tonight, the 76ers were doing many good things, especially in the third quarter as they built a 74-58 lead five minutes into the period. But the shorthanded 76ers (Bobby Jones missed the game with a pinched nerve in his leg) surrendered the lead during a 24-6 Celtics run that illustrated some of those "not so good" things that had led to Philadelphia's underwhelming start to the season.

While the 76ers had stood pat in the offseason, the Celtics had not. Following a shocking sweep at the hands of the Bucks, Bill Fitch resigned and assistant K.C. Jones was elevated to

take his place. Rick Robey was shipped to Phoenix for Dennis Johnson, Tiny Archibald was released, and owner Harry Mangurian sold the team to a group led by Don Gaston. D.J. was acquired to counter Andrew Toney, and he did a credible job in his first attempt, holding Toney to 19 points on fifty percent shooting. However, in the end the Boston Strangler prevailed. Toney drew a foul on Johnson with just over a minute left and drained two free throws to give Philadelphia an 89-88 lead, then Toney hit a jumper to make it 91-88 with twenty-eight seconds left. Boston had a chance to tie, but Cheeks stole the ball from Parish, forcing the Celtics to foul. Erving made one of two at the line, rendering Johnson's follow up three-pointer little more than window dressing.

December 4, 1983

Philadelphia 121, Boston 114 (ot)

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	41	6-15	8-12	4	6	4	20	Maxwell	32	5-8	7-8	6	2	6	17
Javaroni	16	0-1	2-2	0	0	5	2	Bird	46	10-25	2-3	11	13	4	22
Malone	42	12-21	5-7	14	2	3	29	Parish	45	7-17	7-12	13	3	2	21
Cheeks	41	6-8	7-7	1	8	3	19	D. Johnson	31	5-11	0-0	2	3	4	11
Toney	33	6-15	5-5	3	3	4	18	Henderson	38	10-15	0-0	7	4	3	20
Jones	31	7-11	5-7	5	2	3	19	McHale	32	6-8	3-4	3	2	4	15
C. Johnson	17	1-3	1-2	7	2	5	3	Ainge	26	3-9	1-1	1	2	5	8
Richardson	16	3-8	1-1	3	2	0	7	Buckner	11	0-1	0-0	1	0	3	0
Threatt	12	1-2	0-0	0	0	0	2	Wedman	4	0-3	0-0	0	0	1	0
Williams	12	0-3	0-0	2	3	3	0								
Edwards	4	1-1	0-0	0	1	1	2								
TOTALS		43-88	34-43	39	29	31	121	TOTALS		46-97	20-28	44	29	32	114
3-point FG: 1-2 (Toney 1-2). Technical Fouls: C. Johnson. Blocks: 7 (Erving 2, Malone, Toney, Jones 2, C. Johnson).								3-point FG: 2-5 (Bird 0-1, D. Johnson 1-3, Ainge 1-1). Technical Fouls: Jones. Blocks: 4 (Bird 2, Parish, McHale).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Tom Ward.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Philadelphia 76ers	16	30	28	26	21	121
Boston Celtics	29	24	24	23	14	114

The Celtics controlled the first half, including a 23-9 run in the first quarter, and led by fifteen two minutes into the second before settling back to a seven point halftime edge. But Philadelphia outscored Boston 19-10 to start the third as the Celtics shot a woeful 6 for 23 for the period. Still, the Celtics led 93-86 with 3:16 left in regulation as Malone sat resting on the bench.

Malone then returned, and a pair of turnovers by Henderson and Bird allowed the Sixers to make up ground. A three-point play by Bobby Jones made it 96-95 Boston with thirty-nine seconds on the clock. Parish then made two free throws, but Toney made the second of two three-point attempts to tie the game. The two teams headed to overtime thirteen seconds

later; Bird made a running jumper but there was enough time remaining for Malone to inbound the ball and throw a deep pass to Erving, who rattled home the equalizer over Bird. "I was trying to get back on defense and Moses threw a good pass," Bird said. "I anticipated it would be short, but it went over my head. Doc got it and took a tough shot, but it went in." The 76ers had been out of timeouts, so there was no time to set up the play. "I just caught the ball and shot it," Erving said after the game. "No set play, just pro basketball. It just flowed the way that so much of the game flows, and the talent flows whenever these two teams meet. You move away from playing the game on paper, and you actually play it on the court. I think it is a beautiful thing to watch and to participate in."

Overtime featured an exchange of baskets over the first few minutes until the Sixers pulled ahead at 113-108, then made their free throws down the stretch to ice the game.

January 13, 1984

Boston 105, Philadelphia 104

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	31	4-9	2-2	6	7	1	10	Erving	37	7-16	8-12	6	2	2	22
Bird	39	13-25	3-5	19	8	4	29	Iavaroni	24	4-8	0-0	5	3	1	8
Parish	41	9-14	3-4	15	2	4	21	Malone	42	5-14	8-13	14	2	3	18
D. Johnson	37	6-18	5-5	0	7	4	17	Toney	38	11-19	6-8	2	8	3	28
Henderson	35	3-6	0-0	3	5	1	6	Cheeks	29	6-8	2-2	1	5	5	14
McHale	30	9-13	2-3	4	0	6	20	Jones	23	4-8	0-0	10	1	2	8
Buckner	13	0-3	0-0	1	0	3	0	Richardson	23	1-3	0-0	3	3	1	2
Ainge	7	1-4	0-0	2	0	0	2	C. Johnson	18	1-4	0-0	3	1	1	2
Carr	4	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	Threatt	6	1-2	0-0	0	0	1	2
Wedman	3	0-1	0-0	1	1	0	0								
TOTALS		45-94	15-19	51	30	23	105	TOTALS		40-82	24-35	44	25	19	104
3-point FG: 0-2 (Parish 0-1, D. Johnson 0-1). Technical Fouls: Boston illegal defense 2. Blocks: 6 (Parish 4, McHale 2).								Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 12 (Erving 3, Iavaroni 2, Malone 3, Toney, Jones 2, C. Johnson).							
Attendance: 17921. Referees: Jack Madden, James Capers															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	31	24	27	23	105
Philadelphia 76ers	34	27	26	17	104

Boston had won five straight entering the game, and Philadelphia had lost two of three, including a 111-73 stinker in New York as Julius Erving sat out his third straight game with a bruised right forearm sustained against Milwaukee. But Erving was back and the 76ers led for most of this contest, even though Bird had one of his best games of the rivalry (18/13/6 in the first half alone). Bird's jumper with 5:45 left gave the Celtics their first lead since 25-23, but when Erving made one of two free throws with forty-four seconds remaining, the 76ers were back in front, 104-103. Parish and Bird missed chances to get the lead back, but Toney fouled Parish as they fought for the rebound a Bird miss. Parish hit both free throws

to provide the final margin, but the matter wasn't settled until Maxwell fought off Moses Malone to get the rebound of Erving's attempt at a game-winning jumper.

Billy Cunningham summed up the season series perfectly after the game: "The way these two teams play, we ought to just play the last minute."

January 25, 1984

Boston 102, Philadelphia 98

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	37	7-15	6-12	5	6	2	20	Maxwell	30	6-7	2-3	5	3	5	14
Javaroni	21	3-7	3-3	6	0	4	9	Bird	40	5-18	5-5	6	7	1	15
C. Johnson	39	3-13	0-0	8	1	5	6	Parish	37	10-16	4-8	13	3	5	24
Cheeks	33	3-8	3-4	1	3	1	9	D. Johnson	30	4-13	3-6	4	2	5	11
Toney	31	3-12	8-9	6	6	5	14	Henderson	26	4-7	0-2	1	5	4	8
Jones	24	5-8	3-4	4	1	2	13	McHale	31	8-11	1-2	11	0	2	17
Richardson	23	4-6	4-4	3	2	0	12	Ainge	22	3-7	2-2	4	2	0	8
Williams	23	6-11	0-0	8	0	4	12	Buckner	18	1-4	3-4	1	4	5	5
Edwards	9	0-4	3-4	2	1	1	3	Carr	6	0-4	0-0	1	0	1	0
TOTALS		34-84	30-40	43	20	24	98	TOTALS		41-87	20-32	46	26	28	102
3-point FG: 0-1 (Toney 0-1). Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 3 (Erving, C. Johnson, Williams).								3-point FG: 0-2 (Bird 0-1, Ainge 0-1). Technical Fouls: D. Johnson. Blocks: 8 (Bird 2, Parish 4, Henderson, McHale).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Jack Madden, Bill Saar.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	31	27	28	12	98
Boston Celtics	31	29	27	15	102

Philadelphia ended a three game road trip at 0-3 after dropping another close game at the Garden. Moses Malone had sprained his left ankle in the fourth quarter the night before against the Knicks; he missed this game and would also skip the upcoming All-Star game (K.C. Jones, the head coach for the East squad, had already named Parish as Malone's replacement in the starting lineup). Parish completely outplayed Clemon Johnson, who had been acquired in February 1983 from Indiana to provide depth in the frontcourt. The 76ers pursuit of Malone had brought them a championship, but the cost of the trade with Houston and the price tag of Malone's contract had weakened Philadelphia's depth.

The first half was tight throughout—sixteen lead changes in the second quarter alone—and the teams exchanged runs of 16-6 (Celtics) and 14-4 (Sixers) in the third. But the Celtics owned most of the fourth quarter, which was traditionally where the sturdy Malone thrived. "That's his bread-and-butter time," Erving said afterwards. "Having him on the boards and on offense means a lot. We could've used his muscle. That's his time of the game." Instead, Boston held Philadelphia to 3 for 19 shooting in the quarter and took the lead for good with a 14-5 run. The 76ers managed to hold the Celtics without a basket over the final three-and-a-half minutes of the game, but could get no closer than three points.

February 12, 1984

Philadelphia 109, Boston 91

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	37	13-19	4-5	9	4	3	30	Bird	37	7-22	11-14	10	2	3	25
Williams	35	7-12	3-3	13	5	4	17	Maxwell	24	2-8	1-7	10	2	5	5
C. Johnson	41	3-8	3-4	12	1	5	9	Parish	40	7-15	2-3	13	1	3	16
Cheeks	30	5-11	0-0	1	3	1	10	Henderson	26	3-7	3-4	2	3	2	9
Richardson	34	5-14	0-0	1	4	4	10	D. Johnson	25	0-4	0-0	4	4	2	0
Toney	28	9-16	3-3	1	7	5	21	McHale	34	10-19	2-3	11	1	4	22
Javaroni	27	3-9	3-4	5	3	4	9	Ainge	18	0-3	2-2	3	5	0	2
Edwards	4	1-2	0-0	1	0	0	2	Wedman	13	2-5	0-0	0	0	0	4
Jones	3	0-1	1-4	0	0	1	1	Carr	10	1-5	0-0	1	1	3	2
Threatt	1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	Kite	5	2-3	0-0	3	0	2	4
								Clark	4	1-2	0-0	0	0	0	2
								Buckner	4	0-4	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		46-93	17-23	43	27	27	109	TOTALS		35-97	21-33	57	19	24	91
Technical Fouls: Philadelphia illegal defense, six men on court. Blocks: 4 (Williams 3, Richardson). Steals: 10 (Erving 2, Williams 3, Cheeks 2, Richardson 2, Edwards).								3-point FG: 0-3 (Bird 0-1, Wedman 0-1, Carr 0-1). Blocks: 7 (Maxwell, Parish 3, McHale 3). Steals: 3 (McHale, Ainge, Clark).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Hugh Evans, Mike Mathis.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	26	25	28	30	109
Boston Celtics	27	24	12	28	91

Malone was still on the shelf due to his ankle injury, and now Bobby Jones was ailing with back trouble, which meant that the 76ers starting frontcourt consisted of Erving, Clemon Johnson and the immortal Sam Williams. To add depth, the 76ers were forced to sign Charlie Jones (younger brother of Caldwell and Major) from the Bay State Bombardiers of the CBA, who played their home games twenty-five miles south of the Boston Garden in Brockton, Massachusetts. But the healthy Celtics could not take advantage of the 76ers plight, committing eight turnovers in the first quarter, missing 15 of 22 shots in the second, and getting outscored in the third 28-12. "The way we played, we should have lost by 30," Parish said after it was over. As bad as the frontcourt was, the Celtics backcourt was worse: Henderson, Johnson and reserves Ainge, Carr and Buckner shot a combined 4 for 23. "It was really a poor effort on everybody's part," Bird told reporters. "If we don't get our act together soon, we're going to be compared to last year's team, and that's something we didn't want to do."

The 76ers were happy to beat the Celtics for a second time in the Garden that season. "It was a lot of fun out there today," said Erving. Unfortunately for him, it would be the last time he walked off the Garden floor after a victory; the 76ers did not win again in Boston (regular season or playoffs) for four years, and by then, Erving's career, like the 80s Era, was over.

March 25, 1984

Philadelphia 119, Boston 114 (2ot)

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	47	9-14	4-5	8	1	6	22	Erving	43	12-22	4-6	6	6	3	29
Bird	53	12-28	9-12	17	6	4	33	Iavaroni	13	1-3	0-0	1	0	1	2
McHale	50	5-13	2-2	4	1	6	12	Malone	46	11-25	10-12	27	1	3	32
D. Johnson	47	6-14	1-5	4	6	5	13	Toney	46	8-17	4-5	1	5	5	20
Henderson	45	8-15	0-0	1	6	5	16	Cheeks	43	5-11	0-0	3	5	3	10
Wedman	22	3-4	0-0	2	5	1	6	Jones	34	1-5	4-5	7	6	3	6
Buckner	15	4-4	0-1	1	3	3	8	Threatt	28	3-6	3-4	3	5	3	9
Carr	7	1-1	2-2	1	0	1	4	Williams	19	1-5	2-2	4	0	1	4
Kite	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	2	0	C. Johnson	18	3-3	1-2	4	0	5	7
TOTALS		48-93	18-27	39	28	33	114	TOTALS		45-97	28-36	56	28	27	119
Technical Fouls: D. Johnson. Blocks: 3 (Bird, McHale, D. Johnson).								3-point FG: 1-1 (Erving 1-1). Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 8 (Erving 2, Malone, Jones 4, C. Johnson).							
Attendance: 17921. Referees: Wally Rooney, Lee Jones.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	OT2	F
Boston Celtics	22	19	34	20	8	11	114
Philadelphia 76ers	21	25	27	22	8	16	119

Now it was the Celtics turn to be without their starting center due to an ankle injury. Parish sat out his second straight game, forcing McHale and Maxwell to handle Moses Malone inside, while the Celtics backcourt was missing Danny Ainge, out with a jammed neck. But the missing players did not weaken the quality of the game, which was close throughout, and featured a late rally by the Sixers in regulation to overcome a six point deficit. Bird hit an eighteen-footer to force the first overtime, then Maxwell hit a pair of free throws to force a second extra session.

With Malone on the bench at start of the sixth period with an aggravated thumb injury, Philadelphia scored the first five points to lead 108-103, and Maxwell headed to the bench with his sixth foul; McHale would soon follow. Meanwhile, Cheeks and Erving both hit jumpers to beat the shot clock, and then, after a controversial sequence in which Malone appeared to block a shot out of bounds that was ruled in bounds instead, Jones was fouled and hit both free throws to put the game out of reach.

After the game, Cunningham remarked, "I guess you can see why Boston and Philadelphia have had success over the years. They have the players who aren't afraid to take the big shots, players to make the big plays . . . it's just great. It's just great being the coach and being involved in all this." Meanwhile, K.C. Jones groused about the officiating. "If you're asking me what I thought turned the game around, I can't answer that because it would cost me five or 10 thousand dollars. If I said what I wanted to say about [Wally] Rooney, they'd take my whole paycheck."

1984-85

November 9, 1984

Boston 130, Philadelphia 119

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	23	3-13	0-1	3	5	3	6	Maxwell	34	2-5	7-7	8	4	3	11
Javaroni	11	1-2	0-0	2	0	2	2	Bird	30	17-23	7-7	7	3	3	42
Malone	41	8-13	8-10	15	3	2	24	Parish	34	6-11	2-4	5	3	5	14
Richardson	20	5-10	0-0	1	1	3	10	Ainge	45	6-15	3-3	4	12	5	15
Cheeks	35	10-16	2-3	3	6	3	22	McHale	35	7-12	4-5	8	2	5	18
Barkley	31	9-13	9-10	7	3	6	27	D. Johnson	28	7-13	5-5	2	2	5	19
Threatt	27	4-9	4-5	2	2	2	12	Buckner	16	1-3	0-0	1	5	2	2
Jones	24	3-5	0-0	1	6	1	6	Wedman	11	1-3	3-3	2	0	0	5
Wood	16	2-5	0-0	0	5	2	4	Carr	7	2-4	0-0	0	0	0	4
C. Johnson	12	2-2	2-2	2	0	1	6								
TOTALS		47-88	25-31	36	31	25	119	TOTALS		48-89	31-34	37	31	28	130
3-point FG: 0-4 (Richardson 0-1, Cheeks 0-1, Barkley 0-1, Wood 0-1). Technical Fouls: Erving 2, Cunningham, Philadelphia illegal defense, assistant coach Goukas. Blocks: 2 (Cheeks, Threatt).								3-point FG: 1-2 (Bird 1-1, Carr 0-1). Technical Fouls: Bird 2. Blocks: 5 (Bird 2, Parish 2, Carr).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Jack Madden, Dick Bavetta.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	32	20	27	40	119
Boston Celtics	30	31	37	32	130

The outcome was surprising, but what took place with 1:36 left in the third quarter was shocking: a fight between Larry Bird and Julius Erving that led to ejections for both men. Bird had been torching Erving (42 points on 17 for 23 shooting) while the Doctor was missing ten of thirteen shots and growing increasingly frustrated—and physical—as the two stars tracked each other up and down the court. Philadelphia, playing without Andrew Toney (ankle sprain) led by two after the first quarter but then wilted; Boston had built an 87-63 lead when the undercard stole the spotlight.

A knee injury had sent referee Jack Madden to the locker room earlier in the third period, leaving Dick Bavetta to officiate a volatile situation between two old rivals in the middle of a blowout. The fight broke out after Bird and Erving got tangled up in front of the 76ers bench, with Bird ultimately hitting the floor after being whistled for an offensive foul. Then, as the players returned up court, Bird added fuel to Erving's fire by saying something—neither player would provide details later—and the two proceeded to square off near midcourt. As coaches and teammates either piled on or tried to quell the brawl, the Celtics organist played sedately in the background while the fans cheered uncomfortably. The lowlight was an enraged Erving landing three blows on Bird while the latter was held from behind, in a largely

defenseless position, by Malone and rookie Charles Barkley (who was on his way to a career-high 27 points in the game). Malone later launched a vicious left jab at M.L. Carr just as the main action was subsiding. Carr was not shocked by the altercation. "I don't think people expect to see it between Julius and Larry because they are the two best players around," Carr said after the game. "But they have emotions, too, and they both got a little carried away. He came after Larry. Larry came after him. But they're both professionals and I don't think they will hold any grudge."

Erving and Bird were both ejected—the first ejection of Erving's career—and were later fined \$7,500. The NBA agreed with Cunningham's assessment that Bird was the aggressor: "When he has to throw elbows like that, he's got to expect it in return . . . If he's going to play that way, we're going to come in here and point someone out to fight with him." (The league handed out eighteen fines in all, totaling \$30,500; the NBA had increased the fine for coming off the bench during a fight from \$150 to \$500 prior to the season.)

December 12, 1984

Philadelphia 110, Boston 107

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	29	5-8	6-7	6	2	3	16	Erving	30	7-18	2-2	4	3	4	16
Bird	41	16-28	2-2	9	5	3	34	Barkley	37	6-11	5-7	12	0	1	17
Parish	36	4-14	2-4	15	0	4	10	Malone	43	10-19	13-16	13	2	5	33
D. Johnson	45	8-17	6-7	4	10	3	22	Cheeks	40	7-17	2-2	5	10	1	16
Ainge	43	6-11	0-0	3	11	3	12	Toney	37	6-14	1-1	4	11	3	13
McHale	28	4-7	0-0	3	2	4	8	Jones	24	3-6	2-2	5	0	2	8
Wedman	9	2-2	1-2	1	0	1	5	Richardson	15	2-4	1-2	0	3	4	5
Buckner	6	0-0	0-0	1	2	1	0	C. Johnson	10	1-2	0-0	3	0	0	2
Carr	2	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	Threatt	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Kite	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0								
TOTALS		45-88	17-22	42	32	23	107	TOTALS		42-91	26-32	46	29	20	110
Technical Fouls: Jones.															
Attendance: 17921. Referees: Jess Kersey, Tom Nunez.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	23	33	29	22	107
Philadelphia 76ers	37	22	27	24	110

Prior to the game, Erving visited Bird in the Celtics locker room to smooth over any lingering resentment from the game in Boston in November, and when the players later met on the court, smiles had replaced growls as the facial expressions of the day. "It's over," Erving said later. "These teams have to play each other four more times and probably in the playoffs. And they want to play—not gang war, fight or do the things that have made good copy. Boston doesn't need motivation to play Philly. And Philly doesn't need it to play Boston. It's behind me. Behind us." Bird also downplayed the incident, and as the years progressed he proved

reluctant to talk about it (or to sign autographs on photographs of the event) in deference to his respect for Erving and his regret that the fight had happened. Still, the folks who ran the Spectrum stationed ten additional security guards near the Celtics bench during the game, augmenting the pair that would normally be there, in hopes of preventing any incidents caused by rogue fans who might have been inclined to do more than just boo Bird every time he touched the ball. No incidents happened inside the arena, but someone punctured a tire on the bus that was waiting outside for the Celtics.

Unfortunately for the Celtics, Andrew Toney had partially recovered from his ankle woes and scored four of his thirteen points down the stretch and took advantage of Celtics double-teams to get his teammates easy baskets. "My ankle felt better tonight," he said afterwards, "but I had to pace myself. I was trying pick my spots. I knew at the end we would need some offense from the guards." Trailing 108-107, Parish missed two free throws and a follow-up of his second miss. Barkley was then fouled by McHale, and buried both of his tries from the line to end the scoring.

January 20, 1985

Boston 113, Philadelphia 97

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	29	8-12	1-4	7	2	3	17	Maxwell	31	4-8	9-12	5	3	2	17
Barkley	26	8-15	0-0	12	3	3	16	Bird	40	15-26	6-6	9	4	0	38
Malone	42	8-18	4-5	11	2	4	20	Parish	38	4-9	1-3	7	4	5	9
Cheeks	35	5-13	2-2	2	3	1	12	D. Johnson	40	7-15	0-0	2	9	5	14
Toney	35	4-7	4-5	3	5	2	12	Ainge	43	6-13	2-2	1	4	1	14
Jones	21	4-7	2-2	6	3	2	10	McHale	32	7-11	3-3	9	3	4	17
C. Johnson	18	3-8	0-1	5	0	2	6	Clark	13	2-4	0-0	0	2	2	4
Richardson	14	1-3	0-0	0	0	1	2	Wedman	3	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
Threatt	12	0-1	0-0	1	2	0	0								
G. Johnson	7	1-2	0-0	3	0	2	2								
Wood	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0								
TOTALS		42-86	13-19	50	20	20	97	TOTALS		45-87	21-26	33	29	19	113
3-point FG: 0-4 (Erving 0-1, Barkley 0-1, Cheeks 0-2). Blocks: 3 (Erving 2, Malone).								3-point FG: 2-6 (Bird 2-3, D. Johnson 0-1, Ainge 0-2). Technical Fouls: Ainge. Blocks: 5 (Bird 3, Parish, McHale).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Wally Rooney.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	24	25	24	24	97
Boston Celtics	26	30	27	30	113

On Super Bowl Sunday, the Celtics snapped the 76ers thirteen-game winning streak and moved a half-game ahead in the battle for first place in the Atlantic Division. The game was close in the first quarter, but a 14-2 Boston run against the Sixers bench was decisive. Philadelphia spent the rest of the game in comeback mode, but Boston continually beat them

back, leading by seven at the half, fifteen early in the third, and ten entering the final period. The margin was comfortable enough that little-used Celtics guard Carlos Clark, who had played just four minutes against the 76ers as a rookie, contributed thirteen minutes in this game, and did a reasonable job guarding a still recovering Toney.

Larry Bird had his third straight dominant performance against the 76ers, scoring 38 to match his season average against Philadelphia. Erving's breakdowns on defense against him drew much attention after the game, but Bird deflected that notion. "What do you mean, it's easy against the Doc? He gives me more problems than 90 percent of the guys in the league; the only guy who guards me better, I'd say, is Michael Cooper. The Doctor is a gambling-type defensive player ... He's got more ability than I do on the defensive end; he can block shots from behind, he's quick, he can move very well." Erving was equally referential, saying, "Larry is playing as well as he's ever played. They really have a lot of stuff designed for him to shoot the ball. And he's willing to do it. It used to be that his shot was a second option, or even a third. His shot is probably the first option this year. I think he's risen to the challenge, and it makes it really rough for anybody trying to guard him."

At least the Celtics were gracious in victory. After the game Cedric Maxwell couldn't help saying: "I'm just happy Philadelphia didn't get too accustomed to being in first place. Now they're back where they belong."

January 30, 1985

Philadelphia 122, Boston 104

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	34	5-12	2-3	4	2	2	12	Erving	33	4-13	7-8	2	6	2	15
Bird	38	8-15	0-0	7	8	2	16	Barkley	31	6-10	0-0	3	1	3	12
Parish	26	5-8	2-4	8	2	5	12	Malone	42	11-23	16-16	24	3	3	38
D. Johnson	39	9-19	2-2	2	4	3	20	Cheeks	35	5-10	0-0	4	4	2	10
Ainge	30	1-7	0-0	5	4	2	3	Toney	31	7-14	2-2	4	7	0	17
McHale	30	8-12	2-4	7	1	4	18	Richardson	22	6-11	3-3	1	0	2	15
Carr	13	4-7	2-2	2	0	1	12	C. Johnson	19	4-5	0-0	9	2	3	8
Clark	12	1-4	1-2	1	1	0	3	Jones	15	2-4	3-3	3	1	1	7
Wedman	9	1-3	0-0	1	1	0	2	Threatt	6	0-0	0-0	0	4	0	0
Carlisle	3	2-3	0-0	1	0	0	4	G. Johnson	2	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
Buckner	3	1-1	0-0	0	2	2	2	Williams	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0
Kite	3	0-0	0-2	0	0	0	0	Wood	2	0-2	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		45-91	11-19	38	25	21	104	TOTALS		45-93	31-32	51	28	16	122
3-point FG: 3 (Ainge 1, Carr 2). Blocks: 9 (Bird, Parish 3, McHale 5).								3-point FG: 1 (Toney 1). Technical Fouls: Philadelphia illegal defense. Blocks: 4 (Erving, Barkley, Malone, C. Johnson).							
Attendance: 17921. Referees: Earl Strom, James Capers.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	27	31	30	16	104
Philadelphia 76ers	26	35	36	25	122

It took just ten days for the 76ers to get revenge, in their return home from a five-game roadtrip that began with the game in Boston but also took them through Cleveland, Los Angeles (a loss to the Lakers and a win over the Clippers on back-to-back nights) and Dallas. Moses Malone, playing with “total relentlessness” in the words of Kevin McHale, recorded a season-high 24 rebounds. Malone’s task was made easier by foul trouble that plagued Parish all night; he missed ten minutes in the third quarter and picked up his fifth infraction two minutes into the fourth. Billy Cunningham was effusive in his praise of the former MVP: “He’s the kind of player who is like a Larry Bird. He just makes our team better. All of a sudden our people were able to get to the offensive boards because they [the Celtics] were so conscious of him. When he’s hitting a few shots, it makes people like Clint Richardson and Mo Cheeks more effective.” Richardson’s 15 points represented his best offensive performance since getting 18 against the Pistons in mid-November (while Toney was out at the start of the season); he had only scored in double-figures twice since.

The game was close in the first half as the two teams remained within five points of each other, but the 76ers built a 97-88 lead by the end of the third, sparked by an 8-2 run early in the quarter.

March 29, 1985

Boston 112, Philadelphia 108

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Jones	27	2-7	3-5	2	5	6	7	McHale	32	8-17	6-7	13	1	6	22
Barkley	27	6-12	6-8	5	1	4	18	Bird	41	10-15	4-5	7	5	3	24
Malone	43	8-17	6-6	16	2	4	22	Parish	44	4-9	7-10	10	1	4	15
Cheeks	36	4-9	3-3	5	5	1	11	D. Johnson	40	7-12	8-11	6	8	4	22
Toney	26	5-20	3-3	5	1	3	13	Ainge	42	8-18	4-4	8	6	3	20
G. Johnson	27	9-13	3-3	7	1	1	21	R. Williams	14	1-8	0-1	3	4	3	2
Richardson	19	1-2	0-0	1	4	1	2	Maxwell	14	0-2	1-2	2	0	1	1
Threatt	17	3-8	0-0	0	2	4	6	Wedman	11	2-5	2-2	3	2	0	6
S. Williams	13	3-5	0-0	2	0	6	6	Kite	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0
Hayes	5	1-1	0-0	5	0	0	2								
TOTALS		42-94	24-28	48	21	30	108	TOTALS		40-86	32-42	53	27	24	112
3-point FG: 0-3 (Toney 0-1, G. Johnson 0-2). Blocks: 5 (Jones, Barkley, Malone 3).								3-point FG: 0-2 (Bird 0-1, Ainge 0-1). Blocks: 5 (McHale, Parish, D. Johnson, R. Williams 2).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: John Vanak, Tom Nunez.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	19	25	27	37	108
Boston Celtics	35	27	24	26	112

The Celtics were five games ahead of the 76ers in the standings by the time Philadelphia made their last trip of the regular season to Boston. But since their last meeting, the Celtics suffered a major loss when Cedric Maxwell hurt his left knee in Chicago on February 5; he was eventually shut down after a loss against the Lakers at the Forum twelve days later. Maxwell

sat out a month, then scored just seven total points against the Cavaliers and Nets before coming off the bench in this game against the 76ers to play fourteen ineffective minutes.

Maxwell's injury moved McHale into the starting lineup and prompted the Celtics to sign guard Ray Williams, who had averaged 20 points a game for the Knicks during the first three seasons of the 80s Era but had been out of work since the end of the 1983-84 season and was now plagued by horrific shooting: his 1 for 8 performance tonight dropped him to 27 for 80 (.338) on the year.

The 76ers were missing Julius Erving, out with an ankle sprain, and shot 7 for 22 as a team in the first quarter as they fell behind by 16 points. With even Toney shooting bricks (1 for 10 in the first half) the 76ers trailed by 23 in the third before rallying. The catalysts were five dunks by Charles Barkley and Philadelphia's vaunted (and legally questionable) zone press. "We had to start playing against the zone in the second half," a smoldering K.C. Jones said afterwards. "It was called only once, and you cannot run an offense against it. Our guys didn't go to sleep; it was them playing an illegal defense. If you think we were lulled to sleep, then we were watching a different ballgame . . ." The Sixers kept chipping away at the Celtics lead, and when George Johnson's twelve-foot jumper found the bottom of the net with forty-six seconds remaining in the game, Boston's lead was down to 107-105. But Bobby Jones was called for a foul when he blocked Bird's subsequent shot, and two free throws put Boston back up by four. Johnson hit another jumper, was fouled by Bird, and made the free throw to make it 109-108 Boston with fifteen seconds left. But Boston made three of four free throws after that to close out the scoring. Boston had now won ten in a row for the second time this season.

April 9, 1985

Philadelphia 113, Boston 104

[illegible]

2, Parish 2, D. Johnson, Maxwell). Turnovers: 20 (Bird 4, McHale 6, Parish 3, D. Johnson 4, Ainge 2, Williams).	Turnovers: 19 (Erving 3, Jones, Malone, Cheeks 3, Toney 6, Barkley 3, Richardson, C. Johnson).
Attendance: 17921. Referees: Ed T. Rush, Mike Mathis.	

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	20	28	31	26	105
Philadelphia 76ers	28	19	27	20	94

After Game 2, Billy Cunningham tried to temper talk of Andrew Toney's pathetic 3 for 17 performance by evoking happier memories. "I think tonight he tried to do too much to help the team," Cunningham said, and reminded everyone that in Game 6 of the 1982 Eastern Conference Finals, "Andrew had a night similar to this one (1 for 11). The next game, he came back and scored something like 35 points." Toney actually scored 34 as the 76ers won that series. However, the day before Game 2, Cunningham indicated to reporters that he was toying with the idea of starting Clint Richardson in Toney's place, but then relented.

Right on cue, Toney responded with a game-high 26 points as this series shifted to Philadelphia, rewarding Cunningham for sticking with him. Toney hit six of his first eight shots, for 15 points in the first half, but the 76ers squandered an early lead by surrendering a 13-2 Boston run at the start of the second quarter. The rest of the period was tightly contested, and Maxwell's lone basket put the Celtics ahead as time expired.

In the fourth, Cunningham was frantically looking for a lineup combination to stem the tide. Midway through the period, trailing by eight, he replaced Erving, who was struggling offensively and was being exploited by Bird on the other end of the floor, with Barkley. It was a clear sign of the passing of a torch. The 76ers got back to within four (with the ball) but Parish stole a pass by Andrew Toney and then made a jumper. Erving eventually returned with 3:23 left and the 76ers trailing by eight, but Philadelphia never challenged Boston again.

Afterwards, Erving alternated between blaming himself and his coach. "I'm personally upset at myself. I can play better than I did," he said, but when asked why Philadelphia was not performing at the same level as they had against Milwaukee, Erving criticized Cunningham's substitution patterns and offered terse comments such as, "You'll have to ask the coach. What did he say?" In the Celtics locker room much was made of Erving's comments the day before, in which he stated that, "on both courts, I think we're four to five points better." But Erving was paraphrasing Jack Ramsay's comments during the 1977 Finals, when Portland was trailing 2-0 against Philadelphia; the Trail Blazers then won four in row. Erving had been searching for a rationale for why the 76ers could do the same thing now: "Boston is not so awesome, so dominant, so deep. If our four on the front line can neutralize their three, then our guards can more than neutralize their guards." But in Game 3 it was the Celtics who neutralized the 76ers with a balanced attack from all positions.

May 19, 1985

Eastern Conference Finals Game 4

Philadelphia 115, Boston 104

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Bird	38	4-15	6-6	7	6	3	14	Erving	29	4-21	7-9	6	6	3	15
McHale	40	10-22	5-6	17	2	3	25	Barkley	34	7-13	0-2	20	3	5	15
Parish	40	6-11	2-4	11	1	1	14	Malone	44	8-20	5-9	13	3	4	21
D. Johnson	40	8-14	3-4	4	5	5	19	Cheeks	38	10-13	2-2	5	3	2	22
Ainge	30	4-6	2-2	4	8	6	10	Toney	38	8-15	9-10	1	4	3	26
Wedman	15	2-8	0-0	1	1	1	5	Jones	29	7-8	0-0	0	1	3	14
Williams	14	2-3	2-2	1	2	5	6	Richardson	20	1-8	0-0	5	4	2	2
Maxwell	12	3-4	3-4	7	0	1	9	C. Johnson	8	0-0	0-0	2	0	2	0
Carr	5	0-2	0-0	0	0	1	0								
Buckner	4	1-2	0-0	0	1	2	2								
Kite	2	0-1	0-0	0	0	2	0								
TOTALS		40-88	23-28	52	26	30	104	TOTALS		45-98	23-32	52	24	24	115
3-point FG: 1-7 (Bird 0-1, D. Johnson 0-1, Wedman 1-4, Carr 0-1). Blocks: 9 (Bird, McHale 4, Parish 3, Maxwell). Steals: 5 (D. Johnson, Ainge 2, Carr, Buckner). Turnovers: 21 (Bird 8, McHale 2, Parish 4, D. Johnson 4, Ainge 2, Wedman).								3-point FG: 2-3 (Barkley 1-2, Toney 1-1). Blocks: 12 (Erving 4, Barkley, Malone 4, Cheeks, Jones, Richardson). Steals: 12 (Erving 3, Barkley 3, Toney 2, Jones 2, Richardson 2). Turnovers: 15 (Barkley 2, Malone 4, Cheeks, Toney 3, Jones, Richardson, C. Johnson 3).							
Attendance: 17101. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Jess Kersey.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	16	28	30	30	104
Philadelphia 76ers	31	29	25	30	115

With a nineteen-hour, made-for-TV turnaround between Game 3 (6pm finish) and Game 4 (1pm start), Cunningham started Barkley in place of the ailing Jones. Barkley had ten early rebounds as the Sixers rolled to a 31-16 first quarter lead. Erving praised his brash teammate after the game: "Playing less than 24 hours apart, his young strong legs, the new experience of being down, 0-3—the man came through. He played like a man, he played like a veteran." Barkley's youthful exuberance was clearly a spark, while Jones came off the bench to make 7 of 8 shots for 14 points in his best game of the series. Jones was also prescient after the game, telling reporters that Barkley's enthusiasm was not just due to his age: "I don't think it matters whether you're a rookie or a five-year veteran, that's just the type of person he is. I think he'll always be that way."

Philadelphia led by 16 at halftime, and if not for twelve points by Dennis Johnson in the third that helped Boston cut the deficit to 11, the game might have been over. The Sixers backcourt thoroughly outplayed the Celtics guards for most of the afternoon, and with Bird shooting 4 for 15 while playing with a badly swollen right index finger, the rest of the Celtics were listless. Boston's lack of focus was on full display at the start of the fourth quarter, when Cedric Maxwell sat glued to the bench for twenty-one seconds as four of his teammates tried to guard five 76ers; the Celtics were then given a technical foul for having too *few* players on

the court, and Maxwell sheepishly joined the action. "I think we just took them lightly," he said later. "I think we thought we could just come out there and throw our hats in the center of the ring and we'd win the game. ... There were a lot of plays today where we didn't really retaliate like we should, like when Barkley threw the ball at me after he scored ... it was like he was trying to incite a riot." But even Barkley knew that the Sixers were still in trouble in the series: "We have to play three magnificent games [to advance to the Finals]," he said. "They only have to play one."

May 22, 1985

Eastern Conference Finals Game 5

Boston 102, Philadelphia 100

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	32	6-12	4-4	2	3	4	16	Bird	43	6-18	5-7	5	5	2	17
Barkley	37	4-8	2-4	3	2	3	13	McHale	42	6-15	5-8	14	3	2	17
Malone	43	4-13	5-6	15	3	4	13	Parish	45	9-17	2-4	11	3	5	20
Cheeks	42	10-15	6-8	7	6	1	26	D. Johnson	43	10-20	3-5	5	8	4	23
Toney	34	5-12	3-3	4	6	4	13	Ainge	41	6-12	0-0	4	4	2	12
Richardson	20	2-6	2-2	3	3	2	6	Maxwell	9	0-1	0-0	0	0	1	0
Jones	17	5-7	0-0	3	1	2	10	Wedman	8	1-3	0-0	1	1	2	2
C. Johnson	13	0-0	2-2	1	0	4	2	R. Williams	5	2-3	5-5	1	0	2	9
S. Williams	2	0-0	1-2	0	0	0	1	Buckner	4	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS		36-73	25-31	38	24	24	100	TOTALS		41-90	20-29	41	24	20	102
3-point FG: 3-3 (Barkley 3-3). Blocks: 9 (Erving, Barkley 3, Malone, Toney, Jones, C. Johnson 2). Steals: 7 (Barkley 2, Cheeks 2, Toney, Richardson, C. Johnson). Turnovers: 19 (Erving 3, Barkley 2, Malone 2, Cheeks 3, Toney 6, Jones, C. Johnson, S. Williams).								3-point FG: 0-1 (R. Williams 0-1). Blocks: 5 (Bird, McHale 2, Parish, D. Johnson). Steals: 13 (Bird 3, Parish 3, D. Johnson 3, Ainge 4). Turnovers: 14 (Bird 2, McHale, Parish, D. Johnson 4, Ainge 4, Wedman, Buckner).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: John Vanak, Hugh Evans.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	30	21	26	23	100
Boston Celtics	28	28	25	21	102

Back at Boston Garden, the Celtics kept Barkley under control and the rest of the Sixers frontcourt continued to struggle. Cheeks had another outstanding game, and led the 76ers rally in the second half after the Celtics had built a nine point lead. In the final minute of the game, Erving made a finger roll to draw Philadelphia within two. Bird then missed a driving runner with thirteen seconds left, and Erving got the rebound and dribbled upcourt. He passed to Toney who was in front of the Sixers bench, being guarded by Bird. But Bird reached in and stole the ball, and then dribbled out the clock. For Bird, who was still feeling the effects of his injured hand—even though he was proficient enough to win \$160 from the *Boston Globe's* Dan Shaughnessy in an impromptu free throw shooting contest the day before—it was fitting that he sealed the game with a defensive play after a missed shot.

Five days later, Billy Cunningham resigned as the 76ers head coach. With the 76ers roster aging, and the Celtics still at their peak, the rivalry appeared to be over. The 1985 Eastern Conference Finals would prove to be the last playoff meeting between the Celtics and 76ers in the 80s Era, and there was a fitting symmetry: the 76ers had also won in five games in 1980, then the Celtics and 76ers exchanged seven game victories in 1981 and 1982. Over the four series, the two teams had evenly split their 24 playoff games.

1985-86

November 22, 1985

Boston 110, Philadelphia 103

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	34	9-20	2-2	8	1	3	21	McHale	40	11-21	10-13	11	2	1	32
Barkley	25	1-7	1-2	5	0	3	3	Bird	36	5-16	1-2	9	6	4	11
Malone	37	5-11	11-14	10	0	4	21	Parish	35	8-13	4-4	12	2	4	20
Cheeks	35	6-11	5-6	0	9	2	17	Sichting	37	2-7	2-2	2	4	2	6
Threatt	34	9-14	0-0	2	5	3	18	Ainge	33	8-12	2-2	2	4	5	18
Jones	19	2-3	0-0	2	0	3	4	Wedman	16	5-11	2-4	4	1	1	12
Catledge	18	5-9	0-0	2	1	1	10	Carlisle	14	3-3	1-2	3	4	1	7
Thompson	14	2-6	3-3	1	2	2	7	Walton	13	2-6	0-0	4	1	2	4
Wood	13	0-3	0-0	1	3	0	0	Vincent	12	0-1	0-0	1	5	1	0
Johnson	11	1-1	0-0	1	1	3	2	Kite	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
TOTALS		40-85	22-27	32	22	24	103	TOTALS		44-90	22-29	48	29	22	110
3-point FG: 1-4 (Erving 1-3, Barkley 0-1). Blocks: 2 (Cheeks, Thompson). Steals: 8 (Erving 2, Barkley 2, Malone, Cheeks, Threatt, Catledge). Turnovers: 18 (Barkley 3, Malone 4, Cheeks 2, Threatt 3, Catledge, Thompson, Wood 2, Johnson 2).								3-point FG: 0-1 (Bird 0-1). Blocks: 6 (McHale 2, Bird 2, Parish 2). Steals: 6 (McHale, Sichting, Wedman 2, Walton, Vincent). Turnovers: 19 (McHale, Bird 4, Parish 3, Sichting 2, Ainge 4, Wedman, Carlisle 2, Walton, Kite).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Ed Middleton, Mike Mathis.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	22	34	22	25	103
Boston Celtics	23	28	31	28	110

There were a lot of missing faces when the Celtics and 76ers took the floor at Boston Garden to begin the season series. Billy Cunningham was preparing to work with Brent Musberger on CBS telecasts instead of diagramming plays and barking out orders from the bench. Andrew Toney, diagnosed with stress fractures in his feet, was out indefinitely. Assistant coach Matt Goukas, who had been promoted to replace Cunningham, and third-year guard Sedale Threatt, who played sparingly in the 1985 playoffs despite the Sixers obvious need for a youthful spark, were their B-list replacements. Clint Richardson, one of the voices who cost Cunningham the locker room the year before, was in San Antonio, playing twenty minutes off the bench on another forgettable Indiana Pacers team. Richardson had been acquired by the

Pacers to replace Jerry Sichting, who had been dealt to the Celtics less than a month earlier after Indiana matched Boston's offer sheet. Meanwhile, the Celtics also traded Quinn Buckner to the Pacers and successfully rebuffed Indiana's attempt to sign Dennis Johnson as a restricted free agent (Johnson missed this game due to his grandmother's funeral). Cedric Maxwell, whose gift for one-liners frequently added spice to the rivalry, was also gone, traded to the Clippers for Bill Walton. Lastly, Celtics head cheerleader and persistent Sixers antagonist M.L. Carr had retired.

Therefore, the game lacked the sizzle of recent years, which led to the blunt headline “Is The Rivalry Deep-Sixed?” the next day in the *Boston Globe*. The Celtics led 10-2 at the start and were clinging to a one-point lead at the end of the first quarter despite shooting 5 for 10 from the floor. But the Sixers surged ahead by seven late in the second period, as the Celtics shooting woes continued. Bird and the starting backcourt of Ainge and Sichting were 3 for 18 in the half. But McHale and Parish outplayed Malone and Barkley, and the Celtics used runs of 7-0 in the third and 10-0 midway through the fourth to regain the lead and then pull away, respectively. After the game, Danny Ainge discounted talk that the rivalry was dead. “I thought it was a typical [Boston-Philadelphia] game. The crowd didn’t seem to be as excited as at a normal Sixers game, but I think the players were playing with a lot of enthusiasm. I can only speak for myself, but it’s a great challenge for me guarding guys like Maurice Cheeks and having to double on Moses [Malone]. I was equally emotionally involved in the game as always.”

November 26, 1985

Boston 98, Philadelphia 91

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	28	22	24	24	98
Philadelphia 76ers	18	32	26	15	91

Neither side seemed very emotionally involved when the two teams met again four days later. Boston raced in front during a turnover-filled first quarter (eight for Boston, nine for Philadelphia) but the 76ers rallied to within four points when the Celtics rested all five of their starters to begin the second stanza. K.C. Jones then put his starters back in, and watched them build a ten point lead, only to lose it all by halftime. The pattern repeated itself in the third, with Philadelphia ending the quarter on a 15-4 run that wiped out a nine point (70-61) Boston advantage. Two minutes into the fourth the 76ers had an improbable 84-76 lead.

But then the Celtics remembered that this was 1985, not 1982, and scored the next twelve points, including six by McHale, who also blocked a Charles Barkley shot for good measure. The clearest indicator of the Celtics resurgence in the quarter was on the glass; the two teams had each grabbed 29 rebounds through the first three periods, but Boston had a commanding 19-8 edge in the fourth, as they finally exploited their size advantage up front (6'9"-6'10"-7'0" vs. 6'7"-6'6"-6'10").

The loss was the 76ers third straight, and dropped them to 6-8, six games behind the Celtics. It was Philadelphia's worst start since the 1974-75 season, when they had only won 34 games and missed the playoffs. It was a disheartening prospect for Sixers fans.

December 21, 1985

Philadelphia 108, Boston 102

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Bird	47	14-30	1-1	8	6	2	29
McHale	44	11-21	12-13	10	2	5	34
Parish	39	6-10	0-0	6	2	4	12
Ainge	41	4-6	2-2	4	9	2	11
D. Johnson	16	2-5	0-0	2	4	2	4
Sichting	29	3-6	0-0	3	3	3	6
Walton	12	2-4	2-2	1	3	2	6
Carlisle	5	0-1	0-0	1	0	0	0
Vincent	5	0-1	0-0	1	2	0	0
Wedman	2	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		42-85	17-18	36	31	20	102
3-point FG: 1-5 (Bird 0-1, Ainge 1-2, Sichting 0-2). Blocks: 10 (Bird, McHale 4, Parish 2, Walton, Vincent 2). Steals: 7 (Bird 2, McHale 2, Ainge 2, D. Johnson). Turnovers: 14 (Bird 3, McHale 2, Parish 4, Ainge, D. Johnson 2, Sichting, Walton).							

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Barkley	36	6-14	6-8	12	4	4	18
Jones	28	4-8	1-2	6	2	3	9
Malone	39	9-20	6-9	11	1	3	24
Cheeks	48	11-19	4-5	6	14	2	26
Erving	33	5-14	4-4	6	2	2	14
Wood	27	5-10	0-0	2	3	1	11
C. Johnson	23	3-3	0-0	7	0	4	6
Moss	6	0-2	0-0	1	0	0	0
TOTALS		43-90	21-28	51	26	19	108
3-point FG: 1-5 (Barkley 0-1, Erving 0-1, Wood 1-1, Moss 0-2). Blocks: 11 (Barkley 2, Jones, Malone 2, Erving, C. Johnson 4, Moss). Steals: 11 (Barkley 5, Jones, Malone, Cheeks 4). Turnovers: 16 (Barkley 5, Jones, Malone 4, Cheeks 4, Erving, Wood).							

Attendance: 17941. Referees: Earl Strom, Bill Saar.

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	31	23	30	18	102
Philadelphia 76ers	30	25	28	25	108

But Philadelphia was not dead. The Sixers won five straight after the loss to the Celtics, dropped four of out their next five, and then won eight in a row, culminating with an overtime victory in Portland on New Year's Day. Along the way, they defeated the Celtics in this game at the Spectrum. The outcome was slightly tainted by the second quarter ejection of Dennis Johnson, but the game was tight for three quarters, featuring twenty-seven lead changes (and a stressful delay in between the first two periods when an overhead light fixture became loose and swayed precariously over a section of the seats for a few minutes before being secured). Philadelphia pulled ahead for good with eight straight points during a stretch in the fourth in which Boston, playing both Carlisle and Wedman, went scoreless for more than four minutes.

January 26, 1986

Boston 105, Philadelphia 103

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Barkley	41	8-24	10-11	21	2	5	26	Wedman	26	8-13	0-0	3	1	5	16
Jones	30	1-4	5-5	4	1	5	7	Bird	43	9-25	7-7	14	6	2	28
Malone	36	3-16	5-10	9	1	2	11	Parish	32	3-8	7-10	3	1	5	13
Cheeks	42	9-13	4-4	2	8	3	22	Ainge	40	3-5	0-0	7	4	4	6
Erving	35	6-13	1-1	3	4	4	13	D. Johnson	33	5-10	7-7	4	3	5	17
Threatt	31	7-14	0-0	1	1	3	14	Walton	25	7-13	5-8	13	1	3	19
C. Johnson	11	3-4	0-0	5	0	3	6	Sichting	21	1-3	0-0	0	2	0	2
Moss	7	2-2	0-0	1	1	3	4	Thirdkill	18	2-3	0-0	3	1	0	4
Catledge	7	0-2	0-0	1	0	0	0	Vincent	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		39-92	25-31	47	18	28	103	TOTALS		38-80	26-32	47	19	24	105
3-point FG: 0-2 (Barkley 0-2). Blocks: 8 (Barkley 2, Jones 3, Malone, Cheeks, C. Johnson). Steals: 11 (Barkley 2, Jones, Malone, Cheeks, Erving, Threatt 5). Turnovers: 14 (Barkley 2, Jones, Malone 2, Cheeks 5, Erving 2, Threatt 2).								3-point FG: 3-5 (Bird 3-5). Blocks: 8 (Parish 5, D. Johnson, Walton 2). Steals: 10 (Wedman, Bird 4, Parish, D. Johnson, Walton 2, Thirdkill). Turnovers: 14 (Parish 2, Ainge 3, D. Johnson 5, Walton, Sichting 3).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Hugh Evans, Jack Nies.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	27	23	28	25	103
Boston Celtics	29	22	31	23	105

The 76ers were 11-5 in January, but the Celtics were 12-1, and a few hours before the New England Patriots faced the Chicago Bears in Super Bowl XX the Celtics won their eighth straight game. Kevin McHale was out, missing his second consecutive game with a sore left Achilles tendon; he would not return until February 4, and by then the Celtics winning streak would be approaching thirteen. One of the main reasons for that was the presence of Bill Walton, who posted his first double-double in a Celtics uniform in a very productive twenty-

five minutes off the bench. Wedman drew the starting assignment and promptly scored 10 points in the opening quarter. But with Bird having his worst shooting day since the shocking loss to the Knicks on Christmas Day—he still ended up with a remarkable 28/14/6 stat line—the game remained close in the first half.

Philadelphia appeared to blow the game open with a 20-4 run in the third, but with Bird (a trio of threes, including a thirty-five-foot heave at the buzzer) and Walton leading the way, Boston led 82-78 heading to the fourth. The rest of the game was a tense, back-and-forth affair, which was finally decided when Walton rebounded a Bird miss and passed to Johnson, who was fouled with three seconds left and made both free throws to clinch the game.

March 16, 1986

Boston 118, Philadelphia 101

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Barkley	35	4-10	4-8	12	1	2	13	McHale	37	10-14	2-6	6	2	4	22
Erving	32	4-12	5-5	5	4	4	13	Bird	39	16-25	1-2	14	6	3	36
Malone	35	6-14	6-9	10	0	5	18	Parish	28	3-7	2-4	5	5	3	8
Cheeks	38	5-9	1-1	5	9	1	11	Ainge	23	4-7	1-2	1	3	2	10
Threatt	25	7-10	0-0	0	2	1	14	D. Johnson	29	6-12	2-2	0	7	2	14
McAdoo	19	4-10	1-2	1	0	2	9	Sichting	24	5-8	0-0	1	4	0	11
Moss	18	1-4	5-7	1	0	3	7	Walton	22	1-1	3-4	3	4	2	5
C. Johnson	16	3-5	0-0	7	0	3	6	Carlisle	15	1-1	0-0	0	0	1	2
Catledge	12	4-8	0-0	2	0	2	8	Wedman	9	3-5	0-0	3	1	0	6
Green	6	0-5	0-0	0	0	0	0	Vincent	5	1-5	2-2	1	0	2	4
Stokes	4	0-0	2-2	4	0	0	2	Kite	5	0-1	0-0	3	0	1	0
								Thirdkill	4	0-2	0-0	0	0	2	0
TOTALS		38-87	24-34	47	16	23	101	TOTALS		50-88	13-22	37	32	22	118
3-point FG: 1-2 (Barkley 1-1, Moss 0-1). Blocks: 2 (Moss, C. Johnson). Steals: 4 (Barkley, Cheeks, Threatt 2). Turnovers: 16 (Barkley 3, Erving, Malone 4, Cheeks 2, Threatt, McAdoo, Moss, C. Johnson 2, Stokes).								3-point FG: 5-7 (Bird 3-4, Ainge 1-1, Sichting 1-2). Blocks: 10 (McHale 3, Parish 2, D. Johnson, Walton 2, Kite 2). Steals: 9 (Bird 3, Ainge, D. Johnson 3, Walton, Wedman). Turnovers: 10 (McHale, Bird, Ainge 2, D. Johnson 3, Walton 2, Thirdkill).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Ed T. Rush, Wally Rooney.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	27	23	22	29	101
Boston Celtics	25	28	33	32	118

Boston's cruise towards the best record in the NBA continued with their most lopsided thrashing of the Sixers since December 1982. Philadelphia sprinted to a 21-12 lead, but Boston responded with a 33-14 run that gave the Celtics the lead for good. The lead grew to as much as 22 in the fourth before K.C. Jones sent in the Green Team (aka the bench brigade, who traditionally wore green jerseys during practices). Along the way, the Celtics toyed with the 76ers at times, including a stunning tip pass off a rebound by Bird to Walton that led to the redhead's only basket of the game (he was still feeling the effects of a sprained right

wrist). "I detected on their part a conscious desire to fight complacency because they lack a challenge. They get bored trying to get the same shots, so you see things like a lob to Dennis Johnson," Erving said after the game. "Now, to be on the opposing team and to see stuff like that is to have your antennae up. You file it away for the future."

April 6, 1986

Philadelphia 95, Boston 94

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Bird	41	8-17	0-2	10	10	2	18	Barkley	38	5-16	4-6	14	6	5	14
McHale	38	3-10	4-4	9	5	3	10	Catledge	33	5-16	3-5	8	0	1	13
Parish	31	6-11	1-1	11	0	2	13	Stokes	16	2-5	0-0	3	0	1	4
Ainge	27	3-5	5-5	1	4	1	12	Cheeks	44	8-16	4-5	2	8	3	20
D. Johnson	35	10-20	2-2	5	3	3	22	Erving	34	8-14	5-7	5	4	0	23
Sichting	24	4-6	0-0	3	1	1	8	C. Johnson	27	5-9	0-0	8	0	2	10
Wedman	15	2-5	0-0	3	2	1	4	Jones	20	0-3	0-0	3	0	1	0
Walton	15	0-2	1-1	5	2	3	1	Threatt	17	4-7	0-0	1	4	1	8
Carlisle	10	3-4	0-0	0	0	2	6	Moss	11	1-5	1-2	4	0	1	3
Kite	4	0-1	0-0	0	1	1	0								
TOTALS		39-81	13-15	47	28	19	94	TOTALS		38-91	17-25	48	22	15	95
3-point FG: 3-7 (Bird 2-4, Ainge 1-1, D. Johnson 0-1, Wedman 0-1). Blocks: 5 (McHale, Parish, Walton 3). Steals: 7 (Bird, Parish 4, D. Johnson 2). Turnovers: 22 (Bird 5, McHale 4, Parish 2, Ainge 3, D. Johnson 3, Sichting, Wedman, Walton 3).								3-point FG: 2-5 (Barkley 0-2, Catledge 0-1, Erving 2-2). Blocks: 7 (Barkley 3, Catledge, Stokes 2, Jones). Steals: 16 (Barkley, Catledge, Stokes, Cheeks 4, Erving 4, C. Johnson, Jones, Threatt 3). Turnovers: 15 (Barkley 4, Catledge 3, Cheeks 2, Erving 3, Jones, Moss 2).							
Attendance: 17941. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Mike Mathis.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	26	22	28	18	94
Philadelphia 76ers	26	21	21	27	95

Erving and his teammates earned a measure of revenge in their final meeting of the season, ending the Celtics season-high fourteen game winning streak. Boston led 94-92 with four seconds left, but Bird missed two free throws, then McHale and Barkley got tied up going for the rebound and Barkley controlled the jump ball, setting up Erving to hit a desperation game-winning three-pointer with Ainge in his face. The result was even more remarkable because Moses Malone missed his fourth game with a fractured right eye socket and Bob McAdoo was out with an injured left knee, leaving Greg Stokes and Clemon Johnson (who had recently missed two games with back trouble) as Philadelphia's only centers.

No one knew it at the time, but Malone missed the rest of the season and his career in Philadelphia was over. Without him, the 76ers pushed the Bucks to seven games in the Eastern Conference Semifinals, losing 113-112 in Milwaukee despite a career-high 28 points by Sedale Threatt. As a result, the Sixers fell two points short of creating the fifth Boston-Philadelphia Eastern Conference Finals matchup of the 80s Era.

1986-87

November 25, 1986

Philadelphia 102, Boston 100

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
McHale	42	12-18	5-8	15	5	5	29	Robinson	31	7-17	4-6	4	0	2	18
Bird	42	10-23	2-3	7	6	3	22	Hinson	31	5-12	6-7	11	1	5	16
Parish	35	4-8	2-2	7	2	4	10	McCormick	30	1-7	2-2	6	0	5	4
Ainge	40	6-12	6-8	4	5	3	18	Cheeks	47	11-18	1-2	4	8	1	23
Johnson	40	5-14	0-2	10	8	2	10	Erving	41	7-14	2-2	5	3	3	16
Wedman	13	0-2	0-0	1	1	0	0	Barkley	32	6-9	5-7	11	5	3	17
Kite	12	2-5	0-0	3	0	3	4	Threatt	25	3-9	2-2	0	7	4	8
Vincent	11	0-3	2-2	0	1	1	2	Wingate	3	0-0	0-0	1	1	1	0
Carlisle	5	1-2	2-2	0	0	0	5								
TOTALS		40-87	19-27	47	28	21	100	TOTALS		40-86	22-28	42	25	24	102
3-point FG: 1-4 (Bird 0-1, Ainge 0-2, Carlisle 1-1). Blocks: 6 (McHale 4, Parish 2). Steals: 4 (McHale 3, Ainge). Turnovers: 15 (McHale 3, Bird 5, Parish 2, Ainge 2, Wedman, Carlisle 2).								3-point FG: 0-2 (Erving 0-1, Barkley 0-1). Blocks: 6 (Hinson 2, McCormick, Barkley 3). Steals: 8 (Hinson 3, Cheeks, Barkley, Threatt 2, Wingate). Turnovers: 8 (Hinson, McCormick, Cheeks, Erving 4, Wingate).							
Attendance: 17967.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	25	23	25	27	100
Philadelphia 76ers	21	41	19	21	102

In the first meeting of the two rivals since the 76ers had shaken up their roster on draft day, Roy Hinson had the ball in his hands on three straight possessions down the stretch with the game tied. He made a short turnaround on the first, passed to Tim McCormick for a layup on the second, and missed a shot on the third, but Barkley got the rebound and drew a foul; his two free throws gave the 76ers a 101-99 lead. "I felt confidence in him [Hinson]," 76ers coach Matt Guokas said after the game. "He looked like he wanted it, and he came up big when we gave him the ball." Philadelphia threatened to run away with the game in the second quarter, but Boston fought back, limiting the 76ers to 7 for 23 shooting in the third period.

The game was more notable for who was *not* playing. Besides the players sent packing on draft day, Bobby Jones had retired, and the 76ers Jeff Ruland had not played since the second game of the season on November 2 due to recurring back and knee injuries (he would not return until January, then played just three more games before sitting out the rest of the year). Boston was missing Bill Walton (more foot problems), Jerry Sichting (stomach virus) and Fred Roberts (flu with a temperature of 102). Scott Wedman was activated for this game to help fill the void, having been out since May due to left heel surgery.

December 5, 1986

Boston 108, Philadelphia 106

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Robinson	35	8-15	0-2	6	2	3	16	Wedman	7	0-2	0-0	0	0	1	0
Hinson	27	5-9	4-8	6	2	3	14	McHale	40	11-17	0-0	7	5	5	22
McCormick	33	5-7	1-1	10	1	2	11	Parish	34	14-17	4-5	5	1	4	32
Cheeks	41	6-10	4-6	1	5	4	16	Ainge	31	3-9	2-2	1	6	3	8
Erving	31	7-13	3-6	3	5	2	18	Johnson	44	9-19	9-13	2	12	3	27
Barkley	36	9-15	4-5	14	3	5	23	Roberts	37	4-10	5-8	7	3	3	13
Wingate	20	1-3	0-0	0	3	3	2	Carlisle	21	2-3	0-0	0	2	3	5
Threatt	12	1-2	4-4	0	2	5	6	Kite	21	0-0	1-2	3	0	3	1
Vranes	5	0-1	0-0	0	0	1	0	Thirdkill	5	0-0	0-0	1	1	1	0
TOTALS		42-75	20-32	40	23	28	106	TOTALS		43-77	21-30	26	30	26	108
3-point FG: 2-4 (Erving 1-1, Barkley 1-3). Blocks: 3 (Robinson, McCormick, Erving). Steals: 3 (Hinson, Erving 2). Turnovers: 19 (Robinson 3, Hinson 3, McCormick, Erving 3, Barkley 8, Threatt).								3-point FG: 1-5 (Ainge 0-2, Johnson 0-1, Carlisle 1-2). Blocks: 5 (Wedman, McHale, Johnson, Kite 2). Steals: 8 (Ainge 5, Roberts, Carlisle, Kite). Turnovers: 8 (McHale 2, Ainge, Johnson, Roberts, Carlisle, Kite 2).							
Attendance: 14890.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	30	26	29	21	106
Boston Celtics	30	28	27	23	108

There was a more prominent absence from this game: Larry Bird watched the action from the bench in his gray suit, his second straight DNP due to a strained right Achilles tendon. Scott Wedman drew the start, but struggled as his left heel continued to trouble him. After seven minutes he was replaced by Fred Roberts, and Wedman would never play again in the NBA, ending his career with 11,916 points in 906 games.

The two teams shot 61 percent in the first half, and after Boston earned a five point lead in the first quarter, neither team led by more than four the rest of the way. Boston's last such advantage came at 104-100 with two minutes left, but a Julius Erving three-point bank shot brought Philadelphia within one. From there, Parish followed up a McHale miss with fifty-eight seconds remaining, and after an exchange of turnovers, Barkley sent the 76ers eleventh dunk of the game rattling through the rim with five seconds left to make it 106-105, Boston. Johnson was quickly fouled and made a pair of free throws to give the Celtics a three point lead. David Thirdkill then immediately fouled Cheeks, who made his first foul shot but missed the second intentionally; Parish grabbed the rebound and run out the clock.

December 19, 1986

Philadelphia 122, Boston 100

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
McHale	36	11-22	4-4	5	2	0	26	Barkley	44	7-11	1-2	14	11	1	15
Bird	36	9-16	2-2	7	9	3	20	Robinson	28	8-14	0-0	4	1	3	16

Parish	26	10-17	1-2	8	1	3	21	McCormick	31	6-7	4-6	5	0	5	16
Ainge	30	2-6	1-1	4	8	2	6	Cheeks	46	6-10	3-3	1	10	1	15
Johnson	37	6-15	1-2	5	9	4	13	Erving	33	7-12	10-12	7	5	2	24
Kite	22	1-3	0-3	3	1	4	2	Hinson	27	6-9	9-9	3	0	2	21
Roberts	16	2-6	0-0	2	1	3	4	Threatt	25	4-5	3-4	2	5	2	11
Sichting	13	1-4	0-0	2	1	0	2	Vranes	2	1-1	0-0	1	1	1	2
Daye	9	0-1	0-0	0	1	2	0	Wingate	2	1-1	0-0	1	0	0	2
Vincent	5	2-4	2-2	0	0	0	6	Green	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0
Carlisle	5	0-0	0-0	0	1	2	0								
Thirdkill	5	0-2	0-2	2	0	0	0								
TOTALS		44-96	11-18	38	34	23	100	TOTALS		46-70	30-36	39	33	17	122
3-point FG: 1-7 (Bird 0-2, Ainge 1-2, Johnson 0-2, Sichting 0-1). Blocks: 4 (Parish, Kite 3). Steals: 4 (Bird, Ainge, Kite, Daye). Turnovers: 13 (McHale 2, Bird, Parish, Ainge 5, Johnson 2, Thirdkill 2).								Blocks: 8 (McCormick 2, Erving 2, Hinson 3, Vranes). Steals: 6 (Barkley 3, Erving, Hinson, Threatt). Turnovers: 17 (Barkley 7, Robinson 3, McCormick 2, Cheeks, Erving 2, Hinson, Green).							
Attendance: 17967.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	21	28	30	21	100
Philadelphia 76ers	28	29	29	36	122

With both teams as healthy as they had been all year, the Sixers snapped a four-game losing streak by blowing out the Celtics at the Spectrum. The Celtics troubles began when Parish was whistled for three fouls in just eight minutes of action in the first half. He came back to score fourteen points in the second half and the Celtics were briefly within two at 59-57 before falling behind by seven at the end of the third quarter. But as K.C. Jones said afterwards, the Sixers “smelled blood in the fourth” and pulled away. Philadelphia improved to 14-10, just two games behind Boston in the Atlantic Division.

For the Celtics, this was the beginning of a six game cross-country road trip that would last through the end of the month. With another game scheduled in Milwaukee the next night, Jones rested all five of this starters for the final five minutes. It didn't help. The Celtics would lose to the Bucks 120-100 for their ninth loss of the season.

January 25, 1987

Boston 111, Philadelphia 96

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Barkley	33	6-15	5-6	11	2	3	18	McHale	38	13-19	4-4	9	1	2	30
Hinson	27	3-8	3-4	4	1	5	9	Bird	34	6-14	4-5	4	5	1	17
McCormick	35	4-12	2-5	13	1	4	10	Parish	33	7-14	7-7	15	2	3	21
Cheeks	23	1-6	0-0	1	3	2	2	Ainge	31	5-11	4-4	2	4	4	16
Erving	29	3-11	0-0	5	2	3	6	Johnson	29	1-1	3-4	3	9	3	5
Wingate	25	4-6	0-1	0	0	1	8	Sichting	19	2-6	0-0	0	1	1	4
Robinson	20	2-8	1-1	5	2	1	5	Kite	17	1-2	3-6	2	1	2	5
Toney	16	8-11	3-3	2	2	2	21	Daye	16	1-2	0-0	7	2	3	2
Colter	12	4-7	1-2	0	4	1	10	Henry	9	1-3	0-0	1	0	1	2
Free	12	3-5	1-3	0	0	1	7	Vincent	8	1-2	2-2	0	3	0	4
Vranes	8	0-0	0-0	2	0	2	0	Roberts	3	1-3	1-2	2	0	1	3

								Carlisle	3	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS		38-89	16-25	43	17	25	96	TOTALS		40-78	28-34	45	28	21	111
3-point FG: 4-9 (Barkley 1-3, Erving 0-1, Wingate 0-1, Toney 2-2, Colter 1-1, Free 0-1). Blocks: 4 (Barkley, Hinson, Erving 2). Steals: 14 (Hinson 2, Cheeks 3, Erving, Wingate 2, Robinson, Colter 2, Free 2, Vranes). Turnovers: 20 (Barkley 4, Hinson, McCormick, Cheeks 2, Erving, Wingate 3, Robinson 2, Toney 4, Colter, Free).								3-point FG: 3-6 (Bird 1-1, Ainge 2-3, Sichting 0-1, Henry 0-1). Blocks: 8 (McHale 2, Parish 2, Ainge, Johnson, Kite 2). Steals: 13 (McHale 3, Bird 4, Parish 3, Ainge 2, Johnson). Turnovers: 17 (McHale 2, Bird 2, Parish, Ainge, Johnson 2, Kite 2, Daye 3, Henry, Vincent, Roberts, Carlisle).							
Attendance: 14890.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	17	28	15	36	96
Boston Celtics	27	27	33	24	111

The Celtics rebounded from the back-to-back blowouts in December to win thirteen of their next fifteen games to open up a six game lead in the division. Then on Super Bowl Sunday they thrashed the Sixers, leading by as many as 31 points en route to a satisfying victory. "We've been playing pretty well at home all year, and this week we've been playing good defense," Larry Bird told reporters at the conclusion. "If we can sustain it when we get on the road, we'll be in good shape." Seventeen unanswered points by the Celtics in four-plus minutes during the third quarter put the game away. The Sixers made the outcome closer due to Toney's electrifying performance, which would prove to be his last double-digit outing at the Garden.

March 29, 1987

Boston 118, Philadelphia 100

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Barkley	41	5-9	9-11	12	4	3	19	Roberts	32	8-11	5-5	3	0	6	21
Hinson	41	6-13	1-2	6	0	4	13	Bird	40	7-16	2-2	13	12	1	17
McCormick	35	3-7	1-1	6	1	3	7	Parish	37	6-12	2-7	10	10	1	14
Colter	37	10-18	2-4	4	6	3	22	Ainge	39	12-15	2-2	5	3	2	30
Erving	35	11-26	5-5	3	4	5	28	Sichting	35	6-8	0-0	2	5	5	13
Wingate	20	1-7	0-0	2	2	1	2	Henry	21	5-9	0-0	2	3	1	12
Toney	19	4-7	0-0	2	1	1	9	Daye	18	5-6	1-2	1	2	1	11
Vranes	11	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0	Kite	18	0-2	0-2	3	1	4	0
McNamara	1	0-0	0-4	1	0	1	0								
TOTALS		40-87	18-27	37	18	21	100	TOTALS		49-79	12-20	39	36	21	118
3-point FG: 2-6 (Barkley 0-1, Erving 1-2, Wingate 0-1, Toney 1-2). Blocks: 3 (Hinson, Colter, Erving). Steals: 9 (Hinson 2, McCormick 2, Colter, Erving 3, Toney). Turnovers: 12 (Hinson, McCormick 2, Colter, Erving 3, Wingate 2, Toney 3).								3-point FG: 8-15 (Bird 1-3, Ainge 4-6, Sichting 1-1, Henry 2-5). Blocks: 5 (Roberts, Parish 2, Henry, Kite). Steals: 6 (Roberts, Bird, Parish, Ainge 2, Daye). Turnovers: 14 (Roberts 3, Bird 2, Parish 2, Ainge 6, Kite).							
Attendance: 14890.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	27	22	24	27	100
Boston Celtics	30	30	24	34	118

The day began with a tribute for Julius Erving, who was playing his final regular season game at the Boston Garden (and as it turned out, there would be no playoff encore). Throughout the pregame ceremony, the Boston fans cheered him on, and during his speech Erving took note of the homemade banners honoring him that were hanging in the balcony alongside the traditional signs of support for the Celtics stars. He took special pride in the piece of parquet floor presented to him by Larry Bird, telling the crowd that it was “really a pleasant surprise.”

Erving then proceeded to score 28 points, his best output at the Garden in three years (since February 1984). Several of his colleagues missed his farewell, including Maurice Cheeks (torn finger tendon), Kevin McHale (left ankle, right big toe) and Dennis Johnson (separated right shoulder), but there were plenty of quality performances to go around. Ainge scored 30 points for the third time this season, and Parish registered his first career triple-double while Bird recorded his eighty-first. Boston even got a McHale-like offensive performance from Fred Roberts, who had 11 points in the first quarter to provide a spark. In the third, after the Sixers cut their deficit to 72-70, bench brothers Greg Kite, Darren Daye and Conner Henry helped Bird and Ainge assemble a 12-3 run that eliminated much of the remaining drama.

With 1:27 remaining, Erving departed to a three-minute standing ovation worthy of a player, who, in the words inscribed on the plaque bearing his personal piece of the Garden floor, was, "A most respected and admired adversary whose grace, skill and competitive play has entertained so many for so long on the Boston parquet."

April 5, 1987

Philadelphia 106, Boston 104 (ot)

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Boston Celtics	24	33	23	19	5	104
Philadelphia 76ers	33	29	19	18	7	106

The Celtics entered this game having clinched the Atlantic Division title and had a comfortable four game lead in the loss column over the Hawks for the best record in the East with seven games remaining. Both the Celtics and 76ers were down a starting guard as Ainge (flu) joined Cheeks (still out with a finger injury) on the sidelines. Boston's troubles on the road continued, as they fell to 19-19 away from the Garden. Their fate was sealed in surprising fashion when Bird air-balled a potential game-tying turnaround over Barkley at the buzzer in overtime. "I was fading a little," Bird explained. "Going sideways. The shot was a little harder than I thought it was going to be." Bird had also missed a turnaround late in regulation after Barkley tied the game at 99-99, but with Parish's right elbow hampering his shooting, Bird and McHale were the only viable offensive options down the stretch. Philadelphia scored the final seven points of overtime, all with Julius Erving on the bench; Guokas pulled him with 6:47 remaining in regulation, providing an inglorious ending to Erving's career against the Celtics.

Chapter Eight

76ers vs. Lakers

1979-80

January 25, 1980

Los Angeles 124, Philadelphia 103

PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		LOS ANGELES	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Erving	10	4-8	24		Chones	8	0-2	16
C. Jones	6	0-2	12		Wilkes	14	2-2	30
Dawkins	8	0-0	16		Abdul-Jabbar	7	10-14	24
Cheeks	5	1-1	11		Cooper	7	0-0	14
Richardson	4	3-4	11		Nixon	11	2-3	24
Bibby	4	4-4	12		Johnson	5	0-0	10
B. Jones	3	0-0	6		Ford	1	4-4	6
Mix	1	3-4	5					
Spanarkel	3	0-0	6					
Toone	0	0-0	0					
TOTALS	44	15-23	103		TOTALS	53	18-25	124

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	30	23	27	23	103
Los Angeles Lakers	26	32	31	35	124

The Trail Blazers had snapped the Lakers season-long six-game winning streak the night before, but Los Angeles rebounded from a rough first quarter to get back in the win column and close within a game-and-a-half of the first-place Seattle SuperSonics in the Pacific Division. Magic Johnson scored 10 points off the bench as the Lakers built a 15 point advantage with five minutes remaining in the fourth quarter. The 76ers got no closer than 11 before the Lakers scored ten unanswered points to settle matters. Wilkes scored 30 to lead the Lakers and tied his season high, set in late December against the Suns.

For Philadelphia, this game was the beginning of a three-game losing streak on the West Coast. By the time the Sixers returned home, their narrow half-game lead in the Atlantic Division over the Celtics had become a one-game deficit.

February 10, 1980

Philadelphia 105, Los Angeles 104

LOS ANGELES	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Chones	3	0-0	6		Erving	8	6-7	22
Wilkes	6	3-4	15		C. Jones	0	2-2	2
Abdul-Jabbar	15	8-12	38		Dawkins	7	4-7	18
Nixon	5	0-0	10		Richardson	0	1-2	1
Johnson	8	5-5	21		Cheeks	7	3-4	17
Haywood	3	0-0	6		Bibby	0	1-2	1
Cooper	2	2-3	6		B. Jones	7	7-10	21
Ford	1	0-0	2		Hollins	5	2-2	13
					Mix	5	0-0	10
TOTALS	43	18-24	104		TOTALS	39	26-36	105
					3-point FG: 1 (Hollins 1).			

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	23	24	32	25	104
Philadelphia 76ers	19	31	20	35	105

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's game-high 38 points included a run of ten consecutive successful field goals, but a pair of free throws by Maurice Cheeks with twenty-nine seconds remaining gave the 76ers the victory. Lionel Hollins scored 13 points, including a key three-pointer in the fourth quarter, in his first appearance for the 76ers after being acquired from the Trail Blazers. "I think when Lionel gets healthy and used to playing here, he can be a very valuable player for us," Julius Erving said, referring to a series of injuries that had limited Hollins to just twenty games so far in the season. "He's a first-rate player and a first-class guy."

This game included Santa Barbara-native Don Ford's last basket as a member of the Lakers. Within a week, Ford was shipped to the Cavaliers with the Lakers 1980 first-round pick in exchange for Butch Lee and Cleveland's first-rounder in 1982. The Lakers also made a second move, acquiring forward Mark Landsberger from Chicago for guard Oliver Mack and a pair of second-round selections.

May 4, 1980

NBA Finals Game 1

Los Angeles 109, Philadelphia 102

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS		LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	41	8-17	4-8	7	4	2	20		Chones	22	1-4	1-2	3	0	4	3
C. Jones	42	5-9	5-7	9	4	2	15		Wilkes	43	9-20	2-2	7	6	3	20

Dawkins	18	4-8	4-4	3	1	6	12	Abdul-Jabbar	41	14-21	5-5	14	5	4	33		
Cheeks	32	6-13	0-0	6	3	2	12	Johnson	40	8-12	0-0	9	10	1	16		
Hollins	39	7-18	2-2	0	8	3	16	Nixon	43	9-16	5-6	1	6	3	23		
B. Jones	27	6-11	3-3	10	1	2	15	Cooper	31	1-7	0-0	4	2	3	2		
Bibby	25	2-9	2-2	3	4	0	6	Landsberger	14	5-7	0-0	4	0	5	10		
Mix	16	2-5	2-2	2	3	0	6	Haywood	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0		
								Holland	3	1-2	0-0	1	1	1	2		
TOTALS			40-90	22-28	40	28	17	102	TOTALS			48-89	13-15	43	30	24	109
3-point FG: 0-2 (Hollins 0-1, Bibby 0-1). Blocks: 13 (Erving 2, C. Jones 5, Dawkins 2, B. Jones 3, Mix). Steals: 12 (Erving 2, Dawkins 2, Cheeks 2, Hollins 5, B. Jones). Turnovers: 14 (Erving, C. Jones 5, Dawkins 3, Cheeks, Hollins, Bibby 2, Mix).								Blocks: 9 (Abdul-Jabbar 6, Cooper 2, Landsberger). Steals: 5 (Johnson 3, Nixon, Cooper). Turnovers: 17 (Chones 2, Wilkes 2, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Johnson 2, Nixon 4, Cooper 3, Landsberger).									
Attendance: 17505.																	

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	28	25	17	32	102
Los Angeles Lakers	26	27	31	25	109

Philadelphia led for most of the first half, including 41-34 at one point in the second quarter. But the 76ers went scoreless during the first 4:21 of the third, fell behind 65-53, and proceeded to shoot 3 for 20 during the period overall. Los Angeles would lead by as many as sixteen points, but the 76ers were able to close within four, at 92-88 midway through the fourth quarter. Erving was held to just nine points on nine shots over the first three quarters, a victim of consistent double-teaming by the Lakers. "We ran two people at him," said Michael Cooper, who drew the primary defensive responsibility for Doctor J. "That was the game plan. We made him pick up his dribble and pass off." Abdul-Jabbar badly outplayed Darryl Dawkins, who scored just 12 points (in what would be his lowest output of the series) as he spent much of the afternoon in foul trouble. The colorful Dawkins later remarked, "I ain't afraid to go to the hoop on Kareem, but when the refs are callin' 'em that way, it's a waste of time. I lost my funk."

May 7, 1980

NBA Finals Game 2

Philadelphia 107, Los Angeles 104

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	38	8-15	7-7	10	7	2	23	Chones	32	5-6	4-6	10	2	4	14
C. Jones	30	1-3	1-2	4	2	4	3	Wilkes	38	9-23	0-0	5	4	4	18
Dawkins	39	11-20	3-6	7	2	3	25	Abdul-Jabbar	41	19-31	0-2	14	3	4	38
Cheeks	39	11-13	1-3	4	10	4	23	Johnson	41	5-8	3-3	8	11	5	13
Hollins	39	4-14	2-2	5	7	2	10	Nixon	43	4-13	0-0	6	9	4	8
B. Jones	27	5-10	3-3	3	4	4	13	Cooper	28	4-10	1-1	3	2	2	9
Bibby	18	2-5	2-2	1	2	1	6	Landsberger	15	1-3	0-0	6	1	4	2
Mix	10	1-5	2-2	0	0	1	4	Haywood	2	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS		43-85	21-27	34	34	21	107	TOTALS		48-95	8-12	52	32	27	104

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	31	28	30	18	107
Los Angeles Lakers	21	20	30	33	104

Los Angeles 111, Philadelphia 101

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	31	27	26	27	111
Philadelphia 76ers	18	26	21	36	101

Los Angeles out-worked Philadelphia on the glass, scoring 25 points off twenty-two offensive rebounds while the Sixers scored just 8 second-chance points. Abdul-Jabbar was a major force, as the Sixers were only able to get the better of the play while the Lakers center was on the bench. "His presence just makes everybody on the court for LA so much better," 76ers coach Billy Cunningham said later. "You can see a distinct difference when he is out of the game. The funny thing is, I thought we did by far our best defensive job of the series on him." In the second quarter the Lakers saw their 31-18 lead nearly melt away in the face of an 18-7 run by the 76ers with Kareem on the sidelines, but Philadelphia got no closer than two points. Then Los Angeles closed the half with a 13-2 spurt that made their halftime break much more enjoyable. By early in the fourth the Lakers led by twenty-one and were able to hold off a 76ers rally that brought Philadelphia within seven at 108-101.

The Lakers had suspended forward Spencer Haywood after Game 2, seeing no reason to tolerate his defiant and bizarre behavior given his increasingly diminished role on the team.

May 11, 1980

NBA Finals Game 4

Philadelphia 105, Los Angeles 102

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Chones	29	3-4	0-0	6	2	4	6	Erving	41	9-17	5-6	5	3	3	23
Wilkes	42	9-16	2-3	7	2	4	20	C. Jones	41	2-4	5-6	10	1	4	9
Abdul-Jabbar	39	11-27	1-1	11	4	4	23	Dawkins	41	12-23	2-3	6	3	5	26
Johnson	45	10-14	8-10	9	9	1	28	Cheeks	40	8-13	2-2	3	7	2	18
Nixon	44	7-15	2-3	3	4	2	16	Hollins	41	6-12	6-6	4	13	2	18
Cooper	24	1-6	1-2	3	2	5	3	B. Jones	28	4-9	3-3	6	3	2	11
Landsberger	17	3-11	0-0	10	0	2	6	Bibby	8	0-1	0-0	0	1	2	0
TOTALS		44-93	14-19	49	23	22	102	TOTALS		41-79	23-26	34	31	20	105
Technical Fouls: Chones, Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 6 (Abdul-Jabbar 4, Johnson, Cooper). Steals: 12 (Wilkes 3, Abdul-Jabbar, Johnson 3, Nixon 5). Turnovers: 19 (Chones 2, Wilkes 3, Abdul-Jabbar 6, Johnson 3, Nixon 3, Cooper 2).								Technical Fouls: Dawkins. Blocks: 10 (Erving, C. Jones 4, Dawkins 2, B. Jones 3). Steals: 5 (Erving, Cheeks, Hollins 2, B. Jones). Turnovers: 14 (Erving 4, C. Jones, Dawkins 2, Cheeks 2, Hollins 3, B. Jones 2).							
Attendance: 18276.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	21	30	25	26	102
Philadelphia 76ers	28	21	32	24	105

Forced to play on back-to-back days at the request of CBS (on Saturday and Sunday afternoon), the 76ers used an 18-5 run in the third quarter to wipe out a six point Laker lead,

then held off Los Angeles down the stretch. An acrobatic layup by Julius Erving had given the Sixers a 105-100 lead with just over a minute to play, but after the Lakers scored to make it 105-102, Abdul-Jabbar rebounded an off-balance shot by Cheeks. Los Angeles called timeout with six seconds remaining. Magic Johnson then inbounded the ball to Nixon, but Bobby Jones, whose defense was tremendous throughout the game, intercepted a cross-court pass intended for Michael Cooper and then dribbled out the clock.

This game also featured one of Julius Erving's most memorable highlights, a swooping drive that took him around Mark Landsberger on the right side of the court, and then, with Abdul-Jabbar blocking a direct assault on the rim and Doctor J still in midair, Erving went behind the backboard before he reverse-banked the ball off the glass and into the basket with his right hand.

May 14, 1980

NBA Finals Game 5

Los Angeles 108, Philadelphia 103

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	41	12-24	12-16	9	6	2	36	Chones	29	1-6	3-4	6	2	3	5
C. Jones	24	3-9	0-0	10	0	5	6	Wilkes	44	6-15	2-2	5	3	4	14
Dawkins	44	10-25	3-4	7	5	4	23	Abdul-Jabbar	41	16-24	8-9	15	1	4	40
Cheeks	33	2-4	0-0	2	4	4	4	Johnson	39	4-13	6-7	15	10	5	14
Hollins	40	5-11	0-0	8	10	2	10	Nixon	43	7-17	6-9	5	7	3	20
B. Jones	27	4-10	0-0	3	1	4	8	Cooper	32	6-13	1-2	5	5	5	13
Bibby	18	3-5	2-2	2	4	1	8	Landsberger	12	1-3	0-0	5	0	3	2
Mix	13	3-6	2-2	1	2	3	8								
TOTALS		42-94	19-24	42	32	25	103	TOTALS		41-91	26-33	56	28	27	108
3-point FG: 0-3 (Erving 0-1, Dawkins 0-2). Technical Fouls: Mix, Cunningham, Philadelphia illegal defense. Blocks: 7 (Erving 2, C. Jones, Dawkins 3, B. Jones). Steals: 9 (Erving 4, Cheeks 2, Hollins, B. Jones 2). Turnovers: 12 (Erving 2, Dawkins, Cheeks, Hollins 2, B. Jones 3, Bibby 2, Mix).								Blocks: 6 (Chones, Abdul-Jabbar 4, Cooper). Steals: 7 (Johnson 3, Nixon, Cooper 2, Landsberger). Turnovers: 21 (Chones, Wilkes 2, Abdul-Jabbar 5, Johnson 10, Nixon, Cooper 2).							
Attendance: 17505.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	22	31	20	30	103
Los Angeles Lakers	25	25	31	27	108

A day after Lakers owner Jerry Buss announced that Jack McKinney would not return as head coach in 1980-81, interim head coach Paul Westhead piloted the team to a 3-2 lead in the Finals, one win away from the franchise's first championship since 1972. The first half of the game was extremely tight, featuring nineteen lead changes and seven ties, with neither side able to pull ahead by more than four points. Abdul-Jabbar was again the focus of Los Angeles's offense. He scored 12 of the Lakers first 15 points (while his teammates began the game

shooting 1 for 13 from the floor) and had 20 by halftime. The 76ers led at the half courtesy of a jumper by Steve Mix and a Hollins-to-Bibby outlet pass and layup in the final seconds.

The Lakers were leading 67-65 with 4:35 remaining in the third quarter when Abdul-Jabbar sprained his left ankle and missed the rest of the period. "I have never seen Kareem injured before, but when I saw how he was leaning on [Laker trainer] Jack Curran when he went out," Westhead later told reporters, "I knew he was in trouble." In his absence, the Sixers failed to take advantage and fell further behind, trailing 81-73 at the end of the quarter as Westhead employed Magic Johnson at center. Abdul-Jabbar returned to add fourteen points in the fourth quarter, further buoying the team's hopes. However, Erving tied the game at 103-103 with forty-three seconds left, punctuating a 16-point quarter by the future Hall-of-Famer. But following a timeout, Magic found Abdul-Jabbar, who dunked home the deciding points; Jabbar was also fouled by Erving on the play, and he added a free throw for good measure.

May 16, 1980

NBA Finals Game 6

Los Angeles 123, Philadelphia 107

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Chones	43	5-9	1-1	10	3	2	11	Erving	39	13-23	1-4	7	3	4	27
Wilkes	42	16-30	5-5	10	2	4	37	C. Jones	26	2-3	2-2	6	2	4	6
Johnson	47	14-23	14-14	15	7	3	42	Dawkins	31	6-9	2-5	4	1	5	14
Cooper	39	4-9	8-9	4	6	4	16	Cheeks	40	5-11	3-3	2	8	2	13
Nixon	40	1-10	2-2	3	9	3	4	Hollins	26	5-13	3-4	1	6	4	13
Landsberger	19	2-7	1-2	10	0	4	5	B. Jones	29	4-8	0-0	9	1	4	8
Holland	9	3-4	2-2	0	0	2	8	Bibby	21	4-10	0-2	3	3	2	8
Byrnes	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Mix	25	8-11	2-2	4	2	1	18
								Spanarkel	1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0
								Toone	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
								Richardson	1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		45-92	33-35	52	27	22	123	TOTALS		47-89	13-22	36	27	27	107
3-point FG: 0-2 (Johnson 0-1, Landsberger 0-1). Blocks: 4 (Chones 2, Johnson, Nixon). Steals: 14 (Chones 3, Wilkes, Johnson 3, Cooper 2, Nixon, Landsberger 2, Holland 2). Turnovers: 18 (Chones, Wilkes 3, Johnson 5, Cooper 4, Nixon 2, Landsberger, Holland).								3-point FG: 0-6 (Erving 0-2, Hollins 0-1, Bibby 0-2, Richardson 0-1). Blocks: 11 (Erving 2, C. Jones 2, Dawkins 3, Cheeks, B. Jones 2, Mix). Steals: 4 (Erving 2, B. Jones, Bibby). Turnovers: 18 (Erving 3, Dawkins 5, Cheeks, Hollins 6, B. Jones, Bibby, Mix).							
Attendance: 18276. Referees: Joe Gushue, Jack Madden.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	32	28	33	30	123
Philadelphia 76ers	29	31	23	24	107

Kareem's ankle injury was severe enough that he did not even make the trip to Philadelphia for Game 6. Dr. Robert Kerlan judged that Abdul-Jabbar's only hope for playing in a Game 7—if necessary—was to get as much treatment as possible. Westhead inserted Michael Cooper

into the starting lineup and moved Magic Johnson to center as he had done in the third quarter of Game 5. But Magic would allow the bulkier Jim Chones and Mark Landsberger to guard Darryl Dawkins and do most of the banging down low under the boards. Instead, Magic would spend most of his time matched up with Caldwell Jones, who had a four-inch height advantage but a more slender build.



Lineup Analysis

The Lakers opened the second half with a 14-0 run, with Magic scoring four points and handing out three assists while being guarded by either Caldwell Jones or the defensively-minded Bobby Jones. With Abdul-Jabbar out, the Sixers were rarely using Dawkins and Caldwell Jones together on the floor.

Third Quarter Game 6 1980 Finals (Part one)

Lakers ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	Bibby	Bibby	Bibby
	C. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	Erving	Mix	Mix
	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones
	Hollins	Hollins	Bibby	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Los Angeles	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper
	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes
	Chones	Chones	Chones	Chones	Chones	Chones
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic
	Nixon	Nixon	Nixon	Nixon	Nixon	Nixon
76ers ball	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	Mix	Mix
	Dawkins	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	Dawkins
	C. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones
	Hollins	Hollins	Bibby	Bibby	Bibby	Bibby
Time left	12:00	10:30	9:30	8:30	5:35	4:00
Score	60-60	66-60	70-60	74-60	78-66	82-68

Late in the quarter, Cunningham decided to go with a larger lineup with only one true guard (Cheeks), partly due to the effectiveness of Mix, who had already scored a playoff-high 12 points and would finish the game with 18. Riley countered by bringing Chones back in for Wilkes, which moved Landsberger to forward to pick up Mix.

Third Quarter Game 6 1980 Finals (Part two)

Lakers ball	Erving	Erving		Erving	
	Mix	Mix		Mix	
	Dawkins	Dawkins		Dawkins	
	B. Jones	B. Jones		Hollins	
	Cheeks	Cheeks		Cheeks	
Los Angeles	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	
	Wilkes	Landsberger	Landsberger	Landsberger	
	Landsberger	Chones	Chones	Chones	
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	
	Nixon	Nixon	Nixon	Holland	
76ers ball	Erving		Erving	Erving	
	B. Jones		Mix	Mix	
	Dawkins		Dawkins	Dawkins	
	Mix		Hollins	Hollins	
	Cheeks		Cheeks	Cheeks	
Time left	3:00	1:00		0:30	0:00
Score	84-72	90-81	93-81	93-82	93-83

The Lakers sprinted to a 7-0 lead but the 76ers stayed close, taking their first lead at 36-35 in the second quarter on a basket by Mix. By halftime, with the game tied at 60-60, Magic and Jamaal Wilkes had combined for 34 points while Norm Nixon was scoreless (Nixon was the team's fourth-leading scorer behind Jabbar, Wilkes and Magic). But Los Angeles had been far more aggressive on the boards (a surprising 22-19 Lakers advantage—including 7 to 3 on the offensive glass—given Abdul-Jabbar's absence) and on offense; the Lakers had made 22 of 24 free throws while the Sixers had earned just 8 attempts and had made only half of them.

Los Angeles came out rolling in the third quarter, scoring fourteen unanswered points. The Sixers missed their first six shots of the quarter while the Lakers made seven of nine; restless Philadelphia fans began booing the home team, and threw in a Bronx cheer when Cooper missed a jumper for one of Los Angeles's rare misfires. Magic's full arsenal of talent was on display as he scored, made several spectacular passes, and contributed on the boards. Jamaal Wilkes added 16 points in the quarter on 8 for 11 shooting as the Lakers lead fluctuated between eight and twelve points during the rest of the period. Billy Cunningham later labeled the quarter as the most impressive part of "perhaps the best game anybody played against us all year."

In the fourth, the 76ers rallied as the Lakers seemed unwilling, or unable, to maintain their break-neck pace. Bobby Jones twice pulled Philadelphia within two, the last time at 103-101, but then Los Angeles scored ten points in a row to regain a comfortable lead. Magic hit four free throws in the final moments to put the finishing touches as his masterpiece, and earned the Finals MVP award that likely would have gone to Abdul-Jabbar had he not been injured. "The thing that amazed me was that [Magic] kept getting better and better as the playoffs went on," a bewildered Cunningham said after the game. "If you asked me now whether Bird or Magic is better, it would be a tough one to answer."

1980-81

December 28, 1980

Los Angeles 122, Philadelphia 116

PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		LOS ANGELES	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Erving	10	6-7	26		Chones	1	2-5	4
C. Jones	3	0-0	6		Wilkes	14	4-4	32
Dawkins	6	5-7	17		Abdul-Jabbar	14	6-9	34
Toney	6	0-0	12		Nixon	4	6-6	14
Cheeks	5	2-2	12		Cooper	6	3-3	15
Hollins	7	3-5	18		Carter	1	4-4	6
B. Jones	6	5-5	17		Brewer	2	0-0	4
Richardson	2	0-0	4		Jordan	2	0-0	4
Mix	2	0-0	4		Landsberger	4	1-1	9
TOTALS	47	21-26	116		TOTALS	48	26-32	122
3-point FG: 1 (Hollins 1).								
Attendance: 17505.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	29	27	23	37	116
Los Angeles Lakers	31	25	35	31	122

The 76ers dropped back-to-back games for the first time all season, failing to take advantage of the absence of Magic Johnson due to a knee injury. The game was tied at the half, but Philadelphia, playing their third road game in as many nights, faded after the break. Wilkes scored 13 and Abdul-Jabbar added 11 (while shooting a combined 11 for 15 from the floor) in the decisive third stanza, as the Lakers put forth “one of our best team efforts of the year” in the words of Paul Westhead, who had had the “interim” tag removed from his title prior to the season. Journeyman point guard Eddie Jordan, pressed into service in Magic’s absence, added four steals to further the Lakers cause.

February 8, 1981

Philadelphia 102, Los Angeles 99

LOS ANGELES	FGM	FTM-A	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Chones	5	3-5	13	Erving	8	0-2	16
Wilkes	12	4-4	28	C. Jones	5	2-2	12
Abdul-Jabbar	7	5-6	19	Dawkins	7	2-2	16
Nixon	8	4-4	20	Cheeks	6	4-5	16
Cooper	4	0-2	8	Toney	6	0-0	12
Brewer	2	0-1	4	Hollins	4	2-4	10
Jordan	2	0-0	4	B. Jones	6	3-4	15
Landsberger	0	3-8	3	Johnson	1	0-0	2
Carter	0	0-0	0	Richardson	1	1-1	3
TOTALS	40	19-30	99	TOTALS	44	14-20	102
Attendance: 18276.							

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	26	26	20	27	99
Philadelphia 76ers	28	33	22	19	102

With Magic still injured, the Lakers saw their season-long seven-game winning streak come to an end at the Spectrum. Bobby Jones gave the Sixers took the lead for good at 40-39 on a layup midway through the second period. With Philadelphia holding their own on the boards (a slight 53-48 edge for Los Angeles, which paled in comparison to the 51-37 advantage that the Lakers had averaged during the 1980 Finals), the Sixers pulled ahead by as many as seventeen points, 81-64, in the third quarter. “They were rebounding with a will today,” Westhead said afterwards, referring to the duo of Darryl Dawkins and Caldwell Jones, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar added, “I don’t think there is really that much of a difference in their team this season, except Darryl is getting better, and he’s a lot better this year. Caldwell played well, but he always plays well and plays good defense against me.”

The 76ers then struggled down the stretch, going without a field goal for over four minutes as their lead shrunk to 100-99. “[W]e became a little bit passive,” Cunningham explained afterwards. “It looked like we were trying to hold the ball and run the clock down instead of going on and shooting the ball with authority.” Philadelphia’s last possession

produced a busted play as Los Angeles knocked the ball loose. In the subsequent scramble, Dawkins got the ball and fed Erving for a dunk (which ended the field goal drought); it was Dawkins' seventh assist, a new career high. Then the Lakers Butch Carter missed a desperation heave in an attempt to send the game to overtime.

1981-82

February 26, 1982

Los Angeles 116, Philadelphia 114 (2ot)

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	47	9-18	4-7	6	4	4	22	Rambis	23	5-9	0-2	7	0	4	10
B. Jones	35	6-13	0-0	7	5	6	12	Wilkes	50	8-20	8-10	2	4	4	24
C. Jones	31	5-6	1-4	13	2	6	11	Abdul-Jabbar	49	17-27	7-11	19	3	2	41
Cheeks	39	5-9	0-0	5	7	3	10	Johnson	50	7-12	4-4	10	10	3	18
Hollins	25	4-15	1-2	2	5	0	9	Nixon	49	5-15	3-4	1	8	6	13
Bantom	31	7-14	5-5	7	1	3	19	Cooper	26	1-6	0-0	4	2	6	2
Cureton	25	1-6	0-2	8	4	1	2	Brewer	33	2-5	0-0	12	3	5	4
Toney	36	12-28	2-5	3	4	5	27	Jordan	10	1-3	2-2	1	1	1	4
Mix	5	0-0	0-0	1	1	1	0								
Richardson	16	1-2	0-0	2	2	2	2								
TOTALS		50-111	13-25	54	35	31	114	TOTALS		46-97	24-33	56	31	31	116
3-point FG: 1-2 (Erving 0-1, Toney 1-1). Blocks: 8 (Erving 2, B. Jones, C. Jones 4, Cheeks)								Technical Fouls: Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 10 (Rambis, Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar 5, Brewer 3).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Tom Nunez.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	OT2	F
Philadelphia 76ers	33	18	17	31	6	9	114
Los Angeles Lakers	20	31	27	21	6	11	116

Los Angeles returned from a quick one-day trip to Seattle and posted their sixth win in a row by dispatching Philadelphia in double-overtime. The loss snapped the 76ers second ten-game winning streak of the season. Each team played one good quarter in the first half (which featured a delay when Erving tore the net from the rim while blocking an attempted fast-break layup by Nixon), and the result was a 51-51 halftime tie. The third period belonged to Los Angeles, who used a 10-0 run to turn a four point deficit into a lead that eventually grew to thirteen. Andrew Toney scored 16 in the fourth quarter to help rally the Sixers, but Abdul-Jabbar tied the game at the end of regulation with a pair of free throws with two seconds remaining. It was a controversial call; Bobby Jones claimed that his block of Jabbar's shot was clean, and his coach agreed. "I feel very sorry for our team," Cunningham said afterwards. "We played well and came back only to have an official take the game away from us. Everything happened at their end, especially that last call."

After Toney's ten-foot jumper bounced off the rim at the buzzer, the two teams traded leads in the first overtime. A second extra session was required after Erving airmailed a potential game-winning shot while being hounded by the duo of Wilkes and Jim Brewer.

March 7, 1982

Philadelphia 119, Los Angeles 113

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	35	5-8	6-6	8	0	3	16	Erving	40	8-22	4-6	9	4	1	20
Wilkes	30	6-14	1-2	3	1	5	13	B. Jones	28	4-9	2-2	5	2	1	10
Abdul-Jabbar	38	11-17	4-6	10	3	3	26	C. Jones	33	0-6	0-0	13	1	4	0
Nixon	40	12-19	2-2	3	7	3	26	Hollins	23	2-14	3-4	2	6	1	7
Johnson	41	6-11	4-6	11	8	3	16	Cheeks	30	5-8	2-2	5	9	4	12
Cooper	35	6-11	1-1	2	4	1	13	Toney	35	21-29	4-5	1	5	3	46
Brewer	12	0-1	1-2	2	0	2	1	Bantom	20	3-4	1-2	5	0	2	7
Jordan	5	0-1	2-2	0	1	1	2	Cureton	15	4-4	0-1	5	0	3	8
Landsberger	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	2	0	Mix	8	0-2	5-6	3	0	0	5
								Richardson	8	2-4	0-0	2	0	0	4
TOTALS		46-82	21-27	40	24	23	113	TOTALS		49-102	21-28	50	27	19	119
3-point FG: 0-2 (Cooper 0-1, Brewer 0-1). Blocks: 13 (Rambis 4, Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar 5, Johnson, Cooper 2).								3-point FG: 0-1 (Toney 0-1). Blocks: 7 (Erving, B. Jones, C. Jones 4, Bantom).							
Attendance: 18364. Referees: Earl Strom, Hue Hollins.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	36	25	30	22	113
Philadelphia 76ers	27	30	26	36	119

Andrew Toney scored a career-high 46 points, including 20 in the fourth quarter, as the 76ers rallied to defeat the Lakers. "[Toney] broke us down individually," Pat Riley said after the game. "It's the mark of a great basketball player to be able to do that. He was magnificent." Cunningham had angrily confronted Toney late in the first quarter for rushing a three-point attempt but left him in the game due to the 76ers lackluster offense. Toney responded with the best game of his young career. "A performance like that doesn't really need to be explained," Julius Erving remarked. "It's out there to be enjoyed. And in our locker room right now, we're definitely enjoying it."

The Lakers led 91-83 at the end of the third quarter, but Toney helped the 76ers go on an 11-2 run that gave them the lead at 102-101 on a layup by Maurice Cheeks midway through the fourth. Michael Cooper answered with a layup of his own, but Cheeks put the 76ers back up in front for good at 103-102 with 5:39 left. Toney then capped his afternoon by contributing two baskets, a steal, and two free throws in the final minute of the game. His 46 points were the most by a Sixer since Cunningham scored 47 at Portland in 1971. The Lakers concluded their three-game road trip against Atlantic Division opponents (Nets, Knicks, 76ers) at 0-3.

May 27, 1982

NBA Finals Game 1

Los Angeles 124, Philadelphia 117

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	25	5-7	2-2	3	1	4	12	Erving	39	9-18	9-12	9	3	1	27
Wilkes	38	11-22	2-5	10	3	5	24	B. Jones	33	8-12	3-3	8	1	3	19
Abdul-Jabbar	38	10-19	3-5	7	5	4	23	C. Jones	28	3-8	0-0	11	1	4	6
Nixon	43	9-18	6-7	4	10	3	24	Cheeks	37	6-10	0-0	1	9	1	12
Johnson	45	4-10	2-3	14	9	3	10	Toney	30	8-18	2-2	0	9	5	20
McAdoo	24	4-7	6-7	7	1	2	14	Dawkins	20	7-12	2-2	4	0	4	16
Cooper	27	6-10	5-6	5	5	5	17	Hollins	21	3-9	0-0	2	3	4	6
								Bantom	18	3-9	2-4	5	1	2	8
								Mix	5	1-1	0-0	0	0	1	3
								Richardson	8	0-1	0-0	1	1	1	0
								Cureton	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		49-93	26-35	59	34	26	124	TOTALS		48-98	18-23	49	28	26	117
Team Rebounds: 9 Blocks: 7 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar 4, McAdoo, Cooper). Steals: 11 (Wilkes 4, Abdul-Jabbar, Nixon 2, Johnson, McAdoo 2, Cooper). Turnovers: 22 (Rambis 4, Wilkes, Nixon 2, Johnson 7, McAdoo 4, Cooper 4).								Team Rebounds: 8 3-point FG: 3-6 (Erving 0-2, Toney 2-2, Hollins 0-1, Mix 1-1). Blocks: 7 (Erving, C. Jones 4, Dawkins 2). Steals: 11 (Erving 3, B. Jones, Cheeks 3, Dawkins, Hollins 3). Turnovers: 18 (Erving 3, B. Jones 2, Cheeks 3, Toney 3, Dawkins, Hollins 3, Mix 2, Richardson).							
Attendance: 18364. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Hugh Evans.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	30	20	41	33	124
Philadelphia 76ers	32	29	28	28	117

For two-and-a-half quarters, the fans at the Spectrum were dreaming of the Sixers first championship in fifteen years. The Lakers fast break was occasionally spectacular, successfully scoring off *made baskets* by the 76ers, but Philadelphia was holding their own on the boards and showed off a remarkably efficient fast break themselves. Philadelphia led 83-68 with 6:10 left in the third, but Los Angeles then exploded to score 40 of the game's next 49 points. It began with an 11-0 run that was reminiscent of the 14-0 spurt the Lakers used to blow open Game 6 of the 1980 Finals against the Sixers. Defense, specifically a 1-3-1 matchup zone trap, fueled their persistent fast break and allowed the Lakers to score their 40 points while making just three outside shots. "We really stuck with our trap tonight," said head coach Pat Riley. "If you let Philadelphia get to their spots and run their offense for Doc [Julius Erving] and [Andrew] Toney, they are tough to guard. If we trap, they go to a freelance game instead of a set offense, and while they are a good freelance team, so are we."



Lineup Analysis

The Lakers trailed by 11 points at halftime on the road in Philadelphia, and turned around the game in the third quarter despite falling behind by 15 five minutes into the period.

Third Quarter Game 1 1982 Finals (Part one)

Lakers ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	B. Jones
	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	Bantom
	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Toney	Richardson	Toney	Hollins
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks
Los Angeles	Rambis	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes
	Wilkes	McAdoo	McAdoo	McAdoo
	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic
	Nixon	Nixon	Nixon	Nixon
76ers ball	B. Jones	Erving	Erving	B. Jones
	Erving	B. Jones	B. Jones	Bantom
	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones	C. Jones
	Toney	Cheeks	Toney	Hollins
	Cheeks	Richardson	Cheeks	Cheeks
Time left	12:00	7:00	5:46	4:00
Score	61-50	79-64	83-70	83-75

The 79-64 edge, courtesy of a three-pointer by Andrew Toney, was the 76ers largest lead of the game. Toney had been hit in the left knee on the previous possession and would leave the game shortly after picking up his third foul in a scuffle with Abdul-Jabbar on a break. Toney briefly returned, but then missed most of the rest of the period, which deprived the 76ers of their most feared outside shooting threat. The Sixers would lead by fifteen points again at 83-68, before the tide decisively turned.

Third Quarter Game 1 1982 Finals (Part two)

Lakers ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	
	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom	Dawkins	
	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Bantom	
	Hollins	Hollins	Cheeks	Hollins	
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Hollins	Cheeks	
Los Angeles	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	
	McAdoo	McAdoo	McAdoo	Rambis	
	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	McAdoo	
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	
	Nixon	Nixon	Cooper	Cooper	
76ers ball	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	
	Bantom	Bantom	Bantom	Dawkins	
	C. Jones	Dawkins	Dawkins	Bantom	
	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins	Hollins	
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	
Time left	2:47	1:55	1:25	0:48	0:00
Score	85-81	87-85	87-87	89-87	91-89

The final four minutes were decisive. The Lakers lead at 87-85 was their first since 10-8, and Los Angeles closed the period on a 16-6 run. Jamaal Wilkes scored 16 of his 24 points in this quarter, and he and Magic played the entire twelve minutes.



While Toney was hampered by ankle and knee injuries suffered during the game, the Lakers continued to pour it on in the fourth quarter, sprinting to a 12-1 start with Abdul-Jabbar on the bench, part of a 17-3 run in the period that concluded the overall 40-9 thrashing. The Lakers led 108-92, but allowed the Sixers to get within eight at 120-112 with forty-six seconds left. However, a pair of costly Steve Mix turnovers prevented Philadelphia from getting even closer, and Los Angeles was able to close out their Game 1 victory—and their ninth consecutive playoff win to start this postseason.

May 30, 1982

NBA Finals Game 2

Philadelphia 110, Los Angeles 94

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	16	4-7	3-6	4	1	3	11	Erving	36	10-15	4-7	9	3	1	24
Wilkes	41	5-14	3-5	5	2	2	13	B. Jones	28	5-8	0-0	7	4	4	10
Abdul-Jabbar	41	7-14	9-13	7	2	3	23	C. Jones	32	6-11	0-0	11	0	4	12
Nixon	42	3-14	0-0	3	10	5	6	Cheeks	41	7-17	5-6	1	8	5	19
Johnson	44	6-14	6-7	11	7	3	18	Toney	33	6-16	0-0	1	11	4	12
McAdoo	28	6-11	0-0	2	0	4	12	Dawkins	8	4-6	1-2	1	0	5	9
Cooper	28	4-9	3-6	7	3	1	11	Bantom	25	4-5	0-0	5	0	2	8
								Richardson	22	5-8	0-4	4	2	2	10
								Cureton	15	2-7	2-2	8	0	3	6
TOTALS		35-83	24-37	51	25	21	94	TOTALS		49-93	12-21	58	28	30	110
Team Rebounds: 12 3-point FG: 0-5 (Wilkes 0-1, Nixon 0-1, Johnson 0-2, Cooper 0-1). Technical Fouls: Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 6 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar 4, McAdoo). Steals: 11 (Rambis, Wilkes 2, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Nixon, Johnson 4, Cooper). Turnovers: 18 (Rambis, Wilkes 4, Abdul-Jabbar, Nixon 2, Johnson 5, McAdoo 2, Cooper 3).								Team Rebounds: 11 3-point FG: 0-2 (Cheeks 0-1, Toney 0-1). Blocks: 8 (Erving, C. Jones 3, Dawkins 2, Bantom 2). Steals: 7 (Erving 3, C. Jones, Cheeks, Toney, Bantom). Turnovers: 23 (Erving 3, B. Jones, C. Jones, Cheeks 5, Toney 5, Dawkins 3, Bantom 3, Richardson, Cureton).							
Referees: Darrell Garretson, Earl Strom.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	26	21	29	18	94
Philadelphia 76ers	34	23	31	22	110

Hard work on the boards paid off for the 76ers, who outrebounded the Lakers despite horrendous foul trouble that forced Earl Cureton and Mike Bantom to play significant minutes. Darryl Dawkins and Caldwell Jones both had three fouls with over five minutes still remaining in the second quarter, but the 76ers extended their lead to thirteen while the duo was on the bench. Philadelphia earned a 12-0 edge in second-chance points in the period, which was fortunate as Andrew Toney was struggling through a 1 for 8 shooting stretch. "There is no secret to offensive rebounding," Riley explained to reporters. "It's a matter of who wants the ball. If you want it, go get it. They went after it harder than we did."

The Lakers closed to within 98-90 late in the fourth quarter, but Bobby Jones, who had suffered a left hip pointer in the first half when Cooper accidentally kneed him, tapped in a missed jumper by Toney to stem a Los Angeles rally. Cunningham had successfully tutored his players on ways to beat the Laker trap, and claimed after the game that his team "did a good job" but could do better. "[The Lakers] want to force the tempo. If you show some patience, you can get a good shot."

June 1, 1982

*NBA Finals Game 3***Los Angeles 129, Philadelphia 108**

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	32	6-14	9-14	3	3	5	21	Rambis	25	3-6	1-2	8	3	3	7
B. Jones	26	0-1	0-0	3	3	4	0	Wilkes	33	6-14	5-5	5	1	3	17
C. Jones	21	1-6	3-4	5	0	4	5	Abdul-Jabbar	28	7-12	2-6	6	2	3	16
Cheeks	34	7-14	3-3	1	9	3	17	Nixon	41	12-20	5-8	6	6	4	29
Toney	36	13-21	9-10	5	2	3	36	M. Johnson	34	8-9	6-7	9	8	5	22
Dawkins	28	5-9	4-8	13	0	4	14	McAdoo	24	4-13	6-11	5	2	6	14
Bantom	24	1-6	0-0	7	0	5	2	Cooper	30	4-9	3-4	5	3	4	12
Richardson	16	2-3	0-0	0	2	5	4	Landsberger	15	2-3	0-4	4	1	1	4
Hollins	10	2-6	0-0	0	5	1	4	Brewer	2	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
Mix	7	1-4	1-1	1	1	1	3	McGee	2	3-3	0-0	0	0	0	6
Cureton	6	1-4	0-0	5	0	1	2	Jordan	2	0-1	0-0	0	4	0	0
								C. Johnson	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
TOTALS		39-88	29-40	54	25	36	108	TOTALS		50-91	28-47	66	30	30	129
Team Rebounds: 11 3-point FG: 1-1 (Toney 1-1). Technical Fouls: Erving, Cunningham. Blocks: 8 (Erving 2, B. Jones, C. Jones, Dawkins 3, Bantom). Steals: 10 (Erving, C. Jones, Cheeks 2, Toney 2, Bantom, Hollins 2, Cureton). Turnovers: 19 (Erving 3, B. Jones, Cheeks 3, Toney 3, Dawkins 5, Bantom, Richardson, Hollins, Cureton).								Team Rebounds: 18 3-point FG: 1-1 (Cooper 1-1). Technical Fouls: Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 5 (Abdul-Jabbar 2, McAdoo 3). Steals: 15 (Rambis 4, Abdul-Jabbar, Nixon 3, M. Johnson 3, McAdoo, Cooper 2, Jordan). Turnovers: 18 (Rambis 2, Wilkes 2, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Nixon 4, M. Johnson 3, McAdoo 2, Cooper 2).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Ed Rush, Wally Rooney.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	20	28	22	38	108
Los Angeles Lakers	32	28	31	38	129

Now it was the Lakers turn to win a blowout. Los Angeles led from start from finish, were in front 42-22 early in the second quarter, and if not for a late rally in the period—sparked by 15 points from Andrew Toney—that sliced their advantage to nine before the half, this game might have over at the break. “Anything and everything we did tonight was a step slow,” Cunningham said afterwards. “Everything we did, reacting to whatever they did, was much slower than we’d like it to be. Our timing was just off tonight.” Norm Nixon felt that the Lakers fast start was critical: “This was the first game where we’ve taken command from the very beginning. We made a concentrated effort to go out and take the game away from Philly right away, and I thought it was very important that I got off well.” The Lakers even weathered a fourteen minute stretch at the end of the half without Abdul-Jabbar, who was forced to the bench with foul trouble.

With Kurt Rambis and Magic Johnson physically dominating Julius Erving, the Lakers began the second half on a 17-4 run, and Nixon scored 21 of his points in the second half as Los Angeles pulled away. Toney was the lone bright spot for the Sixers, who capped off his 36-point night with a four-point play (the first in NBA playoff history) when he was fouled by

Michael Cooper while making a three-pointer from the left corner. Bobby Jones played 26 minutes, and though he claimed that his hip was not bothering him, Jones took just one shot and was held scoreless for the first time since the opener of the Eastern Conference Finals and for just the third time in his career.

June 3, 1982

NBA Finals Game 4

Los Angeles 111, Philadelphia 101

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	38	11-15	3-4	3	4	4	25	Rambis	18	1-3	1-2	11	1	2	3
B. Jones	38	6-12	0-2	9	6	5	12	Wilkes	41	11-23	2-2	3	4	4	24
C. Jones	30	3-7	1-2	7	0	3	7	Abdul-Jabbar	38	10-17	2-6	11	6	2	22
Cheeks	38	5-15	2-2	7	9	1	12	Nixon	41	4-18	3-4	3	14	3	11
Toney	44	11-25	6-8	5	11	4	28	M. Johnson	43	8-15	8-9	8	7	3	24
Dawkins	17	2-8	0-0	4	0	3	4	McAdoo	29	8-13	3-4	3	1	2	19
Bantom	20	3-4	0-0	4	0	1	6	Cooper	21	2-6	2-2	3	4	5	6
Richardson	15	3-5	1-2	1	2	2	7	Landsberger	6	0-1	0-0	4	0	1	0
								C. Johnson	3	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS		44-91	13-20	53	32	23	101	TOTALS		45-97	21-29	58	37	22	111
Team Rebounds: 13 3-point FG: 0-3 (Cheeks 0-1, Toney 0-2). Blocks: 7 (Erving, B. Jones, C. Jones 2, Cheeks, Dawkins, Bantom). Steals: 3 (Cheeks, Toney, Richardson). Turnovers: 16 (Erving 5, B. Jones 2, C. Jones 2, Cheeks 2, Toney, Dawkins, Bantom 2, Richardson).								Team Rebounds: 12 3-point FG: 0-1 (M. Johnson 0-1). Blocks: 4 (Abdul- Jabbar 3, McAdoo). Steals: 10 (Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Nixon 2, M. Johnson, McAdoo, Cooper, C. Johnson). Turnovers: 12 (Rambis, Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar 5, Nixon 2, Cooper 2, Landsberger).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Jack Madden, Paul Mihalak.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	18	24	30	29	101
Los Angeles Lakers	29	28	30	24	111

The Sixers shot poorly in the early going (32 percent in the first quarter) and then made a pair of critical turnovers down the stretch that denied their hopes of a comeback. Los Angeles led 29-16 in the first and 41-27 in the second, before their lead peaked at 63-44 in the third quarter. "To start the game," lamented Billy Cunningham, "we weren't reacting the way we wanted to. We set out to do one thing—I can't tell you what that is—and we just didn't respond."

The Lakers lead had been cut to 105-98 with 2:41 left in the game when Caldwell Jones was inserted in place of an ineffective Darryl Dawkins. On Philadelphia's subsequent possession, Jones threw a pass intended for Cheeks—but Cheeks had reversed direction, and the ball sailed helplessly into the backcourt, causing a violation that gave possession back to the Lakers. McAdoo missed a jumper, and Jones atoned by grabbing the rebound. But then Erving threw the ball away under the basket as the 24-second clock wound down. "Those two

plays could have turned the game around for us if we'd have converted them to hoops, but we didn't," Cheeks said later.

June 6, 1982

NBA Finals Game 5

Philadelphia 135, Los Angeles 102

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	13	3-10	0-1	6	0	4	6	Erving	42	10-19	3-3	12	4	1	23
Wilkes	38	6-17	1-2	7	4	3	13	B. Jones	30	7-9	7-8	3	2	4	21
Abdul-Jabbar	28	3-6	0-2	4	4	5	6	C. Jones	27	2-7	0-1	4	1	3	4
Nixon	38	9-19	2-3	5	13	1	20	Cheeks	34	5-9	3-6	3	8	0	13
M. Johnson	40	4-9	2-4	10	4	4	10	Toney	41	13-18	5-6	2	8	2	31
Cooper	30	8-11	2-2	3	4	5	18	Dawkins	28	9-15	2-6	7	1	4	20
McAdoo	27	11-14	1-2	4	1	5	23	Bantom	14	1-3	0-0	2	4	2	2
Landsberger	9	0-2	0-0	6	0	1	0	Hollins	3	0-1	0-0	1	4	0	0
Brewer	3	1-1	0-0	1	0	0	2	Mix	3	2-2	0-0	0	1	0	4
McGee	3	2-8	0-0	2	0	0	4	Richardson	15	4-8	3-4	5	4	2	11
C. Johnson	8	0-2	0-0	1	0	1	0	Edwards	3	3-3	0-0	0	0	0	6
Jordan	3	0-1	0-0	0	1	0	0								
TOTALS		47-100	8-16	57	31	29	102	TOTALS		56-94	23-34	53	37	18	135
Team Rebounds: 8 3-point FG: 0-2 (McGee 0-1, Jordan 0-1). Technical Fouls: Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 9 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar, Nixon, McAdoo 5, Brewer). Steals: 5 (Nixon, M. Johnson 2, Cooper, McAdoo). Turnovers: 24 (Rambis 2, Wilkes 5, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Nixon 2, M. Johnson 5, Cooper 2, McAdoo 4, Landsberger, Jordan).								Team Rebounds: 14 Technical Fouls: Philadelphia illegal defense. Blocks: 13 (Erving, B. Jones 4, C. Jones 4, Dawkins 3, Bantom). Steals: 14 (Erving 2, C. Jones 2, Cheeks 3, Toney, Dawkins, Bantom 2, Hollins 2, Richardson). Turnovers: 11 (Erving 3, B. Jones 2, Cheeks 3, Toney, Bantom, Hollins).							
Attendance: 18364. Referees: Ed Rush, Jake O'Donnell.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	20	34	27	21	102
Philadelphia 76ers	20	34	37	44	135

The 76ers scored a playoff record 81 points in the second half and held Kareem Abdul-Jabbar to single digits in points for the first time in 420 games while keeping their season alive. After a tight first half, Philadelphia pulled ahead 72-70 early in the third, and when Abdul-Jabbar and Magic Johnson missed potential game-tying free throws, the 76ers dialed up their defense. "They got a second wind that was incredible," Lakers assistant Bill Bertka said later. "Their defensive intensity was outstanding. We didn't execute, and the next thing we knew, we were being buried under an avalanche." By the end of the third quarter the 76ers were up by 10, then kept up the pressure in the final stanza. "When we got behind in the second half, we lost our poise," Abdul-Jabbar said afterwards. "I doubt there will be any carryover effect [to Game 6]. We beat them the last two games, and it didn't seem to bother them. They played me the way everybody plays me. They pushed and shoved, and today they got away with it."

Magic posted a pedestrian double-double, still feeling the effects of jammed knuckles on his right hand suffered in the Western Conference Semifinals against the Suns. It was the sixth time in the playoffs that he was held below his regular season average of 18.6 points per game. “[The injury] affects me in all areas because it’s weak,” Johnson told reporters during the Finals. “It’s so weak that I can’t handle, pass, shoot or rebound the way I want to. But I’m icing it in order to get some feel, and I’m gonna be ready, whether it wants to be or not.”

June 8, 1982

NBA Finals Game 6

Los Angeles 114, Philadelphia 104

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	43	11-24	8-10	8	3	0	30	Rambis	23	4-6	0-2	7	1	5	8
B. Jones	31	2-8	3-6	7	0	4	7	Wilkes	43	11-25	5-5	5	3	4	27
C. Jones	39	1-4	0-0	9	3	5	2	Abdul-Jabbar	39	6-13	6-9	11	4	4	18
Cheeks	39	6-19	3-4	2	9	2	15	Nixon	31	8-13	0-0	1	7	4	16
Toney	43	13-23	3-3	3	6	5	29	Johnson	44	2-3	9-9	13	15	5	13
Dawkins	20	4-5	2-2	1	0	6	10	Cooper	26	8-12	0-0	2	5	1	16
Bantom	10	3-3	0-0	3	0	3	6	McAdoo	33	8-14	0-0	9	0	3	16
Richardson	15	1-5	3-4	2	1	1	5	Landsberger	1	0-1	0-0	1	0	0	0
TOTALS		41-91	22-29	43	22	26	104	TOTALS		47-87	20-25	59	35	26	114
Team Rebounds: 8 3-point FG: 0-2 (Erving 0-1, Cheeks 0-1). Technical Fouls: Cunningham, Philadelphia illegal defense. Blocks: 7 (Erving, C. Jones 4, Dawkins, Richardson). Steals: 11 (Erving 5, C. Jones, Cheeks 2, Toney 2, Bantom). Turnovers: 15 (Erving 4, Cheeks, Toney 6, Dawkins 3, Bantom).								Team Rebounds: 10 Blocks: 11 (Abdul-Jabbar 5, Johnson 2, Cooper, McAdoo 3). Steals: 12 (Rambis, Wilkes 2, Abdul-Jabbar, Nixon, Johnson 4, Cooper 2, McAdoo). Turnovers: 22 (Rambis, Wilkes 6, Abdul-Jabbar 5, Nixon 3, Johnson 6, Cooper).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Jack Madden.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	26	31	22	25	104
Los Angeles Lakers	30	36	20	28	114

Los Angeles clinched their second championship in three years, once again leading from start-to-finish against Philadelphia. The Lakers fast break bogged down in the second quarter, but Jamaal Wilkes and Michael Cooper made up for that problem by repeatedly making big shots from outside. Meanwhile, the Lakers defense continued to be a key to the series. “I read a lot about Boston’s defensive intensity in the clutch,” Riley said. “Well, for a running team, we played it pretty well too.”

Philadelphia’s best chance came in the third, when they twice had the ball while trailing by just one point. But Bob McAdoo broke up an alley-oop from Cheeks to Erving on the first such possession, and then Cooper stole the ball from Andrew Toney minutes later. Los Angeles went on to score the last six points of the period to build a more comfortable edge. After extending their lead to 100-89 in the fourth, the Lakers weathered another Sixers run,

and with 3:55 left Los Angeles was clinging to a 103-100 advantage. But the Lakers got three offensive rebounds on their next possession, which concluded with Abdul-Jabbar drawing a foul on a leaner that took a fortunate bounce or two before dropping in. He added a free throw to make it 106-100 and the Sixers never seriously challenged again. "We were more disappointed this time than in any other year," said a downcast Julius Erving after the game. "I don't know why. . . . It hurts more than any other year. It's very painful." Magic Johnson collected his second Finals' triple-double and earned another Finals MVP award.

1982-83

December 5, 1982

Philadelphia 114, Los Angeles 104

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	37	11-27	1-4	14	5	4	23	Landsberger	14	1-5	0-0	6	1	4	2
Iavaroni	26	5-9	1-2	4	3	5	11	Wilkes	32	9-18	4-5	5	0	4	22
Malone	39	12-22	5-8	14	0	2	29	Abdul-Jabbar	27	7-11	1-2	2	3	4	15
Cheeks	32	2-10	0-0	1	9	1	4	Johnson	40	3-6	7-11	8	7	1	13
Toney	31	9-13	3-3	4	4	5	21	Nixon	37	5-14	2-3	4	7	3	12
Jones	25	1-2	0-2	3	4	3	2	Worthy	33	4-13	6-8	6	1	0	14
Richardson	23	6-11	0-0	8	1	3	12	McAdoo	32	9-15	3-6	9	2	3	21
Edwards	10	2-3	2-3	0	3	3	6	Cooper	25	2-5	1-2	4	3	2	5
Cureton	9	2-3	0-1	5	0	2	4								
Schoene	8	1-2	0-0	2	0	1	2								
TOTALS		51-102	12-23	55	29	29	114	TOTALS		40-87	24-37	44	24	21	104
3-point FG: 0-1 (Iavaroni 0-1). Blocks: 7 (Erving, Iavaroni 2, Malone 2, Jones 2).								3-point FG: 0-3 (Wilkes 0-1, Nixon 0-1, Cooper 0-1). Technical Fouls: Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 9 (Landsberger, Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Johnson, Nixon, Worthy 2, McAdoo).							

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	25	29	24	36	114
Los Angeles Lakers	24	26	23	31	104

The 76ers had acquired Moses Malone for days like this, and he did not disappoint, grabbing 14 rebounds as Philadelphia out-rebounded their hosts 55-44 and held off a series of charges in the second half to win at the Forum in Los Angeles for the first time since Game 2 of the 1980 Finals. "I was just moving hard under there, and the balls kept coming to me," Malone explained. "Moses gives them exactly what they were looking for," Riley conceded. "When their outside shooting fails them, he's in there to take over in the middle. He's not only a defensive player, but he's an offensive player. He gives them both of those things." Of Malone's 14 fourth quarter points, 6 came off of offensive rebounds, and the 76ers needed every one, as the Lakers closed the gap to 97-94 with five minutes remaining. Soon, with Malone's help,

Philadelphia had given themselves some breathing room in the form of a 103-96 edge, and then led the rest of the way.

January 5, 1983

Philadelphia 122, Los Angeles 120 (ot)

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	33	2-3	1-1	7	3	4	5	Erving	42	11-16	5-6	5	5	0	27
Wilkes	40	17-24	2-3	2	1	4	36	Javaroni	17	1-3	0-0	3	0	1	2
McAdoo	43	6-18	1-2	9	3	4	13	Malone	36	7-13	7-11	15	1	5	21
Johnson	46	11-16	1-1	12	20	3	23	Cheeks	33	6-11	1-1	1	5	0	13
Nixon	29	9-12	2-2	1	4	6	20	Toney	39	13-23	2-2	1	8	4	28
Worthy	36	9-15	0-3	4	1	3	18	Jones	33	4-6	3-3	3	1	3	11
Cooper	32	2-3	1-2	1	3	3	5	Richardson	30	2-9	1-1	2	2	2	5
Landsberger	5	0-0	0-0	1	0	1	0	Cureton	20	2-3	0-0	8	0	2	4
Jordan	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Schoene	11	3-5	2-2	2	0	3	8
								Edwards	4	0-1	3-3	0	1	0	3
TOTALS		56-91	8-14	37	35	28	120	TOTALS		49-90	24-29	40	23	20	122
Technical Fouls: Johnson, Riley, Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 2 (Wilkes, Worthy).								3-point FG: 0-2 (Toney 0-2). Technical Fouls: Malone. Blocks: 3 (Jones 2, Schoene).							
Attendance: 18482. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Mike Mathis.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Los Angeles Lakers	33	25	28	26	8	120
Philadelphia 76ers	31	36	20	25	10	122

Even with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar out with a migraine, the Lakers took the 76ers to overtime before falling at the Spectrum. The game ended on a clutch shot by Andrew Toney. Tied at 120-120 with forty seconds left, the Sixers ran down the clock and were bailed out when Wilkes was called for a foul on Erving with twenty-one ticks remaining. As a result, the shot clock was turned off and Cunningham called timeout. Toney got the ball on the right-hand side, guarded by Wilkes. Before Magic Johnson could double him, Toney drove toward the hoop and banked a shot off the glass with five seconds left. "The play was for Moses or me," Erving later explained, "but he [Toney] did the right thing by taking it himself. He's a beautiful player to watch when he gets it going and takes over." Toney shrugged off the significance of his decision: "I knew I had to do two things. I had to take a shot, or I had to look for the double-team and be aware of the open man." The Lakers still had a chance to win it but Wilkes missed a three-pointer at the buzzer.

May 22, 1983

NBA Finals Game 1

Philadelphia 113, Los Angeles 107

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	19	0-4	5-6	6	0	2	5	Erving	39	8-18	4-6	10	9	2	20
Wilkes	34	8-15	0-0	5	1	4	16	Iavaroni	26	3-4	0-0	7	0	2	6
Abdul-Jabbar	39	8-15	4-6	4	3	4	20	Malone	41	9-20	9-12	18	0	3	27
M. Johnson	43	8-15	3-3	9	11	4	19	Cheeks	25	5-11	0-0	3	5	4	10
Nixon	41	12-23	2-3	4	2	3	26	Toney	39	9-18	7-7	1	4	3	25
Cooper	28	4-11	3-4	5	1	5	11	Richardson	31	7-12	1-2	4	3	4	15
Landsberger	19	1-6	2-2	10	0	4	4	B. Jones	28	2-7	0-2	4	5	2	4
D. Jones	9	0-3	0-2	2	0	1	0	C. Johnson	9	2-5	0-0	5	0	2	4
C. Johnson	7	3-4	0-0	2	1	2	6	Edwards	1	0-1	2-2	1	0	0	2
Mix	1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0	R. Johnson	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		44-96	19-26	56	20	29	107	TOTALS		45-96	23-31	62	26	22	113
Team Rebounds: 9 3-point FG: 0-2 (Wilkes 0-1, Cooper 0-1). Technical Fouls: Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 8 (Rambis 2, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Cooper, Landsberger 2). Steals: 7 (Wilkes, M. Johnson, Nixon 2, Cooper 2, C. Johnson). Turnovers: 15 (Rambis 2, Wilkes 3, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson 3, Nixon 3, Cooper 2, D. Jones).								Team Rebounds: 9 Technical Fouls: Philadelphia illegal defense. Blocks: 13 (Erving 5, Iavaroni, Malone 3, B. Jones 4). Steals: 11 (Erving, Iavaroni, Malone 2, Cheeks 2, Richardson 4, B. Jones). Turnovers: 14 (Erving, Malone 3, Cheeks 5, Toney, Richardson, B. Jones 3).							
Attendance: 18482. Referees: Jack Madden, Ed Rush.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	20	37	26	24	107
Philadelphia 76ers	30	24	31	28	113

The Lakers, playing without rookie James Worthy, whose season ended when he suffered a broken leg in April, and Bob McAdoo, out with a pulled thigh muscle that he injured in the clinching game of the Western Conference Finals against the Spurs, saw their comeback fall short in the series opener. In the first quarter, Andrew Toney, already hampered throughout the playoffs by an injured left thigh, violently collided with Norm Nixon. Both remained in the game, though an examination later revealed that Nixon had separated his left shoulder, and Toney, a bit woozy after taking a shot to the head, was held to just ten points after the opening period. Los Angeles got good performances off the bench from Mark Landsberger and Clay Johnson, and overcame a ten-point deficit to lead by three at the half.

The Lakers had been forced to fly cross-country a day after eliminating the Spurs, and they began to tire in the second half. Abdul-Jabbar was held without a rebound after halftime, prompting him to admit afterwards that "I was more fatigued this afternoon than I remember being at any other time." With 6:37 left in the fourth, the Sixers led 100-88 and appeared to be comfortably in front. But then the Lakers rallied, and when Cheeks committed the Sixers third straight turnover, throwing the ball away with twenty-one seconds on the clock, Los Angeles had the ball, trailing 111-107. Abdul-Jabbar missed a hook (he shot just 3 for 9 after halftime) and Bobby Jones grabbed the rebound and was fouled. Jones missed both shots (Cunningham admitted later that he was weakened by strep throat) but the Lakers only had time left for a deep three-pointer by Cooper which sailed off the rim.

May 26, 1983

NBA Finals Game 2

Philadelphia 103, Los Angeles 93

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	21	4-7	1-1	5	0	3	9	Erving	39	6-17	2-2	7	2	3	14
Wilkes	41	8-21	1-2	7	2	2	17	Iavaroni	29	3-6	3-4	6	2	2	9
Abdul-Jabbar	34	11-17	1-2	4	3	5	23	Malone	31	8-10	8-13	12	1	5	24
M. Johnson	44	6-14	0-0	8	13	3	12	Cheeks	37	8-14	3-5	2	8	0	19
Nixon	38	4-13	0-0	2	6	4	8	Toney	37	7-18	5-6	4	5	2	19
Cooper	28	6-7	0-0	4	1	4	12	Jones	28	6-11	2-2	5	2	0	14
McAdoo	19	4-10	0-0	7	1	5	10	Richardson	21	1-4	0-0	5	1	1	2
Landsberger	12	1-2	0-0	3	0	3	2	Cureton	17	1-3	0-0	3	1	3	2
C. Johnson	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Edwards	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
McGee	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0								
TOTALS		44-91	3-5	46	26	29	93	TOTALS		40-83	23-32	55	22	16	103
Team Rebounds: 6 3-point FG: 2-7 (M. Johnson 0-1, Nixon 0-2, McAdoo 2-3, Landsberger 0-1). Blocks: 10 (Rambis, Wilkes 2, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Nixon, McAdoo 2, C. Johnson). Steals: 10 (Rambis, Wilkes 3, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson 3, McAdoo 2). Turnovers: 20 (Rambis 3, Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson 4, Nixon 4, Cooper, McAdoo 3, Landsberger).								Team Rebounds: 11 3-point FG: 0-1 (Toney 0-1). Blocks: 6 (Erving 3, Jones 3). Steals: 10 (Erving, Cheeks 3, Toney 2, Jones 2, Cureton 2). Turnovers: 18 (Erving, Malone 6, Cheeks, Toney 7, Jones, Richardson, Cureton).							
Attendance: 18482. Referees: Darrell Garretson, John Vanak.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	29	26	20	18	93
Philadelphia 76ers	26	25	28	24	103

The evening began well for the Lakers, who outrebounded the Sixers 26-17 in the first half (including five offensive rebounds by Wilkes, more than Philadelphia accumulated as a team) and led by as many as nine points. But the 76ers responded with a 17-8 streak in the third quarter to take the lead for the first time since 8-6.

In the fourth, with Malone on the bench with five fouls and backup center Earl Cureton doing a credible job guarding Abdul-Jabbar (Cureton was playing because Malone's usual backup, Clemon Johnson, was in Temple University Hospital recovering from a urinary tract infection) the Sixers were able to extend an 85-83 lead with an 11-4 run. "Earl just came in and played with a great deal of confidence," said Cunningham. "He battled on the boards, played good defense. He did everything we asked of him." Cureton even managed to make a hook shot over Abdul-Jabbar.

McAdoo returned to the Lakers lineup, but Nixon, feeling the effects of his shoulder injury, shot just 4 of 13 from the floor and was held scoreless in the fourth quarter (as were Magic Johnson and Jamaal Wilkes). Los Angeles' primary complaint after the game was a claim of lopsided officiating, which cost Riley a \$3,000 fine; the Lakers set an NBA playoff record by taking just five free throws in the game and tied another record by making only three. But the

76ers held Abdul-Jabbar without a point over the final four minutes, and in the second half Magic had more turnovers (4) than points (2) or shot attempts (3). These facts led Lakers general manager Jerry West to dismiss the gripes about the officiating. "The truth is, we've been outplayed," West bluntly stated. "They've wanted it more than we have."

May 29, 1983

NBA Finals Game 3

Philadelphia 111, Los Angeles 94

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	39	8-16	5-7	12	3	3	21	Rambis	19	5-5	0-0	2	1	4	10
Javaroni	26	2-2	0-2	6	4	5	4	Wilkes	43	10-20	0-0	6	3	4	20
Malone	40	10-19	8-13	19	6	4	28	Abdul-Jabbar	42	8-20	7-8	15	3	4	23
Cheeks	43	6-12	0-2	3	5	3	12	M. Johnson	44	3-12	12-13	7	13	4	18
Toney	32	8-19	5-8	2	5	4	21	Nixon	31	1-6	5-8	2	5	3	7
Jones	26	7-12	3-3	7	2	3	17	Cooper	30	2-6	0-0	1	1	6	4
Richardson	20	1-7	0-0	2	1	1	2	McAdoo	23	5-12	2-2	7	0	3	12
C. Johnson	10	1-5	0-0	2	1	0	2	Landsberger	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	3	0
Cureton	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	C. Johnson	3	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
McNamara	1	2-2	0-0	1	0	0	4	McGee	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Edwards	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0								
TOTALS		45-94	21-35	65	27	23	111	TOTALS		34-82	26-31	50	26	31	94
Team Rebounds: 11 3-point FG: 0-1 (Jones 0-1). Technical Fouls: Cunningham. Blocks: 2 (Erving, Richardson). Steals: 14 (Erving 2, Malone 3, Cheeks 4, Toney 2, Jones, Richardson, C. Johnson). Turnovers: 19 (Erving 3, Javaroni 2, Malone, Cheeks 2, Toney 5, Jones 4, Richardson 2).								Team Rebounds: 10 3-point FG: 0-3 (M. Johnson 0-1, McAdoo 0-1, C. Johnson 0-1). Blocks: 8 (Rambis 2, Wilkes 3, Abdul-Jabbar 2, M. Johnson). Steals: 12 (Rambis, Wilkes 3, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson 2, Nixon 2, McAdoo 3). Turnovers: 25 (Rambis 2, Wilkes 3, Abdul-Jabbar 4, M. Johnson 8, Nixon 3, McAdoo 4, McGee).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Jess Kersey.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	21	28	23	39	111
Los Angeles Lakers	32	20	20	22	94

The 76ers took the Lakers best punch of the series so far, but fought back by outscoring their hosts 31-12 during a stretch that began in the second quarter and continued into the first three minutes of the third. Then Philadelphia broke the game open with fourteen unanswered points early in the fourth to take an 86-76 lead. "We worked hard on our defense," a confident Moses Malone said afterwards. "And it seemed like we got stronger, too. They're strong. They're the defending world champion. But we're stronger. We feel that, if we play our game, we can beat any team." The Sixers scored 28 of their points off of 25 Lakers turnovers, and out-rebounded them 22 to 15 on the offensive glass, creating more second chance opportunities. Down the stretch, Malone made a pair of three-point plays to keep the Lakers from mounting a surge.

Nixon, who again struggled from the floor, strained a tendon in his left knee to add to his injury woes. After the game, Cunningham boldly declared that the Sixers were going for the sweep: "We will come out with more intensity on Tuesday, more than we have had all season . . . We want LA in four; we want people to remember this team." And Julius Erving tempted fate by virtually guaranteeing success: "If we don't win it Tuesday, we'll win it the next day. We have to work, but we're going to win it."

May 31, 1983

NBA Finals Game 4

Philadelphia 115, Los Angeles 108

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	36	8-13	5-5	5	6	3	21	Rambis	26	3-9	1-2	5	2	4	7
Iavaroni	18	2-5	0-2	3	2	6	4	Wilkes	39	9-20	3-5	5	1	4	21
Malone	45	9-22	6-9	23	1	3	24	Abdul-Jabbar	40	10-15	8-10	7	3	5	28
Cheeks	38	7-10	6-8	1	7	3	20	M. Johnson	48	8-21	11-12	5	7	5	27
Toney	39	6-16	11-12	2	9	2	23	Cooper	40	5-11	2-2	3	4	5	13
B. Jones	25	6-7	1-2	3	2	4	13	Landsberger	21	2-2	0-0	7	2	2	4
Richardson	20	2-5	2-2	2	2	3	6	McGee	18	3-9	0-0	7	1	3	6
C. Johnson	19	2-3	0-0	2	0	4	4	D. Jones	8	1-5	0-0	2	0	3	2
TOTALS		42-81	31-40	50	29	28	115	TOTALS		41-92	25-31	53	26	31	108
Team Rebounds: 9 3-point FG: 0-1 (Toney 0-1). Blocks: 11 (Erving 2, Iavaroni 2, Malone 3, Toney, B. Jones 2, C. Johnson). Steals: 9 (Erving, Malone, Cheeks 2, Toney, B. Jones 4). Turnovers: 17 (Erving 4, Iavaroni 3, Malone, Cheeks 3, Toney 5, C. Johnson).								Team Rebounds: 12 3-point FG: 1-3 (M. Johnson 0-1, Cooper 1-2). Technical Fouls: Los Angeles illegal defense. Blocks: 3 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson). Steals: 7 (Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson, Cooper 4). Turnovers: 20 (Rambis, Wilkes 2, Abdul-Jabbar 6, M. Johnson 9, Cooper, McGee).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Earl Strom, Hugh Evans.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	24	27	31	33	115
Los Angeles Lakers	26	39	28	15	108

The short-handed Lakers gave the Sixers all they could handle, but Philadelphia finished off their sweep and a record-setting 12-1 postseason record. Nixon and McAdoo both sat out the game with their injuries, forcing Magic Johnson to go all forty-eight minutes and Riley to play Mark Landsberger and Mike McGee far more minutes than he would have preferred (thirty-nine combined, versus a total of just five minutes in Game 3). Los Angeles threw the ball away on their first four possessions, underscoring Nixon's absence, but despite a 6-0 run by Philadelphia midway through the quarter, the Lakers led 26-24 when Cooper drained a leaning three-pointer at the buzzer. The second quarter belonged to the Lakers, who outworked the Sixers all over the floor and built a sixteen point lead just before halftime. The Lakers had also led at the half in each of the first three games of the series; the difference tonight was that Los Angeles was also able to hold the lead after three quarters, at 93-82.

But in the fourth quarter the Lakers began to tire, and 76ers surged back, led by Moses Malone who began grabbing nearly every key rebound while collecting 9 points and 10 boards in the period. "Their fourth quarters were like instant replays," said Riley. "The mark of a great team is to come back, and they came back in style." Magic Johnson agreed: "We tried as hard as we could, but our shots came up short in the fourth, and we ran out of gas."



Lineup Analysis

Philadelphia closed out their sweep of the Lakers by taking control in the fourth quarter. The 76ers trailed throughout the entire second and third periods, and appeared to be content to go back to Philadelphia with a 3-1 series lead.

Fourth Quarter Game 4 1983 Finals (Part one)

Lakers ball		Wilkes	Wilkes	D. Jones	Rambis	Rambis
		D. Jones	Rambis	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes
		Landsberger	D. Jones	Rambis	Jabbar	Jabbar
		McGee	McGee	McGee	McGee	Magic
		Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	McGee
Philadelphia	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving
	Iavaroni	Iavaroni	Iavaroni	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones
	Malone	Malone	Malone	Malone	Malone	Malone
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney
	Richardson	Richardson	Richardson	Richardson	Richardson	Cheeks
76ers ball	Cooper	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Magic
	D. Jones	D. Jones	Rambis	Rambis	Jabbar	Rambis
	Landsberger	Landsberger	D. Jones	D. Jones	Rambis	Jabbar
	McGee	McGee	McGee	McGee	McGee	Wilkes
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	McGee
Time left	12:00			9:52	9:00	7:49
Score	93-82	93-84	95-88	95-90	95-92	100-93

At the nine minute mark, the 76ers had closed to 95-92 and Riley brought Abdul-Jabbar back into the game, restoring the Lakers starting five on the floor. The Lakers built their lead back up to seven, then Cunningham sent Cheeks back in after a four minute break. (Iavaroni had fouled out earlier in the quarter, so nine of the ten starters were now on the court.)

Lakers ball	Rambis	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	
	Wilkes	Rambis	Rambis	Rambis	Rambis	Rambis	
	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	
	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	
Philadelphia	Erving	B. Jones	Erving	Erving	Erving	Erving	
	B. Jones	C.Johnson	C.Johnson	B. Jones	B. Jones	B. Jones	
	Malone	Malone	Malone	Malone	Malone	Malone	
	Toney	Toney	Toney	Toney	Richardson	Toney	
	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	Cheeks	
76ers ball	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	
	Rambis	Jabbar	Jabbar	Rambis	Rambis	Rambis	
	Jabbar	Rambis	Rambis	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	
	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	
	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	
Time left	7:15	6:36	5:04	2:24	0:59	0:42	0:00
Score	100-93	100-95	100-99	106-104	109-107	109-108	115-108

The 76ers scored the next three baskets, and Cunningham even sneaked in a brief rest for Erving while Philadelphia cut their deficit to one. Los Angeles got the lead back to three on two occasions, the last at 106-103 when Abdul-Jabbar scored over Malone, but Philadelphia scored six of the next seven points to take their first lead since 24-23. Cunningham then made defense for offense substitutions in the backcourt in the final minute, alternating Richardson and Toney.



Fittingly, Julius Erving contributed a series of highlights down the stretch. His steal of an Abdul-Jabbar pass intended for Cooper led to a breakaway dunk and a 106-106 tie with two minutes remaining. Magic then made one of two free throws to put the Lakers back in front,

and the Lakers got the ball back after a 24-second shot clock violation by the Sixers at the 1:20 mark. But Abdul-Jabbar misfired on a hook, and the Sixers were off and running again; Erving corralled a low pass from Cheeks and dunked home the go-ahead basket and added a free throw as Rambis was called for a foul. Philadelphia led 109-107, their first lead since before Cooper's buzzer-beating three-pointer in the opening stanza. After Jabbar made one of two free throws, Erving hit a jumper over Magic to extend the 76ers lead to 111-108 with twenty-four seconds to play. "That shot found me and I just let it fly," Erving said afterwards. Cooper missed a wild three-pointer that could have tied the game, and Los Angeles got another chance when Philadelphia knocked the loose ball out of bounds. But Jones then stole the ball, and Cheeks fed Malone for a thunderous dunk that put an exclamation point on the series. "Let me tell you, we cried here last year," Erving exclaimed to reporters. "But for us, this is a beginning. This isn't the end of a long, cumbersome journey—this is the beginning."

1983-84

February 26, 1984

Los Angeles 101, Philadelphia 99

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	15	2-2	0-0	5	0	1	4	Erving	31	10-18	0-0	10	1	4	22
McGee	35	7-13	1-4	2	3	3	15	Iavaroni	7	1-4	0-0	2	0	0	2
Abdul-Jabbar	37	5-15	2-4	5	1	3	12	Malone	35	6-13	6-6	11	1	3	18
Scott	34	7-10	2-2	8	3	1	16	Richardson	33	4-10	0-0	2	7	2	8
M. Johnson	43	10-19	3-4	8	11	2	23	Cheeks	37	8-17	3-4	6	6	1	19
Worthy	33	6-15	0-0	9	2	4	12	Williams	28	5-9	1-2	6	1	3	11
Cooper	32	6-13	3-4	2	2	3	17	Edwards	26	2-9	3-3	1	3	1	7
Nater	10	1-1	0-0	7	1	3	2	C. Johnson	22	2-6	0-1	8	0	2	4
Garrett	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0	Jones	21	4-12	0-0	7	4	2	8
TOTALS		44-88	11-18	47	23	20	101	TOTALS		42-98	13-16	53	23	18	99
3-point FG: 2-4 (Cooper 2-4). Blocks: 5 (McGee, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson, Worthy 2).								3-point FG: 2-6 (Erving 2-3, Richardson 0-1, Cheeks 0-1, Jones 0-1). Technical Fouls: Cunningham, Philadelphia illegal defense. Blocks: 9 (Erving 3, Malone 2, Williams, C. Johnson 2, Jones).							
Attendance: 17921. Referees: John Vanak, Lee Jones.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	31	22	28	20	101
Philadelphia 76ers	22	31	21	25	99

Several key contributors were unable to play in this game. For Philadelphia, Andrew Toney re-aggravated a sprained right ankle during warm-ups, and Moses Malone was still out with an ankle sprain of his own. The Lakers were missing Jamaal Wilkes, out with the flu, and Bob McAdoo, who was sidelined with a respiratory infection. In the second quarter the two teams

traded runs of 13-2 (76ers) and 10-0 (Lakers) before ending the half tied at 53-53. The Lakers then pulled ahead for good in the third but nearly squandered their lead down the stretch. Leading 92-82 in the fourth quarter, the Lakers went without a field goal for over five minutes, but six turnovers by the 76ers and a lack of offensive rebounding resulted in a meager 4-1 advantage for Philadelphia in that span. Then the 76ers nearly erased a nine-point deficit in the final thirty-three seconds of the game as Erving hit a pair of three-pointers and Malone added a layup with one second remaining. Bobby Jones then stole the Lakers inbound pass but his long-distance heave was way off the mark. Pat Riley was disappointed that his team had given the undermanned 76ers a chance to come back, telling reporters that, "we played extremely well for the entire game, and then we tried not to lose it. We stopped attacking all of a sudden. Actually, we played right into their hands. But I thought our defense stayed strong."

The victory was the first for the Lakers at the Spectrum since Game 1 of 1982 Finals, and their first in Philadelphia during the regular season since 1975. Philadelphia fell to 13-16 since New Year's Day. "We had some good shots and good opportunities that we just didn't convert or take advantage of on offense," said Billy Cunningham. "The way we're going, we have players doubting themselves and wondering whether or not we're going to be able to do the same things we did last year. The only way we are going to get things going in the right direction again is through hard work. It's going to take us awhile."

March 7, 1984

Philadelphia 113, Los Angeles 105

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Erving	39	12-18	4-6	4	9	3	28	Rambis	11	1-3	0-0	4	0	3	2
Javaroni	22	4-6	0-0	6	2	1	8	Wilkes	36	5-14	0-0	3	3	4	10
Malone	40	8-17	6-9	11	2	3	22	Abdul-Jabbar	39	14-21	1-1	6	4	5	29
Cheeks	37	8-14	2-4	1	3	3	18	M. Johnson	40	3-7	5-7	2	11	6	11
Toney	38	7-14	1-1	1	6	3	15	Scott	34	7-13	2-2	2	2	4	16
Jones	26	3-7	4-6	2	0	2	10	Worthy	34	7-14	1-4	10	0	0	15
Richardson	21	4-8	0-0	4	4	0	8	Cooper	29	6-13	4-4	2	4	4	20
Williams	9	1-1	1-2	4	0	3	3	Nater	9	1-1	0-0	5	0	2	2
C. Johnson	8	0-1	1-2	1	0	1	1	McGee	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
								McAdoo	3	0-2	0-0	0	0	1	0
TOTALS		47-86	19-30	34	26	19	113	TOTALS		44-88	13-18	34	24	30	105
Technical Fouls: Philadelphia illegal defense 2. Blocks: 7 (Erving 2, Malone, Jones 2, Williams, C. Johnson).								3-point FG: 4-9 (M. Johnson 0-1, Worthy 0-1, Cooper 4-7). Blocks: 6 (Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson, Worthy, Cooper).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Wally Rooney, Bill Saar.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	28	29	27	29	113
Los Angeles Lakers	22	34	26	23	105

With both teams closer to full strength, the 76ers led nearly start-to-finish at the Forum, in a game that Pat Riley had declared a day earlier was Philadelphia's "Armageddon" given their struggles this season. Byron Scott and Jamaal Wilkes each scored eight points in the second quarter, as the Lakers made their only significant run of the night. "I don't know if this is a turning point for us or not," Maurice Cheeks said, who had scored 15 of his points in the first half. "All I know is that we just played very well tonight, and we came to play well."

Throughout the third quarter, the Sixers built a series of small leads, seven points or less, and withstood every charge made by the Lakers without surrendering their advantage. The Sixers did their best to blow a double-digit lead in the fourth, missing seven straight free throws in the final two minutes, but the Lakers killed their comeback chances with turnovers on four consecutive trips down the floor.

Malone's 22 points and 12 rebounds represented one of his best games during an injury-plagued season; just days earlier, 76ers owner Harold Katz had ripped his players for lack of effort, and focused on his high-priced superstar, saying that even before Malone sprained his ankle, he was not playing "with the verve or intensity he did last year" and was "absolutely" not worth his \$2 million salary this season. "He doesn't seem able to make a power move. He doesn't seem able to make the quick first step," Katz added, while admitting that the team did not have "a snowball's chance in hell" of winning another title unless Malone's play improved. Ultimately, the Sixers would be upset by the Nets in the first round of the playoffs that spring.

1984-85

December 7, 1984

Philadelphia 122, Los Angeles 116

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	27	33	28	28	116
Philadelphia 76ers	38	29	31	24	122

In a game dominated by Moses Malone, the 76ers closed the third quarter on a 14-2 run (featuring 12 points by Malone) that gave them the lead for good. Malone and rookie Charles Barkley combined for 28 rebounds—16 on the offensive glass—and 8 blocks, and were too much for the Lakers to handle. “The pivotal thing,” Erving said later, “is what Charles and Moses did on the offensive boards. They did a masterful job.” Kareem Abdul-Jabbar lamented, “We let [Malone] get inside position in the second half a few more times. And they went to him more. That kind of took me by surprise. I wasn’t expecting it.”

Both teams did a remarkable job holding on to the ball; the 76ers set a season low with 12 turnovers (just two in the first half), while the Lakers turned it over just 14 times. But Riley told reporters that “Philadelphia’s aggressiveness was the key to the game,” which produced a 41-17 Sixers advantage in free throw attempts and slowed down the Lakers fast break. “They shot well and banged the offensive boards,” Riley continued. “After misses, they would pick the ball up higher. They always get back and load the middle, so there’s not a whole lot of penetrating gaps for Magic.”

January 25, 1985

Los Angeles 109, Philadelphia 104

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Barkley	21	4-8	2-2	2	0	1	10	Rambis	25	4-5	0-0	6	2	4	8
Erving	35	8-13	0-0	1	3	2	16	Worthy	41	8-15	2-2	8	5	0	18
Malone	38	5-13	6-7	14	3	4	16	Abdul-Jabbar	41	9-19	5-7	9	1	5	23
Cheeks	34	5-10	0-0	3	9	2	11	M. Johnson	39	6-11	4-5	6	15	1	16
Toney	37	9-19	9-10	5	9	3	30	Scott	30	11-16	0-1	0	6	5	22
Jones	22	2-2	4-5	3	2	6	8	Cooper	25	2-6	0-0	3	4	5	5
Richardson	22	1-5	3-4	0	2	2	5	Wilkes	21	3-8	2-2	2	1	1	8
C. Johnson	19	3-4	0-0	4	0	3	6	Kupchak	7	2-2	1-1	2	0	1	5
G. Johnson	9	1-2	0-0	2	0	2	2	McGee	7	1-2	0-2	1	0	0	2
Threatt	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	Spriggs	4	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS		38-76	24-28	34	28	25	104	TOTALS		47-85	14-20	37	34	22	109
3-point FG: 4-5 (Cheeks 1-1, Toney 3-4).								3-point FG: 1-2 (M. Johnson 0-1, Cooper 1-1).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Tom Nunez, Jess Kersey.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	27	24	26	27	104
Los Angeles Lakers	30	31	22	26	109

The Lakers got a measure of revenge despite the absence of backup center Bob McAdoo due to a bruised left heel. After a back-and-forth first quarter, the Lakers led by three and never trailed after that, partially due to a blistering 66 percent shooting percentage in the first half

that produced a 59-45 lead late in the second period. But Philadelphia kept grinding away, and with five minutes left in the game Los Angeles's lead was down to 95-93. The Lakers then scored twelve of the next eighteen points to make the margin more comfortable. After the game, James Worthy, who scored ten of his points in the first quarter, explained the simple motivation for the Lakers to win this one: "Since we only meet these guys twice during the season, it did us some good to split with them ... We couldn't let them have a psychological edge on us." Magic Johnson was already looking forward to possibly meeting the Sixers again in the Finals, saying that, "It's still us, Boston and Philadelphia. Still the big names and still the big three." But the 76ers would fall to the Celtics in the Eastern Conference Finals.

1985-86

January 31, 1986

Los Angeles 134, Philadelphia 100

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Barkley	29	6-9	4-11	5	2	3	17	Rambis	32	4-5	2-2	8	0	2	10
Jones	16	3-4	0-0	1	2	1	6	Worthy	33	10-16	2-2	5	3	1	22
Malone	31	4-11	6-8	9	3	0	14	Abdul-Jabbar	24	6-12	1-1	4	4	4	13
Cheeks	38	6-11	2-2	2	7	2	14	Cooper	32	8-13	2-2	3	13	2	18
Erving	29	3-6	0-0	3	1	1	6	McGee	22	8-11	3-4	2	0	3	19
Threatt	28	7-13	1-1	0	1	4	15	Scott	26	9-11	5-5	3	3	3	24
McAdoo	21	4-10	2-2	5	3	1	10	Lucas	22	5-12	6-6	2	3	6	16
Moss	15	2-3	2-2	2	2	1	6	A. Green	21	3-3	0-2	2	0	2	6
Johnson	11	0-0	0-0	1	1	3	0	Lester	16	2-4	0-0	0	6	1	4
K. Green	9	4-4	0-0	4	0	0	8	Spriggs	12	1-2	0-0	2	1	0	2
Catledge	8	0-1	0-0	1	0	1	0								
Stokes	5	2-5	0-0	1	0	1	4								
TOTALS		41-77	17-26	34	22	18	100	TOTALS		56-89	21-24	31	33	24	134
3-point FG: 1-1 (Barkley 1-1). Blocks: 1 (Barkley). Steals: 7 (Malone, Cheeks, Erving, McAdoo, Moss, Catledge 2). Turnovers: 26 (Barkley 4, Malone 6, Cheeks 4, Erving 3, Threatt, McAdoo, Moss 2, K. Green 3, Stokes 2).								3-point FG: 1-3 (Cooper 0-1, McGee 0-1, Scott 1-1). Blocks: 4 (Worthy 3, Lucas). Steals: 15 (Rambis 2, Worthy 3, Abdul-Jabbar, Cooper, McGee 3, Scott 3, Lucas, Lester). Turnovers: 12 (Rambis, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar, McGee 2, Scott 3, A. Green, Spriggs 3).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Lee Jones, Blane Reichelt.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	20	28	26	26	100
Los Angeles Lakers	36	25	42	31	134

With Magic Johnson out with a sore right knee, the Lakers ripped the 76ers for a surprisingly easy victory, defensively strangling the visitors by forcing 27 turnovers. Afterwards, Maurice Cheeks succinctly summarized the 76ers plight, stating "it was total domination," while Charles Barkley attempted to overlook the obvious gap between the two teams. "Tonight was

just a bad night. We just got pounded, but that doesn't mean we're not a good team." Yet, Philadelphia had dropped a 107-86 decision in Utah two days earlier, and the 134 points were the most that the Sixers had allowed in a non-overtime game since yielding 134 to Denver on February 27, 1982. Prior to the game, Philadelphia activated Bob McAdoo, who was signed to an offer sheet two weeks earlier but did not become 76ers property until the Lakers failed to match it the day before.

February 23, 1986

Los Angeles 117, Philadelphia 111 (ot)

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	26	2-4	0-0	5	0	5	4	Barkley	50	7-15	10-13	18	1	5	24
Spriggs	18	2-5	0-0	2	3	3	4	Jones	29	4-4	2-2	4	3	2	10
Abdul-Jabbar	44	12-22	4-5	5	3	5	28	Malone	44	9-21	9-14	12	3	3	27
M. Johnson	43	13-21	7-8	5	11	5	34	Cheeks	51	7-22	4-6	4	9	3	18
Scott	42	8-12	6-6	6	5	2	22	Erving	35	6-16	0-0	8	2	4	12
Cooper	35	3-7	2-2	5	5	1	10	Threatt	20	5-7	0-0	3	1	2	10
Lucas	27	1-9	1-1	8	1	2	3	McAdoo	18	2-8	0-0	2	0	1	4
Green	14	5-6	0-0	4	0	2	10	C. Johnson	9	2-3	0-0	3	0	3	4
Kupchak	8	0-2	2-4	1	0	0	2	Moss	9	1-1	0-0	0	0	1	2
McGee	8	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0								
TOTALS		46-88	22-26	41	29	25	117	TOTALS		43-97	25-35	54	19	24	111
3-point FG: 3-6 (M. Johnson 1-3, Cooper 2-3). Blocks: 11 (Rambis 2, Spriggs, Abdul-Jabbar 7, Cooper). Steals: 11 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson, Scott, Cooper 4, Lucas). Turnovers: 18 (Rambis, Spriggs, Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson 4, Scott, Cooper 2, Lucas 3, Green 2, McGee).								3-point FG: 0-2 (Cheeks 0-1, Erving 0-1). Blocks: 7 (Barkley 3, Malone, McAdoo, C. Johnson, Moss). Steals: 9 (Barkley, Malone 3, Cheeks 4, Erving). Turnovers: 19 (Barkley 7, Jones 2, Malone 3, Cheeks 2, Erving 3, McAdoo 2).							
Attendance: 17941. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Dick Bavetta.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Los Angeles Lakers	24	30	30	23	10	117
Philadelphia 76ers	32	24	19	32	4	111

In the middle of a six-game stretch without James Worthy, out with a bruised groin, the Lakers salvaged a win at the Spectrum as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar passed Elvin Hayes to set a new NBA record for most games played (1,304). Worthy's absence coincided with the last four games of a five-game road trip and a home-and-home with the Phoenix Suns; the Lakers would go 3-3. "We had to have this game," Pat Riley told reporters afterwards. "We endured. We didn't crack at all." Los Angeles led by as many as thirteen points in the third, as Abdul-Jabbar did his best to contain Malone while scoring 28 points and blocking a season-high 7 shots. However, a 23-9 run by Philadelphia in the fourth put them in front, 102-97, with two minutes left in regulation. With eleven seconds remaining, the 76ers were still ahead by three after a pair of free throws by Charles Barkley. Then Magic Johnson, with Julius Erving backing off as he approached the three point line—anticipating a pass—drained a three-pointer to tie the

game. "That shot was going in all the way," Johnson said later. "It was like a shot in the arm." A 6-2 Laker run at the start of overtime put Los Angeles in front to stay.

1986-87

December 28, 1986

Los Angeles 111, Philadelphia 85

PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Barkley	32	4-11	5-7	16	2	4	13	A. Green	19	1-3	0-0	1	0	0	2
Robinson	30	4-11	0-0	6	0	2	8	Worthy	35	8-17	1-2	4	0	4	17
McCormick	29	5-8	0-2	6	0	3	10	Abdul-Jabbar	30	7-9	2-2	9	4	2	16
Cheeks	37	5-9	7-7	2	5	0	17	Johnson	31	12-17	4-4	8	9	1	28
Erving	31	3-9	0-0	2	5	2	6	Scott	23	3-10	0-0	2	4	3	6
Hinson	24	3-9	9-9	8	0	3	15	Cooper	23	3-11	0-0	1	3	3	6
Wingate	15	4-5	2-3	1	1	4	10	Rambis	22	3-4	2-2	4	2	4	8
Vranes	15	0-5	0-0	1	2	1	0	Matthews	18	1-5	1-2	1	7	2	3
Threatt	13	0-1	0-0	1	1	2	0	Brickowski	17	3-4	0-0	5	2	6	6
Toney	10	2-10	2-2	1	2	0	6	Thompson	10	2-3	5-6	3	2	2	9
K. Green	4	0-1	0-2	0	0	1	0	Branch	7	3-5	2-4	3	0	1	8
								Smrek	5	1-2	0-0	1	0	1	2
TOTALS		30-79	25-32	44	18	22	85	TOTALS		47-90	17-22	42	33	29	111
3-point FG: 0-9 (Barkley 0-1, Erving 0-2, Wingate 0-1, Vranes 0-1, Toney 0-4). Blocks: 2 (Erving, Vranes). Steals: 8 (Barkley 3, Robinson, Cheeks 2, Erving, Vranes). Turnovers: 24 (Barkley 3, Robinson 4, Cheeks 3, Erving 3, Hinson 3, Wingate 5, Toney, K. Green 2).								3-point FG: 0-4 (Worthy 0-1, Scott 0-1, Cooper 0-2). Blocks: 6 (Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Rambis, Thompson). Steals: 12 (Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Johnson 2, Cooper, Rambis 2, Matthews, Brickowski, Thompson, Branch). Turnovers: 16 (A. Green, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar, Johnson 5, Scott, Cooper, Rambis 2, Matthews, Brickowski 2, Smrek).							
Attendance: 17505.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Philadelphia 76ers	25	11	26	23	85
Los Angeles Lakers	19	26	34	32	111

The Lakers presented Julius Erving with a rocking chair during a pregame ceremony, then proceeded to hold him to just 6 points in his last game at the Forum. Philadelphia led by five in the second quarter before Los Angeles pulled away on a 20-6 run to close out the half. Both coaches later stated that the game had turned on a pair of missed dunks by Charles Barkley. "Charles' missed dunk was a momentum-changer. Everything went south after that," head coach Matt Goukas said. "I've said it many times, 'Just make the layup.'" Barkley initially rejected the notion with an expletive-laced response to a reporter, then backed off when he was informed of Goukas's statement. But the Sixers had shot 5 for 17 during the quarter as a team, which was just as big of a factor.

In the other locker room, Pat Riley was praising his star, Magic Johnson. "Earvin was relentless and he kept creating. His intensity and commitment to playing and leading is the best I've seen. ... He looks like he's having tremendous fun." As were the rest of his teammates. The Lakers scored thirteen unanswered points in the third to push their lead to 71-52, allowing Johnson to sit out the entire fourth quarter as Los Angeles cruised to victory. The 76ers lost for the eighth time in their last ten games.

February 22, 1987

Los Angeles 112, Philadelphia 110 (ot)

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	PHILADELPHIA	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Green	30	6-12	3-4	10	3	3	15	Barkley	53	11-21	7-9	13	4	4	29
Worthy	47	11-22	2-2	6	4	1	24	Hinson	49	7-13	1-1	8	3	5	15
Abdul-Jabbar	38	9-20	0-0	7	4	3	18	McCormick	46	9-14	2-2	9	4	4	20
Johnson	44	7-10	2-4	9	18	3	16	Cheeks	53	7-19	0-0	4	11	0	14
Scott	34	6-9	1-1	0	1	3	15	Toney	46	8-16	10-10	1	9	0	26
Cooper	29	5-9	0-0	5	3	2	10	Vranes	10	2-3	0-0	2	0	0	4
Thompson	29	5-14	0-0	5	0	2	10	Free	7	1-2	0-0	1	0	0	2
Rambis	14	2-4	0-0	5	1	2	4	Wingate	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0
TOTALS		51-100	8-11	47	34	19	112	TOTALS		45-88	20-22	39	31	13	110
3-point FG: 2-6 (Green 0-1, Scott 2-3, Cooper 0-2). Blocks: 6 (Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Scott, Cooper). Steals: 8 (Abdul-Jabbar, Johnson 3, Scott, Cooper, Rambis 2). Turnovers: 14 (Worthy 3, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Johnson 4, Scott, Cooper 2, Thompson 2).								3-point FG: 0-4 (Barkley 0-2, McCormick 0-1, Cheeks 0-1). Blocks: 9 (Barkley 5, Hinson, McCormick 2, Toney). Steals: 8 (Barkley 2, Cheeks 5, Toney). Turnovers: 14 (Barkley 6, Hinson, McCormick, Cheeks 2, Toney 3, Vranes).							
Attendance: 17967.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Los Angeles Lakers	26	20	34	24	8	112
Philadelphia 76ers	29	23	25	27	6	110

Julius Erving was out with a hairline fracture of the middle finger on his right hand, and Cliff Robinson was still anchored to the bench with an eye infection and a sprained ankle, but a resurgent Andrew Toney brought the Sixers within a whisker of breaking their four-game losing streak against the Lakers. Philadelphia led by six at the half and by eleven, 61-50, in the third, before their lack of depth caught up with them (the 76ers bench contributed just 6 points in 18 minutes of playing time), in the form of a 24-8 run by Los Angeles that gave the visitors a five-point edge. Johnson, suffering from an inflamed left Achilles tendon (he would sit out the Lakers next two games to rest it) was scoreless until the final fifteen minutes of regulation but still inspired the Lakers comeback with his passing and rebounding. Los Angeles led by three at the end of the quarter, but failed to build on it, and fell behind 95-94 on a Barkley dunk at the end of a break with 5:37 remaining. The lead see-sawed back and forth between the teams in the closing minutes, and Barkley—who played all 53 minutes—had a chance to win the game in regulation with nine seconds left and the Sixers trailing by

one, but missed the first of two free throws and the game ended up in overtime. The always colorful Barkley gave himself the choke sign, clutching his own throat after the miss.

In the extra session, neither team could build a commanding lead, and in the closing seconds the Lakers set up a double screen for James Worthy, who hit an unconventional-looking right-hand runner (he took off on his right foot instead of his left) over Barkley for the final points of the game. Barkley then kicked the ball out of bounds on the Sixers subsequent possession, ending Philadelphia's hopes. Goukas admitted to being surprised that Worthy, who had made just one other game-winning shot all year, was the primary option at the end of overtime. Worthy agreed, commenting after the game that, "We've been so accurate in that situation with Kareem's sky-hook and Magic [Johnson] making the basket or getting fouled on the drive, that's usually what we do, even though teams know what's going to happen." But Riley, always the psychologist, was not in a celebratory mood. "This team is on the brink of greatness or disaster. I coach them, I know their attitudes, their hidden agendas. Right now, we're not playing the best basketball in the league. Boston is."

For Toney, still struggling with foot problems and suspended by the team for most of January due to his reluctance to play, it was the third straight game in which he scored 20 or more points, easily his best stretch of the season so far; over his first twenty-six games he had topped that mark only twice.

Chapter Nine

Lakers vs. Celtics

1979-80

December 28, 1979
Los Angeles 123, Boston 105

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Bird	40	7-15	2-3	4	3	5	16	Chones	33	6-8	4-6	7	3	3	16
Maxwell	30	6-12	7-9	16	0	4	19	Wilkes	40	11-21	0-0	8	4	2	22
Cowens	27	2-11	0-0	3	9	6	4	Abdul-Jabbar	36	4-9	7-8	18	7	4	15
Archibald	37	4-13	6-7	0	8	2	14	Johnson	40	7-14	9-10	8	6	4	23
C. Ford	28	7-12	2-4	1	2	3	18	Nixon	39	7-13	3-4	2	8	5	17
Carr	24	8-14	0-0	5	1	2	16	Cooper	20	4-7	0-0	1	3	3	8
Robey	21	3-9	0-2	5	0	3	6	Haywood	23	6-11	4-6	4	1	3	16
Henderson	15	4-7	0-0	2	5	1	8	D. Ford	8	3-3	0-0	1	0	1	6
Chaney	9	1-2	0-0	2	0	1	2	Mack	1	0-1	0-0	0	1	0	0
Judkins	7	0-3	2-2	1	0	2	2								
Fernsten	2	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0								
TOTALS		42-98	19-27	49	29	29	105	TOTALS		48-87	27-34	61	33	25	123
Team Rebounds: 10 3-point FG: 2-7 (Archibald 0-1, C. Ford 2-4, Carr 0-2). Blocks: 2 (Maxwell, Carr). Steals: 13 (Bird 4, Cowens 2, Archibald 3, Carr, Robey 2, Fernsten). Turnovers: 17 (Bird 2, Maxwell 3, Archibald 2, C. Ford, Carr, Robey 5, Henderson 2, Chaney).								Team Rebounds: 12 Blocks: 7 (Chones 3, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Haywood). Steals: 11 (Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Johnson 4, Nixon, Haywood 2). Turnovers: 24 (Chones, Wilkes 3, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Johnson 7, Nixon 7, Cooper, Haywood 2).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Bob Rake, Hue Hollins.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	25	27	25	28	105
Los Angeles Lakers	30	31	28	34	123

The Lakers overpowered the Celtics in the first professional meeting of Magic Johnson and Larry Bird. Boston was in the midst of a six-game road trip, which began with a loss in Philadelphia and then an easy victory over the San Diego Clippers the night before. That outing had raised their record to 28-8, and now the Celtics were attempting to match their

win total from the entire 1978-79 season. Los Angeles had just completed a two game trip to Kansas City and Utah, and were playing their third game in as many nights. But Bird and Dave Cowens were both plagued by foul trouble in the first half, and the Lakers used a 12-2 run to open up a 105-87 lead midway through the fourth. The spurt was led by Jamaal Wilkes and Magic, who scored 13 of his 23 points in the period.

After the game, Fitch downplayed the performance of the two rookies, saying that “neither was instrumental,” while praising Wilkes (whose defense against Bird was also critically important) and Abdul-Jabbar, who had a game-high 18 rebounds. Paul Westhead declared that the “difference in this game was defense” and labeled it “our best individual defensive effort of the year.” Bird was deferential in the face of intense media coverage that had forced the reticent star to hold a press conference *before* the game; afterwards, he stated that his “rivalry” with Magic was being “blown way out of proportion” in an attempt to create publicity for the NBA.

January 13, 1980

Los Angeles 100, Boston 98

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Haywood	28	4-13	2-2	3	1	2	10	Maxwell	31	5-9	3-4	6	1	3	13
Wilkes	41	10-18	1-1	9	4	1	21	Bird	36	7-10	0-0	12	1	4	14
Abdul-Jabbar	41	14-29	5-7	12	2	3	33	Cowens	39	11-21	0-0	9	5	4	22
Nixon	41	2-9	7-8	4	9	4	11	Archibald	34	4-10	5-10	3	10	2	13
Johnson	21	0-2	1-2	3	2	1	1	C. Ford	33	5-16	0-0	6	3	3	11
Chones	27	7-10	1-1	6	2	4	15	Chaney	11	1-3	0-0	1	1	1	2
Cooper	36	4-6	1-1	4	2	3	9	Carr	23	3-5	2-5	0	2	4	8
D. Ford	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	2	0	Henderson	15	3-7	2-2	1	1	0	8
								Robey	16	3-8	1-2	5	1	1	7
								Judkins	2	0-1	0-0	1	0	0	0
TOTALS		41-87	18-22	52	22	20	100	TOTALS		42-90	13-23	56	25	22	98
Team Rebounds: 11 Blocks: 9 (Haywood 2, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Johnson, Chones, Cooper 3). Steals: 10 (Haywood 2, Wilkes, Nixon, Johnson 2, Chones, Cooper 3). Turnovers: 18 (Haywood 2, Wilkes, Abdul-Jabbar 4, Nixon 2, Johnson 3, Chones 4, Cooper 2).								Team Rebounds: 12 3-point FG: 1-4 (Bird 0-1, C. Ford 1-3). Technical Fouls: Fitch. Blocks: 5 (Maxwell, Bird 3, Cowens). Steals: 8 (Bird, Cowens 3, C. Ford 2, Chaney, Carr). Turnovers: 15 (Maxwell 5, Bird 3, Cowens 2, Archibald, Chaney, Carr, Henderson, Judkins).							
Attendance: 15320. Referees: Jack Madden, Ed Rush.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	21	30	26	23	100
Boston Celtics	34	28	12	24	98

Boston began the night shooting 63 percent from the floor in the first half, but then went over seven minutes in the third quarter without scoring as the Lakers escaped with a narrow victory at the Garden. The visitors poured in twenty-one unanswered points during that stretch to wipe out a 67-53 deficit. “Our defense triggered it, but when it’s going like that it’s

a reciprocal thing between the offense and the defense,” Westhead said after the game. He reserved special praise for Michael Cooper, who shut down Bird in the third period after the Celtics budding superstar shot a perfect 6 for 6 in the first half. “I couldn’t have stopped him all by myself,” Cooper admitted later. “I concentrated on denying him the ball. I’m quicker than he is, but I’m in trouble if they [the Celtics] start lobbing passes over my head. They never did.”

Still, the Celtics regained the lead at 80-79 with ten minutes left in the game, and despite falling into a 98-91 hole with two minutes remaining, rallied to force a 98-98 tie when Cedric Maxwell put the finishing touches on a fast break with twenty-one seconds left. On the ensuing Lakers possession, Archibald was called for a foul on Nixon, who made two free throws to close the scoring. Fitch was not pleased with the call: “The man has both hands at his sides and they call a foul. This one will be hard to digest.” Cowens’ attempt at a game-winning twenty-foot heave bounced off the rim at the buzzer.

1980-81

January 18, 1981

Boston 98, Los Angeles 96

LOS ANGELES	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Chones	2	0-0	4		Maxwell	8	6-6	22
Wilkes	14	1-1	29		Bird	4	3-4	11
Abdul-Jabbar	13	6-8	32		Parish	9	4-7	22
Nixon	9	1-2	19		Archibald	10	2-4	22
Cooper	4	0-0	8		Ford	4	0-0	9
Jordan	0	0-0	0		Henderson	0	3-4	3
Brewer	1	0-0	2		Robey	1	0-0	2
Landsberger	1	0-1	2					
TOTALS	44	8-12	96		TOTALS	39	19-27	98
					3-point FG: 1 (Ford 1).			
Attendance: 15320.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	26	33	23	14	96
Boston Celtics	23	30	23	22	98

Larry Bird earned his first victory over the Lakers, but the accomplishment was diminished by the absence of Magic Johnson, who was still out with a knee injury. In his absence the Lakers had posted a 16-12 record, but Los Angeles still managed to give the 37-8 Celtics all they could handle. With Abdul-Jabbar and Wilkes (in a superb 14 for 19 effort) combining for 61 points, and Larry Bird struggling (4 for 13), the Lakers held the lead most of the night before succumbing. Defense was the key to the Celtics comeback, as they held the Lakers to

14 points on 7 for 23 shooting in the fourth quarter. "When you hold a team like the Lakers to that few points, then somebody must be doing something right," Bird told reporters. "This was a good game for us against a good team... I think it was a big victory for us psychologically. It's nice to beat a team you've never beaten before for the first time, especially when it's the world champions." Wilkes missed a potential game-tying twenty-one-footer with two seconds left, and this time it was the Lakers who bemoaned the lack of a foul call in the subsequent scrum for the rebound. Boston improved to 17-0 on the season when holding their opponent under 100 points.

February 11, 1981

Boston 105, Los Angeles 91

BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS	LOS ANGELES	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Bird	16	4-5	36	Chones	1	0-0	2
Maxwell	3	2-2	8	Wilkes	7	2-2	16
Parish	7	9-10	23	Abdul-Jabbar	12	8-12	32
Ford	2	0-0	4	Cooper	4	0-0	8
Henderson	5	1-2	11	Nixon	7	2-4	16
McHale	0	2-2	2	Landsberger	0	0-0	0
Carr	1	0-0	2	Jordan	6	0-0	12
Robey	9	1-5	19	Brewer	2	1-1	5
Duerod	0	0-0	0	Carter	0	0-0	0
TOTALS	43	19-26	105	TOTALS	39	13-19	91
Attendance: 17505.							

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	28	30	28	19	105
Los Angeles Lakers	28	23	28	12	91

Despite the continued absence of Magic Johnson, the Lakers had a significant advantage heading into their second meeting of the year with the Celtics: Los Angeles was coming off a two-day layoff after a 102-99 loss in Philadelphia, while Boston had arrived in town just six hours before the game following a 108-107 defeat in Seattle. But the Celtics had their own advantage: Larry Bird. Bird, who had played fifty minutes in the loss to the SuperSonics, merely chipped in 36 points, 21 rebounds, 5 assists, 5 steals and 5 blocks against the Lakers. His perfect 6 for 6 shooting performance in the second period (part of a 15 for 18 stretch) coincided with a 19-2 Boston run that turned a 28-21 first quarter deficit into a 40-30 lead. The first half ended with Bird driving and passing off to Rick Robey at the last moment for the latter's thirteenth and fourteenth points of the period while Abdul-Jabbar tried in vain to break up the play. Bird added 10 points and 7 rebounds as the teams traded baskets in the third quarter, and then Boston pulled away down the stretch.

1981-82

February 7, 1982

Los Angeles 119, Boston 113

LOS ANGELES	FGM	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM	FTM-A	PTS
Rambis	0	0-0	0		Maxwell	4	2-2	10
Wilkes	12	2-2	26		Bird	5	0-0	11
Abdul-Jabbar	16	3-4	35		Parish	14	1-4	29
Cooper	13	5-6	31		Archibald	7	3-5	18
Nixon	3	7-8	13		Ford	7	0-1	15
McAdoo	2	3-4	7		McHale	7	1-2	15
Jordan	2	0-0	4		Robey	4	0-1	8
Brewer	0	0-0	0		Henderson	1	1-2	3
Landsberger	1	1-1	3		Carr	2	0-0	4
					Ainge	0	0-0	0
					Bradley	0	0-0	0
					Fernsten	0	0-0	0
TOTALS	49	21-25	119		TOTALS	51	8-17	113
					3-point FG: 3 (Bird 1, Archibald 1, Ford 1).			
Attendance: 15320.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	24	28	26	41	119
Boston Celtics	40	26	21	26	113

The Celtics roared out of the blocks with a big first quarter, riding 17 points by Parish and a surprising 6 for 7 start from the floor by Chris Ford. With 8:49 left in the third, their lead had ballooned to 74-54. Then it all fell apart. With Magic Johnson out with an ankle injury suffered two days earlier in Washington, Michael Cooper scored a career-high 31 points while shutting down Bird; together with Wilkes, the duo combined for 34 of the Lakers next 50 points as the Lakers wiped out the deficit. Cooper was perfect from the field over the final seventeen minutes of the game. "We got a hot hand, a real hot hand," Riley said after the game, while Abdul-Jabbar stated, "We stayed with it and didn't hang our heads. We came back. I'm not surprised because we've done it before. But against the Celtics, it surprises everyone." The Lakers opened the fourth quarter on an 18-6 run that put them in front, 96-93 with just under eight minutes remaining. With Bird on the bench for the next four minutes, the Lakers extended their lead to 104-99 while taking critical time off the clock, and then coasted to victory.

February 14, 1982

Boston 108, Los Angeles 103

BOSTON	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS		LOS ANGELES	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS
Bird	4-11	4-5	12		Johnson	6-11	7-9	19

Maxwell	10-16	7-8	27	Wilkes	11-21	3-4	25
Parish	10-17	2-4	22	Abdul-Jabbar	7-16	7-10	21
Archibald	5-13	6-8	17	Cooper	4-13	1-1	9
Ford	1-4	0-0	2	Nixon	3-11	0-0	6
McHale	2-4	2-2	6	Jordan	7-9	0-0	14
Henderson	3-9	1-2	7	McAdoo	3-11	3-4	9
Robey	3-4	0-3	6	Landsberger	0-1	0-0	0
Carr	4-6	1-2	9				
TOTALS	42-84	23-34	108	TOTALS	41-93	21-28	103
3-point FG: 1 (Archibald 1).				Attendance: 17505.			

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	24	28	22	34	108
Los Angeles Lakers	25	32	22	24	103

One week after blowing a twenty point lead at the Garden, the Celtics held off the Lakers at the Forum. Los Angeles had led for much of the game, but were unable to control Parish (14 rebounds) or Maxwell (11 rebounds, 6 on the offensive glass) down the stretch. “Maxwell delivered today,” Wilkes said later. “He was the key.” Wilkes had given the Lakers their final lead of the day at 92-91 with a put back off of an offensive rebound, but the Celtics then ripped off six in a row and never trailed again. Bird struggled from the floor for much of the afternoon, while contributing nine assists, but provided the clinching points when he hit a shot in the closing seconds after being fouled by Cooper; the shot was surprisingly called good (Bob Ryan of *Boston Globe* wrote that the play “may have been carrying the concept of ‘continuation’ to the extreme”) and Bird added a free throw to put the Celtics ahead 107-103. It was Bird’s first career victory over Magic Johnson.

1982-83

January 30, 1983

Boston 110, Los Angeles 95

LOS ANGELES	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS
Rambis	1-5	4-5	6		McHale	8-19	0-0	16
Wilkes	9-19	2-3	20		Bird	9-22	3-3	21
Abdul-Jabbar	12-22	3-3	27		Parish	11-18	2-4	24
Johnson	5-10	4-4	14		Buckner	2-6	0-0	4
Nixon	3-7	0-0	6		Ainge	6-13	0-0	12
Cooper	2-6	2-3	6		Archibald	3-8	1-2	7
Worthy	3-8	1-2	7		Maxwell	6-8	4-5	16
McAdoo	4-11	1-2	9		Carr	3-5	0-0	6
					Henderson	2-7	0-0	4
TOTALS	39-88	17-22	95		TOTALS	50-106	10-14	110

Attendance: 15320.

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	26	24	27	18	95
Boston Celtics	24	36	32	18	110

On Super Bowl Sunday, the Celtics ran over the Lakers at the Garden. Both Bird (21/13/8) and Magic (14/9/10) nearly finished with triple-doubles, but the star of the game was Tiny Archibald, who had lost his starting job after spraining a thumb back in early November. With the Celtics trailing 23-20 late in the first quarter, Archibald came off the bench and immediately sparked the offense, playing what Larry Bird called “one of the best games I’ve seen Tiny play.” By halftime Boston led 60-50, courtesy of a 12-4 run, and the Celtics would go on to outscore the Lakers 85-56 while Archibald was running the break, dishing out a season-high 15 assists. “Tiny’s just a great player,” Pat Riley said afterwards. “He’s got a heart as big as the Grand Canyon. He can play as long as he wants. He certainly had a big impact on this game.”

The leading scorers were Parish and Abdul-Jabbar, and the opposing centers traded compliments after the game. "The thing that I think makes [Parish] an outstanding center is that he fits in so well and plays well with the people around him," Abdul-Jabbar said. "He's very aggressive and makes you work for your shots. He ran very well, especially in the transition game, and did a good job of rebounding. Night after night, he is one of the better centers in the NBA." For his part, Parish stated that "Kareem is still the best in the business. After 14 years in the NBA, he may be up in age, but when he gets it rolling, he's still unstoppable. The only thing you can do is push him farther out on the floor each time and hope he misses. You make a mistake and he gets position, and he's awesome."

February 23, 1983

Boston 113, Los Angeles 104

BOSTON	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS		LOS ANGELES	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS
Bird	13-23	4-6	32		Rambis	1-3	1-1	3
Maxwell	10-16	10-13	30		Wilkes	8-19	1-2	17
Parish	7-13	2-4	16		Abdul-Jabbar	7-18	0-0	14
Ainge	1-9	0-0	2		Johnson	9-21	2-3	20
Archibald	5-13	2-4	12		Nixon	7-14	2-2	16
Henderson	4-4	0-0	8		Worthy	8-12	4-7	20
McHale	3-7	0-0	6		Cooper	4-10	1-1	9
Carr	1-2	1-2	3		Jones	2-3	1-2	5
Buckner	1-6	0-0	2					
Wedman	0-0	2-2	2					
TOTALS	45-93	21-31	113		TOTALS	46-100	12-18	104
3-point FG: 2 (Bird 2).					Technical Fouls: Los Angeles illegal defense.			
Attendance: 17505.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	28	30	32	23	113
Los Angeles Lakers	27	31	29	17	104

In perhaps the best of the regular season meetings between the teams in the first half of the 80s Era, the Celtics and Lakers played a closely-fought game for forty-four minutes before Boston pulled away. Maxwell started out hot, scoring twelve of his points in the opening quarter (a development that was largely missed by Boston television viewers when the initial twenty minutes of the broadcast were pre-empted in lieu of the conclusion of an episode of "Quincy, M.E.") and Bird took over from there, adding 17 rebounds and 8 assists while shooting 56 percent from the floor. "You can use any superlative you want," Riley said, "but I would have to say tonight he was pretty damn good." Riley's own young superstar, Magic Johnson, contributed a triple double (20/13/10), his first against the Celtics.

Bird and Parish were both on the bench during a 6-0 run by the Lakers which gave them a 102-99 lead with 4:10 to play, but Fitch promptly reinserted the All-Star duo. Boston retook the advantage less than two minutes later on a dunk by Parish, and the Celtics closed the night by scoring the final eight points of the game.

1983-84

February 8, 1984

Los Angeles 111, Boston 109

LOS ANGELES	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS
Worthy	7-13	3-3	17		Maxwell	2-8	4-4	8
Wilkes	11-18	3-4	25		Bird	12-19	5-5	29
Abdul-Jabbar	12-19	3-3	27		Parish	8-18	1-1	17
Scott	3-6	0-0	6		Henderson	7-12	1-1	15
M. Johnson	9-13	2-2	20		D. Johnson	5-16	1-2	11
McAdoo	6-10	0-0	12		McHale	9-15	3-3	21
Rambis	0-4	2-2	2		Ainge	3-13	0-0	6
Cooper	1-2	0-0	2		Carr	1-2	0-0	2
McGee	0-2	0-0	0		Wedman	0-0	0-0	0
Nater	0-4	0-0	0					
TOTALS	49-91	13-14	111		TOTALS	47-103	15-16	109
					Technical Fouls: Boston illegal defense.			
Attendance: 14890.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	30	31	27	23	111
Boston Celtics	29	30	26	24	109

The Lakers survived a late Celtics rally to win their eighth straight game. Boston, whose nine-game winning streak had been snapped in New Jersey two days earlier, trailed much of the way before forcing seven ties during a frenetic third quarter. The Lakers pulled ahead 95-89 in the fourth, but the Celtics tied the game at 103-103 on a pair of free throws by Cedric Maxwell. After an exchange of baskets put the Lakers in front 107-105, Magic Johnson, who added six steals to go along with a near triple-double, rebounded a miss by Parish and was fouled on the subsequent break. His two free throws gave the Lakers a four point lead with a minute to play. Los Angeles still led by four when Parish put back a Dennis Johnson miss to make it 111-109 with sixteen seconds left. But the Celtics never tried to foul a Laker to attempt to extend the game, and appeared to get lucky when a hot shooting Wilkes, who had saved a poor James Worthy pass from going out of bounds under the Celtics basket, shot and missed in the final seconds instead of running of the clock. But by the time D.J. controlled the rebound, time had expired.

With 7:33 remaining in the third quarter, Abdul-Jabbar made a reverse hook over Parish to break Wilt Chamberlain's record for career field goals with number 12,682. The Garden crowd responded with a standing ovation, which drew the legendary center's attention. "The people here really appreciate the game," Abdul-Jabbar said afterward. "They showed that tonight by the way they honored me. I really appreciate that." The Celtics lost back-to-back games for the first time since November.

February 24, 1984

Los Angeles 116, Boston 108

BOSTON	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS		LOS ANGELES	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS
Bird	6-12	2-2	14		Cooper	7-16	5-6	20
Maxwell	7-14	3-3	17		Rambis	1-2	3-4	5
Parish	8-19	1-1	17		Abdul-Jabbar	11-18	9-10	31
Henderson	5-10	3-3	13		Scott	7-18	0-0	14
D. Johnson	4-18	3-3	11		M. Johnson	4-11	1-2	9
McHale	11-19	4-4	26		Worthy	11-15	5-5	27
Wedman	4-8	0-0	8		McGee	4-10	2-2	10
Buckner	1-2	0-1	2		Garrett	0-2	0-0	0
Ainge	0-2	0-0	0		Nater	0-1	0-0	0
TOTALS	46-104	16-17	108		TOTALS	45-93	25-29	116
					3-point FG: 1 (Cooper 1). Technical Fouls: Abdul-Jabbar.			
Attendance: 17505.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	26	24	37	21	108
Los Angeles Lakers	23	30	31	32	116

The Celtics annual regular season visit to the Forum was the fifth game on a six-game West Coast road trip; Boston had won the first three before losing to San Diego two nights earlier. The Lakers were coming off a loss in the back half of a home-and-home series against the SuperSonics, and were missing two key players with Jamaal Wilkes out with the flu and Bob McAdoo absent due to an asthma flare up. But James Worthy scored 14 points in the second quarter and eleven of the Lakers first thirteen points after the break, as Los Angeles built a 66-58 lead while Parish was sitting out the first eight-and-a-half minutes of the third quarter with four fouls. An 8-0 Boston run later in the period tied the game at 77-77, and after Parish returned the Celtics pulled ahead 90-84 in the opening moments of the fourth.

Then the Lakers assembled a 9-2 run to retake the lead, and after Abdul-Jabbar slammed home a teammate's miss to make it 95-94 with 7:54 remaining, the Celtics would never lead again. "[The game] was winnable," Dennis Johnson told reporters later. "We just didn't do the things we were supposed to at the end." Boston trailed 105-102 with three minutes left, but six unanswered points by the Lakers settled matters. The loss was part of the Celtics worst stretch of the season; they dropped five of eleven games between February 6 and February 29, which would represent a quarter of their losses during the regular season.

May 27, 1984

NBA Finals Game 1

Los Angeles 115, Boston 109

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	26	3-3	1-1	4	2	3	7	Maxwell	33	3-8	0-0	5	0	5	6
Worthy	39	8-16	4-4	5	1	2	20	Bird	42	7-17	9-11	14	5	4	24
Abdul-Jabbar	35	12-17	8-9	8	5	4	32	Parish	27	6-13	1-4	7	1	6	13
Cooper	38	4-11	2-2	7	5	4	11	D. Johnson	46	7-20	9-11	5	2	5	23
M. Johnson	38	7-11	4-4	6	10	5	18	Henderson	30	5-12	2-2	3	3	1	12
Scott	20	5-7	4-4	2	2	3	14	McHale	39	10-16	5-6	8	1	3	25
McAdoo	23	2-12	3-4	6	0	5	7	Wedman	12	3-5	0-0	4	2	0	6
Nater	12	1-2	1-2	3	0	2	3	Buckner	6	0-3	0-0	1	0	1	0
Wilkes	9	1-4	1-2	1	0	2	3	Kite	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
								Ainge	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		43-83	28-32	50	25	30	115	TOTALS		41-94	26-34	55	14	25	109
Team Rebounds: 8 3-point FG: 1-2 (Cooper 1-1, M. Johnson 0-1). Blocks: 4 (Abdul-Jabbar 2, McAdoo 2). Steals: 10 (Worthy 3, Abdul-Jabbar 2, M. Johnson 4, Scott). Turnovers: 16 (Rambis, Worthy 3, Abdul-Jabbar 5, Cooper, M. Johnson 3, Scott, McAdoo, Nater).								Team Rebounds: 8 3-point FG: 1-3 (Bird 1-1, D. Johnson 0-1, McHale 0-1). Blocks: 5 (Parish, D. Johnson, McHale 3). Steals: 6 (Bird 3, D. Johnson 2, McHale). Turnovers: 17 (Maxwell 2, Bird 6, Parish 2, D. Johnson 3, McHale 2, Wedman, Buckner).							
Attendance: 14890.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	34	31	27	23	115
Boston Celtics	22	30	36	21	109

In the most anticipated NBA Finals opener in years (Jerry West compared it to the “opening of a great play”), and the first Celtics-Lakers Finals game since 1969, the Lakers used a 19-3 first quarter run to take a 22-7 lead and ran the Celtics out of the Boston Garden. Pat Riley later called it “as good a period as we’ve ever played in a big game,” as Los Angeles shot 16 for 22 while running their fast break to perfection. Boston had been lulled into complacency on defense after having played three straight half-court teams in the playoffs (Washington, New York and Milwaukee) but the Lakers were playing at much more dizzying tempo. The Celtics regained their composure and kept pace in the second quarter, but a three-pointer by Cooper at the buzzer restored a thirteen point Lakers edge at the half. Los Angeles’ defense was just as impressive as their offense; Bird and Parish combined to make just four field goals in the first half, the latter being outscored 23-5 by Abdul-Jabbar. “They threw caution to the wind,” Cedric Maxwell said later. “We were the team that sat back and read our press clippings and heard about how good we were.”

In the third quarter, the Lakers built a 73-54 advantage while Parish was on the bench in foul trouble, but then the Celtics rallied, with Bird nailing a buzzer-beating three-pointer of his own to close a 14-3 run that got Boston within four at 92-88. Los Angeles immediately retook control with four fast break baskets, including Wilkes's only basket of the night to conclude a break following a successful layup by Parish. The sequence had not added much to the Lakers lead on the scoreboard (100-94) but was a psychological knockout blow. Boston never seriously threatened again.

May 31, 1984

NBA Finals Game 2

Boston 124, Los Angeles 121 (ot)

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Los Angeles Lakers	26	33	28	26	8	121
Boston Celtics	36	25	29	23	11	124

Game 2 was a game of giveaways. First, Boston gave away a thirteen point lead. Then Kevin McHale gave away a golden chance to tie the game with twenty seconds left in regulation by missing two free throws. But James Worthy and Magic Johnson then trumped those transgressions with a pair of misplays that allowed the Celtics to tie the series.

The Lakers weathered an early surge by the Celtics, who desperately needed to earn a split at home before heading to Los Angeles for Game 3, and the visitors then used a 13-2 run to get back in the game. In the third quarter, an 11-2 streak by Los Angeles, powered completely by the scoring of Worthy and Cooper, put the Lakers in front 85-82. The game remained close into the fourth, and Cedric Maxwell was pressed into duty guarding Magic after Dennis Johnson fouled out. In the final minute, Magic made two free throws to give Los Angeles a 113-111 lead, then McHale was fouled with twenty seconds left.

After McHale's missed free throws, the Lakers called timeout, which Pat Riley later admitted was a mistake. "I don't ordinarily do that. I like to have the floor scattered instead of set in a situation like that," Riley explained later, referring to how his timeout had given Boston a chance to organize their defense. Worthy then made the inbound pass into the backcourt to Magic, who was guarded by Bird and immediately double-teamed by McHale, who had been covering Worthy on the sideline. Magic gave the ball back to Worthy—the only open man—and when Ainge drifted over from Bryon Scott to pick up the Lakers sophomore, Worthy attempted a cross-court lob pass to Scott. But Gerald Henderson had read the play and was ready. "I don't think Byron saw me coming," Henderson said later, after he had intercepted the pass and drove in for a layup to tie the game with thirteen seconds left. "Nobody saw me coming. I couldn't wait for the pass to be released. I had to be in a position to steal it. I'm sure Worthy thought he was wide open. I couldn't understand why he just sort of threw it soft." Then Magic Johnson compounded the error by dribbling out the clock before the Lakers even attempted a game-winning shot.

In overtime, the Lakers led 118-115 with the ball (a possession that ended with a missed hook by Abdul-Jabbar) and were still in front at 121-120 before Scott Wedman made a jumper from the corner to put the Celtics ahead for good. Parish sealed the outcome by stripping the ball from Bob McAdoo; Bird ended up with the ball, was fouled, and hit two free throws to complete the scoring.

June 3, 1984

NBA Finals Game 3

Los Angeles 137, Boston 104

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	28	3-6	3-4	4	5	4	9	Rambis	19	7-7	3-5	5	0	4	17
Bird	38	9-16	12-15	7	2	3	30	Worthy	29	6-11	1-3	4	3	3	13
Parish	34	3-9	3-4	12	0	2	9	Abdul-Jabbar	35	9-19	6-9	9	3	3	24
D. Johnson	14	2-8	0-1	2	1	3	4	Cooper	33	6-13	5-5	6	5	4	17
Henderson	16	4-9	2-4	2	2	3	10	M. Johnson	39	4-6	6-10	11	21	3	14
Wedman	29	7-18	0-0	10	4	5	16	McAdoo	26	8-16	5-7	7	0	4	21
McHale	29	5-13	2-3	4	2	1	12	Wilkes	19	2-6	2-2	5	1	3	6
Buckner	16	3-5	0-0	0	3	4	6	McGee	14	6-15	3-3	4	0	2	15
Ainge	12	1-5	0-0	1	2	2	2	Nater	10	3-6	0-0	7	0	1	6
Carr	11	1-5	0-0	1	1	2	2	Scott	10	1-2	0-0	1	0	0	2
Clark	8	2-5	0-0	0	0	3	4	Spriggs	3	1-2	0-0	0	1	0	2
Kite	5	0-2	0-0	1	1	1	0	Kupchak	3	0-0	0-0	4	2	0	0
TOTALS		40-101	22-31	44	23	33	104	TOTALS		53-103	31-44	63	36	27	137
3-point FG: 2-5 (Wedman 2-3, Ainge 0-1, Carr 0-1). Blocks: 5 (Bird, Parish 2, McHale, Clark). Steals: 5 (Maxwell, Bird 3, Parish). Turnovers: 13 (Maxwell, Bird 2, Parish 2, Henderson 2, Wedman 3, McHale, Ainge 2).								3-point FG: 0-1 (Cooper 0-1). Blocks: 6 (Abdul-Jabbar 4, M. Johnson, McAdoo). Steals: 7 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson, McAdoo, McGee). Turnovers: 10 (Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar 4, Cooper, M. Johnson 2, McAdoo).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Earl Strom, Paul Mihalak.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	26	20	33	25	104
Los Angeles Lakers	29	28	47	33	137

The Lakers began the game with an 18-4 run, followed by eighteen unanswered points in the second quarter after the Celtics had regrouped to close the gap, and then delivered a Finals-record forty-seven-point knockout outburst in the third. Los Angeles led 104-79 at the end of that period, then extended their lead in garbage time as both sides emptied their benches; only five players on either side logged thirty or more minutes on the court in this one. Magic Johnson set another Finals record with 21 assists, and was jubilant after the game. "It's a great feeling when you're running like that because you feel like you can't be stopped ... When we can make 'em turn it over or take a shot they didn't want to take, we're gone." Larry Bird was more succinct, saying, "We played like sissies," before elaborating, "I can't believe a team like this would let LA come out and push us around like they did. Today I didn't feel we played hard. We got beat bad, and it's very embarrassing." Boston was reeling, and if not for Henderson's steal in Game 2, the series might be all but over, as the Lakers seemed capable of running the Celtics off the floor whenever they chose to do so. "They're relentless," lamented Celtics assistant coach Chris Ford. "The only guy they have who doesn't run the floor is Kareem, and the more fast-break layups they get, the less work he has to do. Then he's rested at the end of the game and they can go to him."

June 6, 1984

NBA Finals Game 4

Boston 129, Los Angeles 125 (ot)

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	40	3-6	5-7	3	4	3	11	Rambis	25	4-5	1-4	6	0	2	9
Bird	49	9-24	10-10	21	2	4	29	Worthy	48	14-17	2-3	5	2	3	30
Parish	37	11-23	3-3	12	2	6	25	Abdul-Jabbar	37	12-25	8-11	8	6	6	32
D. Johnson	50	9-23	4-4	2	14	4	22	Cooper	47	4-8	2-4	1	6	3	10
Henderson	25	5-10	3-5	2	3	1	13	M. Johnson	49	8-12	4-7	11	17	5	20
McHale	34	3-13	3-4	8	2	4	9	Scott	11	1-3	0-0	1	0	1	2
Ainge	10	4-7	1-2	0	0	3	9	McAdoo	27	5-10	3-4	6	0	5	13
Buckner	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	Nater	15	1-4	5-6	7	0	1	7
Wedman	14	2-2	0-0	3	3	1	5	Wilkes	6	1-1	0-0	1	0	1	2
Carr	3	2-3	2-2	1	0	1	6								
TOTALS		48-111	31-37	52	30	28	129	TOTALS		50-85	25-39	46	31	27	125
3-point FG: 2-4 (Bird 1-3, Wedman 1-1). Blocks: 3 (Parish 2, McHale). Steals: 15 (Maxwell 2, Bird 3, Parish 3, Henderson 4, Ainge 2, Carr). Turnovers: 15 (Maxwell 2, Bird 3, Parish 2, D. Johnson 2, Henderson 2, McHale 2, Wedman, Carr).								Blocks: 5 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar 2, McAdoo, Nater). Steals: 8 (Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 4, M. Johnson 2, Scott). Turnovers: 20 (Rambis, Worthy 3, Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson 7, Scott, McAdoo 5).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Jess Kersey.															

	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Boston Celtics	32	26	30	25	16	129
Los Angeles Lakers	33	35	22	23	12	125

The Lakers outshot the Celtics 59 to 43 percent from the floor, while making two more field goals than the men in green, and held their own on the boards (52-46 in favor of Boston), but missed 14 of 39 free throws which proved costly. However, what turned around this game—and the series—could not be easily measured by statistics. Boston brought a better defensive game plan, abandoning the questionable strategy of playing Henderson on Magic Johnson in pursuit of a supposed quickness advantage, and instead unleashed Dennis Johnson, who smothered Magic in the second half. The move also reinvigorated D.J.'s offensive game, in spite of the Lakers continued use of the much taller James Worthy to guard him.

Boston also brought a more physical edge, which showed itself on a number of occasions. The first quarter was fast paced and tight until the Lakers pulled ahead by ten at 31-21. But with Abdul-Jabbar and Worthy on the bench, the Lakers then bogged down on offense, and the Celtics ran off eleven in a row to take the lead. Los Angeles fought back, scoring eight in a row, and then, with Magic and Bird both resting, the Lakers extended their run to 16-1 and led by fourteen. Their lead stayed around ten points the rest of the half, but the game began to descend into the slower, more physical style that better suited the Celtics. With a minute-and-a-half left in the second quarter, Cooper scored on a layup that sent him stumbling along the sideline. Bird got the ball and prepared to inbound it, but Cooper, in his rush to get back on the court, chose a route that caused him to get tangled up with Bird. Instead of trying to avoid further contact, Bird deliberately backed into Cooper, and kept backing into him until Cooper fell head over heels into the laps of the photographers sitting courtside. It was a sign of things to come.



Lineup Analysis

In the second and third quarter of Game 4 of the 1984 Finals, the Lakers used a 16-1 run to build a fourteen point lead, but then lost it as the Celtics turned up their defensive pressure. The charts that follow show who was on the court during these key moments, and illustrate a few key points:

First, from these charts it is easy to see that the Celtics had switched to using Dennis Johnson on Magic instead of Gerald Henderson, while Worthy spent most of his time guarding D.J. on the other end of the floor. "I played a lot of perimeter defense on small forwards this year," Worthy said during the series. "Dennis Johnson is essentially a guard with a small forward's offensive game." The strategy mostly worked, as D.J., a 43.7% shooter during the regular season, was held to 40% or less in every game of the Finals except for a 10 for 20 outing in Game 5. But D.J. scored 22, 22, 20 and 22 points in the last four games and came within seven points of equaling Worthy's production in those contests (30,22,20,21).

Second Quarter Game 4 1984 Finals

Lakers ball	McAdoo	McAdoo	McAdoo	Wilkes	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy
	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	McAdoo	Wilkes	Rambis	Rambis	Rambis
	Nater	Nater	Nater	Nater	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar
	Scott	Scott	Scott	Scott	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper
	Magic	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic
Boston	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell
	Bird	McHale	McHale	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird
	McHale	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	McHale
	Wedman	Wedman	Wedman	Wedman	Ainge	Ainge	Wedman	Carr
	Buckner	Buckner	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.
Celtics ball	Wilkes	Wilkes	Wilkes	McAdoo	Worthy	Rambis	Rambis	Rambis
	McAdoo	McAdoo	McAdoo	Wilkes	Wilkes	Cooper	Worthy	Worthy
	Nater	Nater	Nater	Nater	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar
	Scott	Cooper	Scott	Scott	Magic	Magic	Cooper	Magic
	Magic	Scott	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Worthy	Magic	Cooper
Time Left	12:00	10:30	9:19	8:45	8:00	6:34	2:52	1:50
Score	33-32	39-32	43-33	47-33	47-38	51-40	61-50	62-54

Worthy famously had trouble with the passing game in this series, but was dominant on the offensive end. Oddly, his two best shooting nights were in the Lakers two overtime losses (11 for 12 in Game 2, 14 for 17 in Game 3). Worthy also regularly torched Bird in situations where a defensive switch left Bird guarding the much more athletic Worthy.

It is also worth noting that the Lakers 16-1 run came while Abdul-Jabbar was in foul trouble and began while the Celtics were playing the defensively-challenged duo of Bird and Wedman together on the floor. Wilkes was still recovering from a stomach bug, Nater was hardly an offensive weapon, and Magic rested for two-and-a-half minutes, and the Lakers still blew open the game. For Wedman, this was his last appearance in the Finals, as he was kneed in the leg by Michael Cooper early in this quarter and suffered a hairline fracture in his left fibula. His brief return at the 2:52 mark was fueled by adrenaline, but when Wedman was unable to run he asked to be taken back out of the game.

Third Quarter Game 4 1984 Finals

Lakers ball	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	
	Rambis	Rambis	McAdoo	Rambis	Rambis	
	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	
	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Scott	
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	
Boston	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	
	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	
	Parish	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale	
	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	
	D.J.	D.J.	D.J.	D.J.	D.J.	
Celtics ball	Rambis	Rambis	McAdoo	Rambis		
	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper		
	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar		
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic		
	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy		
Time Left	12:00	7:42	5:10	2:50	0:15	0:00
Score	68-58	74-67	79-74	82-80	90-88	90-88

With both starting lineups (for the most part) on the floor to end the second quarter, the Celtics crept closer. McHale's clothesline of Rambis took place just seconds after the substitutions shown at 7:42 in the third quarter. The Lakers lineup during this period features no player shorter than 6'7" which created mismatch problems for many opponents, including the Celtics. "You've got different defensive matchups than you normally would," said assistant coach Chris Ford after Game 1 of the series. "We had decided to have our people guard the same guy who was guarding them, but for some reason we didn't seem to pick up our men well at all, and sometimes we were lost in the transition." That strategy was also abandoned by this game, as these charts show.



With seven-and-a-half minutes left in the third, Boston had inched to within four, at 74-70. Then Abdul-Jabbar hit a hook to put the Lakers up by six; on the Celtics next possession he rebounded an unsuccessful jumper by D.J. and threw a long outlet pass to Worthy on the left baseline near the Lakers three-point line. As Henderson picked up Worthy, Kurt Rambis was streaking down the right sideline. Worthy threw an excellent touch pass to Rambis, but McHale closed from midcourt and took down Rambis with a clothesline move that sent the bespectacled forward (who looked a little more freakish than usual due to a pair of wraps on his left arm that were connected by a cord in an attempt to protect a hyperextended elbow) sprawling into the photographers near the Celtics bench. Bird attempted to play sportsman, extending a hand to help Rambis up, but Rambis soon charged after McHale and both benches emptied as tempers—especially Cooper's—flared up on both sides. The Forum crowd began to chant "Boston Sucks" and would pick it up again a minute or so later when Bird and Abdul-Jabbar started jawing at each other after getting tangled up while going for a rebound. Pat Riley was predictably upset by McHale's aggressive maneuver: "This changes the whole mood, and that's the mood it's going to be for the next three games," he said later. "It was as blatant a cheap shot as I've ever seen."

The game was tight from this point forward. Midway through the fourth quarter, D.J. scored to give Boston their largest lead of the game at 101-99, but Los Angeles soon moved back in front with an 8-0 run. With fifty-six seconds left in regulation Magic made two free throws to extend the Lakers lead to 113-108, but Parish completed a three-point play seventeen seconds later, and on the next Lakers possession, Bird was fouled by Abdul-Jabbar. The foul was Kareem's sixth, ending his night; Bird hit two free throws to tie the game. Then Parish intercepted a pass from Magic that was intended for Worthy, and Boston called timeout to set up a play. Bird missed a tough fallaway three-pointer, and then McHale missed a very makeable short jumper as the buzzer sounded. In overtime, Magic had a chance to put the Lakers ahead with the score tied at 123-123 with thirty-five seconds left, but missed two

free throws. Bird hit a turnaround jumper to put the Celtics in front, then an exchange of free throws made it 127-124 Boston before M.L. Carr added an exclamation point, stealing an inbounds pass by Worthy and slamming it home to the disgust of the Forum crowd.

June 8, 1984

NBA Finals Game 5

Boston 121, Los Angeles 103

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	20	1-2	0-0	9	0	2	2	Maxwell	27	2-4	9-9	4	2	5	13
Worthy	35	10-17	2-5	3	1	5	22	Bird	42	15-20	2-4	17	2	4	34
Abdul-Jabbar	35	7-25	5-6	7	1	2	19	Parish	41	5-12	3-4	12	2	5	13
Cooper	28	3-5	0-0	0	4	5	8	D. Johnson	40	10-20	2-3	2	6	1	22
M. Johnson	39	3-9	4-6	5	13	2	10	Henderson	21	2-9	0-0	1	9	2	4
Scott	9	2-6	0-0	0	0	0	4	McHale	21	5-8	9-10	10	1	6	19
McAdoo	25	7-12	4-8	2	1	2	18	Ainge	17	2-4	0-2	2	6	3	5
Nater	9	1-3	4-4	3	0	3	6	Buckner	18	2-7	0-0	2	0	2	4
Wilkes	14	1-3	0-0	1	0	2	2	Carr	7	1-1	3-4	0	0	2	5
McGee	20	3-8	2-4	4	0	4	8	Clark	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0
Kupchak	2	0-0	2-2	1	0	0	2	Kite	4	1-2	0-0	0	0	2	2
Spriggs	4	1-1	0-0	2	0	2	2								
TOTALS		39-91	23-35	37	20	29	103	TOTALS		45-87	28-36	51	28	32	121
3-point FG: 2-3 (Cooper 2-2, Scott 0-1). Blocks: 8 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson 2, McAdoo 3, Kupchak). Steals: 8 (Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar, Cooper, M. Johnson 2, McAdoo, McGee). Turnovers: 14 (Rambis 2, Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Cooper, M. Johnson 4, McAdoo, McGee 2).								3-point FG: 3-5 (Bird 2-2, Ainge 1-2, Buckner 0-1). Blocks: 5 (Bird, Parish 3, Kite). Steals: 8 (Maxwell, Bird 2, D. Johnson 3, Ainge, Buckner). Turnovers: 18 (Maxwell 3, Bird 5, Parish, D. Johnson 3, Henderson, McHale 3, Ainge, Buckner).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Earl Strom, Hugh Evans.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	26	27	24	26	103
Boston Celtics	26	29	33	33	121

It was 97 degrees on the court at game time in the non-air conditioned confines of the Boston Garden, and the Lakers wilted in the second half as the Celtics began the third quarter with a decisive 13-2 run. Bird was the best player on the floor in the eyes of Pat Riley, who later said that "[Bird] was just awesome. He made everything work. He was the catalyst, and that's what happens when great players come to the front." Yet Bird was not unaffected by the heat and humidity, which left him a bit dizzy at times and prompted the Celtics trainer to keep him wrapped with cool towels on the bench during breaks. (The reserves on both sides also took to fanning the regulars with towels during timeouts to try to provide some relief.) Referee Hugh Evans was less fortunate; he had to depart the Garden at halftime due to dehydration. Abdul-Jabbar, who needed oxygen on the bench, attempted to analogize the conditions after the game: "I suggest you go to the local steam bath with all your clothes on. First, try to do 100 pushups. Then run back and forth for 48 minutes."

Los Angeles had led for most of the opening quarter, until D.J. hit a jumper with a minute-and-a-half left to give Boston a 24-23 lead. A 10-2 run put Boston ahead 38-30, but Los Angeles rallied to close within two at halftime. The second half belonged to the Celtics, who extended their lead to as many as 21 points in the fourth quarter.

June 10, 1984

NBA Finals Game 6

Los Angeles 119, Boston 108

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Maxwell	36	3-7	6-8	3	3	2	12	Rambis	25	4-9	0-0	8	1	5	8
Bird	47	8-11	12-13	14	8	4	28	Worthy	40	9-18	2-2	7	3	4	20
Parish	34	6-13	4-6	10	2	5	16	Abdul-Jabbar	42	14-26	2-6	10	5	5	30
D. Johnson	41	8-20	3-4	3	6	1	20	Cooper	37	9-15	5-5	6	8	2	23
Henderson	38	10-17	2-2	5	5	5	22	M. Johnson	41	10-18	1-2	6	10	3	21
McHale	28	3-9	0-0	3	0	5	6	Scott	17	5-10	0-0	2	2	2	11
Ainge	13	1-6	2-2	2	1	2	4	Wilkes	15	1-4	0-0	1	2	1	2
Buckner	2	0-1	0-0	1	0	0	0	McAdoo	9	0-2	0-0	4	0	2	0
Kite	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	McGee	8	0-1	0-0	0	0	3	0
								Nater	6	1-2	2-2	0	0	1	4
TOTALS		39-84	29-35	41	25	24	108	TOTALS		53-105	12-17	44	31	28	119
3-point FG: 1-3 (D. Johnson 1-1, Henderson 0-1, Ainge 0-1). Blocks: 8 (Maxwell, Bird 3, Parish 2, McHale 2). Steals: 7 (Maxwell, Bird, Parish, D. Johnson 2, Henderson 2). Turnovers: 19 (Maxwell 3, Bird 4, Parish 3, D. Johnson 2, Henderson 5, McHale 2).								3-point FG: 1-2 (Scott 1-1, McGee 0-1). Blocks: 3 (Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar, McGee). Steals: 9 (Worthy 4, Cooper, M. Johnson, Scott 2, Wilkes). Turnovers: 14 (Rambis, Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Cooper 2, M. Johnson 4, Wilkes, McAdoo, McGee).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Jake O'Donnell, Jack Madden.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	33	32	22	21	108
Los Angeles Lakers	29	30	24	36	119

The Lakers staved off elimination with an impressive 36-12 run in the second half that included an 0 for 7 stretch from the floor by the Celtics. Bird had led Boston to a 65-58 halftime lead with 17 points and 10 rebounds, and then the Celtics scored the first ten points of the third quarter to shock the Forum crowd. After an exchange of baskets by Abdul-Jabbar and Dennis Johnson, it was 84-73 Boston and for a moment it looked like the Lakers would not be heading back to Boston for a Game 7. But then came the Lakers 36-12 streak. "We made three adjustments," Riley said after the game. "First, we simply rotated our guards more to stay fresher. Secondly, we wanted to exert more pressure on the Celtics' guards by picking them up deeper. Third, we told our post people, 'You're on your own.' We only kept the double team on [Larry] Bird, and we stopped doubling the other Boston post men."

The Lakers also decided to inject some of their own physicality, which was on display early and often, beginning in the first quarter when James Worthy pushed Cedric Maxwell into the support under the Celtics basket to bring a Boston fast break to a crashing conclusion.

It was a combination of payback for the McHale-Rambis altercation and Maxwell's flashing of the "choke sign" while Worthy was shooting (and missing) free throws late in Game 4.

Still, the game was tied 93-93 early in the fourth quarter before the Lakers landed the decisive blow, a 10-1 run (part of their 36-12 uprising) sparked by a Byron Scott three-pointer. The rookie's series-high 11-point performance off the bench was welcome news, especially since Bob McAdoo sat out the second half with an Achilles tendon injury.

June 12, 1984

NBA Finals Game 7

Boston 111, Los Angeles 102

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	26	3-8	1-1	9	0	5	7	Maxwell	43	5-10	14-17	8	8	2	24
Worthy	40	9-14	3-6	4	2	4	21	Bird	38	6-18	8-8	12	3	1	20
Abdul-Jabbar	43	12-22	5-8	6	4	3	29	Parish	41	4-16	6-9	16	2	3	14
Cooper	42	6-12	2-4	3	6	5	16	D. Johnson	36	5-13	12-12	6	2	5	22
M. Johnson	43	5-14	6-7	5	15	5	16	Henderson	23	4-8	1-2	3	1	4	9
Scott	20	2-7	0-0	2	1	3	4	McHale	26	4-6	2-3	4	0	3	10
Wilkes	16	2-3	0-0	1	0	4	4	Ainge	19	5-12	0-0	2	1	3	10
Kupchak	7	2-4	1-2	3	0	2	5	Carr	7	0-2	0-0	1	1	1	0
Nater	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	Buckner	6	1-1	0-0	0	0	1	2
								Clark	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		41-84	18-28	33	28	32	102	TOTALS		34-86	43-51	52	18	23	111
3-point FG: 2-8 (Worthy 0-1, Cooper 2-4, Scott 0-3). Blocks: 8 (Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Cooper 3, M. Johnson 2). Steals: 9 (Rambis, Cooper, M. Johnson 4, Scott 3). Turnovers: 17 (Rambis 2, Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar 2, M. Johnson 7, Scott 2, Wilkes, Nater).								3-point FG: 0-3 (McHale 0-1, Carr 0-2). Blocks: 3 (Maxwell, Bird, Parish). Steals: 10 (Maxwell 2, Bird 2, Parish, D. Johnson 2, McHale, Ainge, Carr). Turnovers: 13 (Maxwell 2, Bird 2, Parish 2, D. Johnson 5, McHale 2).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Earl Strom, Darrell Garretson.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	30	22	26	24	102
Boston Celtics	30	28	33	20	111

Back in Boston, the Garden was a cooler 90 degrees and the humidity had lessened. But Cedric Maxwell was ready to heat up. Maxwell scored 17 in the first half, including 11 of 13 free throws as the Lakers seemed confused that he had become a focal point of the offense. Chris Ford later recalled that "Max said before the game—really, after the sixth game—'Just ride my shoulders, guys.' He was really determined. He wanted the ball." Maxwell's aggressive streak was in stark contrast to the Lakers, who despite badly out-shooting the Celtics again (49 to 40 percent) were manhandled on the boards (52-33) and made just 18 of 28 free throws while the duo of Maxwell and Dennis Johnson combined to shoot 26 for 29 from the line just by themselves.

Boston took the lead for good in the second quarter by scoring the first eight points of the period and led by six at the break. But the Lakers inched back within one, 73-72, on a reverse

layup by Kurt Rambis with five minutes left in the third quarter. Boston then scored five in a row, as Abdul-Jabbar missed two free throws while Parish made a hook (a positive omen for the home team), and would later close the period on a 9-0 run, with Bird resting on the bench, to take a thirteen point lead to the fourth. The advantage was still 99-85 Boston with 7:58 remaining, but then the Lakers stormed back, and got to within 105-102 when Worthy hit a jumper from the left side with 1:15 left. Bird then missed a fallaway, and Magic had the ball in his hands with a chance to tie. But Parish and McHale surrounded him, causing Magic to lose the ball. On the subsequent break Cooper fouled Dennis Johnson, who made both free throws to give Boston a five point lead with forty-five seconds left. With Celtics fans crowding around (and over) the sidelines, the Lakers failed to score again, and a pair of free throws by Larry Bird closed out the scoring.

After the game, Pat Riley summarized the disappointing result. "I think they are the better team. They don't have the same kind of talent we have. They have equal talent, but it's made differently. In a game decided by aggressiveness and rebounding, their talent is better than ours. We have to hope our quickness gets the better of their size, and it did for a while, about 3 1/2 games. Then their size and power started to take control."

1984-85

January 16, 1985

Boston 104, Los Angeles 102

LOS ANGELES	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS		BOSTON	FGM-A	FTM-A	PTS
Spriggs	1-4	2-2	4		Maxwell	3-4	2-3	8
Worthy	5-11	0-0	10		Bird	9-16	1-1	19
Abdul-Jabbar	12-19	9-11	33		Parish	8-15	3-3	19
Scott	8-15	0-1	16		D. Johnson	10-22	0-0	20
M. Johnson	4-11	0-0	8		Ainge	8-13	0-0	16
Cooper	3-12	0-0	7		McHale	4-13	2-5	10
McAdoo	2-4	2-2	6		Clark	4-8	0-0	8
McGee	3-6	0-2	6		Wedman	2-5	0-0	4
Wilkes	3-4	0-0	6					
Rambis	3-3	0-0	6					
TOTALS	44-89	13-18	102		TOTALS	48-96	8-12	104
3-point FG: 1 (Cooper 1).								
Attendance: 14890.								

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	33	23	28	18	102
Boston Celtics	31	27	29	17	104

Los Angeles was stumbling through a four-game road trip that ended in Boston on a Wednesday night; the Celtics had not played since Saturday, while the Lakers had played twice—and lost twice—during that time. Entering the game, Boston had been dominant at home so far this season (16-1) and were perfect against Western Conference opponents overall (10-0). But the Lakers kept it close throughout, and when the Celtics managed to earn a 68-60 edge early in the third quarter, Los Angeles responded with a 14-2 run of their own. Boston regained the lead by the end of the period, and neither team led by more than three points in the final stanza.

The Lakers had the ball and a 102-99 lead in the final minute, but then Ainge stole a lazy pass by Abdul-Jabbar. Parish scored on the subsequent break and was fouled by Cooper, then hit the game-tying free throw. After the game, Cooper denied that he had made contact, but his head coach disagreed. "You don't foul at that time," Riley told reporters. "You try to make sure that he doesn't get the shot up, but you don't just tap him on the arm." Los Angeles then blew four chances to retake the lead. Magic Johnson was fouled by Ainge while driving to the basket, but his (successful) shot was waved off because the referees ruled that the foul was before the shot; the Celtics were under the limit, so the Lakers got the ball out of bounds instead of two free throws. Then Abdul-Jabbar missed a fallaway and Johnson was twice unable to put back the miss. "The first tip was the best one," Johnson claimed later. "I had it up and over, and it hit the back of the rim. I knew I couldn't do much with the second tip because McHale was there with those long arms." Parish eventually grabbed the rebound and the Celtics called timeout with fourteen seconds left. Bird then passed to McHale, who hit a turnaround bank shot over Rambis to win the game. McHale was just 3 for 12 before the winning basket, leading him to say in the locker room that "I told K.C. (Jones) that I was happy he had a little faith in a struggling man."

February 17, 1985

Los Angeles 117, Boston 111

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	29	33	20	29	111
Los Angeles Lakers	34	25	27	31	117

When this game began, Boston was 43-10, six games better in the standings than Los Angeles, but this contest had profound consequences for the rest of the season. Over the next two months, Boston would go a more pedestrian 20-9, while Los Angeles posted a sparkling 25-4 mark. And the turning point occurred in this game, when Cedric Maxwell aggravated a left knee injury that he had suffered in Chicago earlier in the month. "It's just a re-occurring thing," Maxwell said afterwards. "If it were just an inflamed tendon it should have been OK now, because I got enough rest during the break. But right now it's more sore than before." Maxwell, who had held out and missed part of training camp, would undergo arthroscopic surgery five days later, miss a month, and was a shell of his former self for the rest of the regular season and playoffs. Bird was incensed that Maxwell didn't push himself more that season, saying years later, "Max was way out of shape when he came back. He didn't do the rehab the way they asked. I was so pissed at him..." The injury forced Kevin McHale into the starting lineup and dramatically weakened the Celtics bench.

The Celtics task this afternoon became much more difficult shortly before halftime, when Parish twisted his left ankle. He never returned to action, and the increasingly shorthanded Celtics surrendered eleven points to Abdul-Jabbar in the third quarter as the Lakers built a small lead. Still, when Wedman hit a jumper with 3:43 left in the fourth, the Celtics had tied the game at 101-101. After Abdul-Jabbar and Bird exchanged baskets, however, the Lakers scored the next five points and won a free throw shooting contest down the stretch to seal the victory.

When the Celtics continued their road trip the next night in Utah, Parish and Maxwell (and Quinn Buckner, out with tonsillitis) were back in Boston, but they were not missed. The Celtics outscored the Jazz 34-10 in the first quarter as Utah missed 21 of their first 22 shots, and Larry Bird came within one steal of a quadruple-double (30/12/10/9) despite sitting out the entire fourth quarter to rest for the finale of the trip in Denver two nights later.

May 27, 1985

NBA Finals Game 1

Boston 148, Los Angeles 114

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	22	4-6	0-0	9	0	2	8	McHale	32	10-16	6-9	9	0	1	26
Worthy	37	8-19	4-6	8	5	1	20	Bird	31	8-14	2-2	6	9	1	19
Abdul-Jabbar	22	6-11	0-0	3	1	3	12	Parish	28	6-11	6-7	8	1	1	18
Scott	30	5-14	0-0	2	0	2	10	D. Johnson	33	6-14	1-1	3	10	1	13
M. Johnson	34	8-14	3-4	1	12	2	19	Ainge	29	9-15	0-0	5	6	1	19

Cooper	24	1-5	2-2	2	2	3	4	Wedman	23	11-11	0-2	5	2	4	26
McAdoo	21	6-13	0-0	3	0	5	12	Buckner	16	3-5	0-0	4	6	4	6
Kupchak	16	3-3	1-2	2	1	3	7	Maxwell	16	1-1	1-2	3	1	0	3
McGee	15	4-7	4-5	2	2	1	14	Williams	14	3-5	0-0	0	5	2	6
Spriggs	15	4-7	0-2	3	4	1	8	Kite	10	3-5	1-2	3	0	1	7
Lester	4	0-1	0-0	0	1	0	0	Carr	4	1-3	0-0	1	0	1	3
								Clark	4	1-2	0-0	1	3	0	2
TOTALS		49-100		14-21		35 28 23 114		TOTALS		62-102		17-25		48 43 17 148	
3-point FG: 2-5 (Cooper 0-2, McGee 2-3). Blocks: 4 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar, McAdoo, Spriggs). Steals: 9 (Rambis, Scott 4, M. Johnson 3, Spriggs). Turnovers: 12 (Rambis, Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Scott 3, M. Johnson 2, McGee, Spriggs).								3-point FG: 7-9 (Bird 1-2, D. Johnson 0-1, Ainge 1-1, Wedman 4-4, Carr 1-1). Blocks: 3 (McHale 3). Steals: 10 (Bird 3, Parish 2, D. Johnson 2, Wedman 2, Clark). Turnovers: 13 (McHale, Bird 3, Parish, D. Johnson 3, Ainge 2, Wedman, Buckner 2).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Jess Kersey.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	24	25	30	35	114
Boston Celtics	38	41	29	40	148

The opener of the 1985 Finals tipped off shortly after 3 o'clock in the afternoon on Memorial Day in Boston, and was over about a half-hour later, or so it seemed. The Celtics took control early with an 18-3 run, propelled by stifling defense, while simultaneously foiling the Lakers plans for controlling Kevin McHale by borrowing a page from their 1984 Finals playbook. "They use a scrambling defense relying on Kareem and double-teaming. They want to make you rush your jump shot," Celtics assistant Chris Ford said afterwards. "The key was our patience. We didn't just make the second or third pass. We made the fourth or even fifth pass. Their defense broke down."

Having established an inside game (Bob Ryan wrote in the *Boston Globe* that just four of the Celtics first fifty-two points came on outside shots) the Celtics then began firing away from the perimeter, making the Lakers pay for sagging off of their shooters. Scott Wedman set an NBA record by going a perfect 11 for 11 from the floor, including four three-pointers; he had made just three in the Celtics previous fifteen playoff games combined. Even Ray Williams, signed by Boston after Cedric Maxwell's knee surgery in February, and the offensively-challenged Greg Kite each made three of five shots from the field. Overall, the Celtics set Finals records for points, shooting percentage (.608) and most field goals made (62). Magic Johnson admitted being "embarrassed" by the display, and James Worthy added, "I think we sort of let them run anything they wanted. We weren't aggressive defensively, and by the time we started playing, it was too late."

The Celtics led by as many as 37 (138-101); the 34-point margin of victory was the second-highest in the history of the Finals, behind only Washington's 117-82 thrashing of Seattle in 1978, and was one point better than the Lakers victory over the Celtics in Game 2 in 1984, and the Celtics 129-96 victory over the Lakers in 1965.

May 30, 1985

NBA Finals Game 2

Los Angeles 109, Boston 102

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	13	1-6	1-2	7	0	4	3	McHale	36	6-13	3-8	7	2	5	15
Worthy	29	6-14	4-6	4	2	6	16	Bird	41	9-21	11-11	12	3	2	30
Abdul-Jabbar	42	15-26	0-0	17	8	4	30	Parish	38	6-8	6-7	10	2	3	18
Scott	43	5-17	1-2	4	2	2	11	D. Johnson	43	6-18	3-4	4	8	2	15
M. Johnson	41	6-9	2-4	4	13	3	14	Ainge	35	7-13	1-2	1	3	1	15
Cooper	28	8-9	5-6	4	5	2	22	Wedman	20	2-5	0-0	2	1	3	4
McAdoo	22	1-7	4-5	1	0	6	6	Maxwell	11	0-1	3-4	0	0	1	3
Kupchak	15	2-4	1-2	5	0	3	5	Williams	8	1-3	0-0	0	3	1	2
Spriggs	7	0-0	2-2	3	1	2	2	Kite	6	0-0	0-0	1	0	2	0
								Buckner	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		44-92	20-29	49	31	32	109	TOTALS		37-82	27-36	37	22	20	102
3-point FG: 1-2 (Cooper 1-2). Blocks: 5 (Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Kupchak). Steals: 9 (Abdul-Jabbar, Scott 4, M. Johnson 3, Cooper). Turnovers: 16 (Rambis, Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson 7, McAdoo 2, Spriggs).								3-point FG: 1-6 (Bird 1-3, D. Johnson 0-1, Wedman 0-2). Blocks: 4 (McHale, Bird 2, Parish). Steals: 8 (Bird 2, D. Johnson 2, Wedman 2, Maxwell, Williams). Turnovers: 17 (McHale 4, Bird 5, Parish, D. Johnson 3, Ainge 2, Wedman, Williams).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: John Vanak. Jake O'Donnell.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	31	33	23	22	109
Boston Celtics	26	20	29	27	102

Pat Riley spent the two off days after the “Memorial Day Massacre” grinding the pain of the loss into the very fiber of the Lakers collective being. Riley verbally ripped into each of his stars in front of the entire team, spent hours with them breaking down the game film, and then led a physical practice in which he decreed that no fouls would be called. He told reporters the day before Game 2 that he was “not just shrugging [the loss] off. Our players are not, either. There were some signs I didn’t like.”

The Lakers responded with a far better defensive effort, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar played his best game of the entire playoffs, falling two assists short of a triple-double and helping out at the other end by double-teaming McHale. “After watching the films for 24 hours, the subtleties become apparent,” Riley admitted. “You see things. And Kareem had the green light to drop down when he felt he could.” Los Angeles ran out to leads of 17-6 and 28-14 in the first quarter before the Celtics rallied with a 12-3 run to get back in the game by the end of the period. “They came out and started with a vicious attack on the boards and created chaos when we had the ball,” K.C. Jones explained after the game. Seven consecutive points by the Lakers at the end of the half pushed their advantage to eighteen, taking advantage of a 2 for 8 first half by Larry Bird, who was still affected by bone chips in his right elbow and an injured right hand. Then, with Parish hampered by lower back/buttock trouble after a tussle with Mitch Kupchak, Abdul-Jabbar scored twenty of his points in the second half, as Lakers saw

their lead dwindle but never vanish. "We realized we let everyone down [in Game 1]...", Abdul-Jabbar said later. "I'm proud of the way our guys responded." His coach agreed. "[Abdul-Jabbar] never ceases to amaze me," Riley said. "He was just determined out there for 42 minutes, shooting those hooks, running the floor, rebounding. That's what makes him so great."

Boston came within four points on multiple occasions, the last occurring when Bird hit a pair of free throws with less than two minutes remaining. But Cooper then beat the 24-second clock with a deep jumper, and after a missed shot by Ainge, McAdoo hit one of two free throws to restore a comfortable 107-100 advantage for Los Angeles with 1:17 remaining.

June 2, 1985

NBA Finals Game 3

Los Angeles 136, Boston 111

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
McHale	36	10-13	11-12	10	2	4	31	Rambis	21	3-7	0-1	9	0	3	6
Bird	35	8-21	4-5	7	3	1	20	Worthy	37	12-22	5-6	1	2	1	29
Parish	33	6-14	5-7	8	0	2	17	Abdul-Jabbar	35	10-13	6-8	14	7	5	26
D. Johnson	34	3-14	2-2	2	6	3	8	Scott	38	5-12	1-2	7	4	3	12
Ainge	31	2-8	3-4	2	10	4	7	M. Johnson	39	6-13	4-4	9	16	2	17
Maxwell	18	1-2	2-2	1	0	2	4	McAdoo	25	9-16	1-2	6	0	5	19
Wedman	15	4-6	1-2	2	2	2	10	Cooper	21	2-4	3-3	0	3	2	8
Kite	12	0-3	0-0	3	2	3	0	Kupchak	13	2-3	3-4	2	1	5	7
Buckner	10	2-3	0-0	1	2	3	4	Spriggs	4	2-3	0-0	1	1	1	4
Williams	10	2-5	0-0	1	3	1	4	McGee	3	1-2	2-2	0	0	0	5
Carr	3	2-4	0-0	0	0	0	4	Lester	2	0-1	2-2	0	0	1	2
Clark	3	0-0	2-2	0	0	1	2	Nevitt	2	0-0	1-2	0	0	0	1
TOTALS		40-93	30-36	37	30	26	111	TOTALS		52-96	28-36	49	34	28	136
3-point FG: 1-3 (D. Johnson 0-1, Ainge 0-1, Wedman 1-1). Blocks: 4 (McHale, Parish 2, D. Johnson). Steals: 7 (Bird, Parish, D. Johnson 2, Ainge 2, Buckner). Turnovers: 15 (McHale 3, Bird 2, Parish, D. Johnson 2, Maxwell, Wedman 2, Buckner 2, Williams 2). Technical Fouls: McHale, Williams 2								3-point FG: 4-8 (Worthy 0-1, Scott 1-2, M. Johnson 1-2, Cooper 1-2, McGee 1-1). Blocks: 6 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar 2, McAdoo 2, Nevitt). Steals: 12 (Rambis 2, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Scott 2, M. Johnson 2, Cooper 2, Nevitt). Turnovers: 12 (Rambis 2, Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson, McAdoo 3, Spriggs). Technical Fouls: McAdoo, M. Johnson							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Earl Strom, Hugh Evans.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	29	30	26	26	111
Los Angeles Lakers	25	40	35	36	136

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar broke Jerry West's NBA career playoff scoring record and propelled the Lakers to a 2-1 lead in the series. After a close first quarter, the Lakers went on a 23-7 run in the second, led by James Worthy, who scored 15 points in the period. In the second half, the Celtics were overmatched as their shooting percentage continued to fall; Bird and the Boston starting backcourt shot a combined 13 for 43, giving the Lakers little reason not to double-

team inside. "I'm not very happy with the way I've played," Bird admitted later. "The shot's just not there. But I'm going to spend a lot of time in practice working on it. If you work hard, it's going to pay off for you. I just hope it's not July before it does."

K.C. Jones and Kupchak got into a war of words after the game over the physical nature of the latter's play. "Push, shove, grab, that's all part of the game," Jones stated. "But when you're trying to take somebody's head off, that's different. That was dirty." Kupchak replied, "If according to K.C.'s definition of dirty we can do that for two more games and win the series, then I love to play dirty." Bob McAdoo, who still had a chip on his shoulder for perceived slights suffered during his brief stint with the Celtics in the late 1970s, agreed: "We are *not* going to stand around and get pushed all over the floor. If we are going to win against the Boston Celtics, we are going to have to play their type of game." Bird put his own spin on the spirited play, which included five technicals, one ejection (Williams, for punching Rambis) and plenty of elbows: "What we should do is just meet them out in the parking lot and have a fight to get it out of our system, then we can play ball. I don't know if the league is up for it, but the Celtics are."

June 5, 1985

NBA Finals Game 4

Boston 107, Los Angeles 105

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
McHale	48	11-19	6-8	12	1	2	28	Rambis	23	5-8	2-4	7	2	1	12
Bird	43	8-16	10-12	11	5	4	26	Worthy	46	7-14	2-2	3	6	4	16
Parish	41	4-10	2-2	9	4	4	10	Abdul-Jabbar	37	7-12	7-9	6	4	5	21
D. Johnson	46	11-20	5-6	7	12	0	27	Scott	38	7-17	1-1	4	4	2	16
Ainge	31	4-10	0-0	1	4	4	8	M. Johnson	43	5-12	10-11	11	12	3	20
Wedman	13	0-4	1-2	3	3	2	1	McAdoo	24	5-12	0-0	6	1	2	10
Williams	5	1-1	0-0	0	0	2	2	Cooper	16	3-5	2-2	1	3	4	8
Kite	5	0-0	0-0	0	1	2	0	Kupchak	12	1-3	0-0	2	0	3	2
Maxwell	4	1-2	1-2	0	0	0	3	Spriggs	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Buckner	3	1-3	0-0	1	0	2	2								
Carr	1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0								
TOTALS		41-86	25-32	44	30	22	107	TOTALS		40-83	24-29	40	32	24	105
3-point FG: 0-1 (D. Johnson 0-1). Blocks: 8 (McHale, Bird, Parish 4, D. Johnson 2). Steals: 10 (Bird 3, D. Johnson 2, Ainge 3, Wedman, Maxwell). Turnovers: 13 (McHale 2, Bird, Parish 3, D. Johnson, Ainge 2, Williams 4).								3-point FG: 1-4 (Scott 1-3, Kupchak 0-1). Steals: 7 (Rambis, Abdul-Jabbar, Scott 3, M. Johnson 2). Turnovers: 14 (Rambis, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 3, Scott 2, M. Johnson 4, McAdoo 2, Cooper).							
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Ed T. Rush, John Vanak.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	28	31	23	25	107
Los Angeles Lakers	32	26	26	21	105

Dennis Johnson kept the Celtics hopes of repeating alive with a 21-foot jumper at the buzzer to tie the series. D.J. had extra room to shoot because Magic Johnson had left him to double-

team Larry Bird, and watched helplessly as Bird passed to D.J. and the winning shot swished through the net. "I would've taken the shot, if I could've run the clock down," Bird admitted later, "but I [saw] Worthy and another guy [Magic] come at me." The Lakers led by seven earlier in the fourth quarter, but three turnovers in four late possessions helped turn the tide. "What happened is a little bit of a dagger right now," Riley said after the game. "We lost a tough game, but we don't have time to wallow in it."

Unlike the previous two games, in which the Lakers took advantage of extended lapses by the Celtics, Boston played consistently well throughout, realizing that a 3-1 hole in the series would be insurmountable. "Tonight we played the entire game the way we wanted to play," Boston assistant coach Jimmy Rodgers said. "We went back to the extra-looks and extra-pass philosophy we used so well in the first game." The final two minutes featured a series of memorable moments: A hook by Jabbar to put Los Angeles up 102-99, a twenty-foot jumper by Ainge to pull the Celtics within one, and then, after an exchange of free throws (1 out of 2 by Abdul-Jabbar and a pair by McHale), Ainge hit another long jumper to give Boston a 105-103 lead with thirty-three seconds left. Magic Johnson then put the Lakers ahead with a scoop shot, setting the scene for D.J.'s heroics, which punctuated his best performance of the series; his 17 first-half points were more than he had scored in any of the first three games.

Both sides had escalated the war of words between the teams in the days between Games 3 and 4, but Commissioner David Stern dispatched NBA Vice President Scotty Stirling to warn both coaches that the referees would be keeping their whistles at the ready. K.C. Jones claimed that he kept his team in the dark about the edict, but Riley had spread the word, saying, "I just wanted them to be prepared for the quick whistle, that's all."

June 7, 1985

NBA Finals Game 5

Los Angeles 120, Boston 111

[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	31	20	30	30	111
Los Angeles Lakers	35	29	31	25	120

In the first year of the 2-3-2 Finals format, primarily designed to improve CBS's chances of televising a six- or seven-game series, the Lakers took advantage and pulled to within a game of winning the title. Los Angeles closed out the second quarter on a 15-3 run to open up a double-digit lead, and led by as many as eighteen points in the third. K.C. Jones got just 24 minutes from his paper-thin bench, and both Wedman and Maxwell were on the floor during the Lakers pre-intermission stampede. Jones then used a longtime coaching tactic, getting himself ejected four minutes into the second half for arguing with Darrell Garretson about a non-call on Rambis, and his Celtics woke up. Midway through the fourth, Boston was within four points on several occasions, including with just under four minutes remaining, but the Lakers went on another run and led 113-103 with 2:40 left.

From that point, the Celtics ran out of gas and were unable to get closer as Abdul-Jabbar made two more baskets to put the finishing touches on another turn-back-the-clock performance. "Give him credit," Ainge told reporters. "He hit the big shots." Abdul-Jabbar was also impressive on the defensive end, as Riley changed strategy and used him extensively on McHale for the first time in the series. Dennis Johnson and Magic Johnson posted nearly identical stat lines, and the former's was desperately needed as Bird got off to another slow start (1 for 5, 2 points, 3 rebounds) in the first half.

June 9, 1985

NBA Finals Game 6

Los Angeles 111, Boston 100

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Rambis	26	4-5	1-2	10	0	3	9
Worthy	45	11-15	6-9	3	3	0	28
Abdul-Jabbar	35	13-21	3-4	7	4	6	29
Scott	35	6-13	2-4	5	1	3	14
M. Johnson	36	5-15	4-4	10	14	5	14
Cooper	30	2-4	5-5	3	2	4	9
Kupchak	20	1-5	4-6	5	2	3	6
McAdoo	10	1-5	0-0	1	1	1	2
McGee	3	0-1	0-2	0	0	1	0
TOTALS		43-84	25-36	44	27	26	111
3-point FG: 0-2 (Scott 0-1, McGee 0-1). Blocks: 2 (Worthy, Cooper). Steals: 10 (Rambis 2, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar, Scott, M. Johnson, Cooper 3, Kupchak). Turnovers: 12 (Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 2, Scott 2, M. Johnson 4, Cooper, McAdoo 2).							

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
McHale	42	11-18	10-13	16	1	6	32
Bird	47	12-29	4-5	10	3	3	28
Parish	39	5-14	4-6	11	3	4	14
D. Johnson	43	3-15	5-6	7	4	4	11
Ainge	43	3-16	0-0	4	11	5	6
Wedman	15	2-3	2-2	3	2	3	7
Kite	11	1-1	0-0	3	0	2	2
TOTALS		37-96	25-32	54	24	27	100
3-point FG: 1-7 (Bird 0-2, D. Johnson 0-1, Ainge 0-2, Wedman 1-2). Blocks: 4 (McHale 2, Parish, D. Johnson). Steals: 11 (McHale 2, Bird, Parish, D. Johnson, Ainge 5, Kite). Turnovers: 13 (McHale 3, Bird 2, D. Johnson 5, Ainge 2, Kite).							

Attendance: 14890. Referees: Earl Strom, Hugh Evans

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	28	27	27	29	111
Boston Celtics	26	29	18	27	100

The Lakers ended twenty-six years of frustration against the Celtics and claimed their third championship of the 80s Era by pulling away in the second half for an extra-satisfying clinching victory. At the outset, Boston's legs appeared tired from their cross-country trip, as the Celtics missed seven of their first eight shots. Still, when Abdul-Jabbar picked up his second foul and headed to the bench with 4:45 remaining in the opening period, the Celtics rallied and trailed by only two heading into the second quarter. Similarly, the Celtics also took advantage when Abdul-Jabbar sat out the final six minutes of the first half after picking up his third personal; the game was tied at intermission even though Danny Ainge and Dennis Johnson were a combined 3 for 17 from the floor.

Los Angeles pulled ahead to start the second half and never trailed, steadily maintaining a double-digit lead. The Celtics bench was on pace to contribute even less than they had in Game 5, but when McHale fouled out with 5:21 left in the fourth, it forced Wedman back into the game. The veteran swingman's performance in Game 1 was just a memory now; after scoring 26 points on 11 for 11 shooting that afternoon, Wedman made only 11 out of 25 shots in the following five games for a total of 30 points. The Lakers had little sympathy for the Celtics plight. "They were only playing a few guys," Magic Johnson said later. "My job was to push the ball up the court until they broke. We made 'em lose it. I saw they were tired, so we ran them into the ground." Boston closed to within five or six points on a few occasions in the final period, but McHale's departure was the final straw; in the fourth quarter the Celtics missed 16 of 23 shots, and the Lakers regrouped and pushed their advantage to 103-92 when Magic blew through Boston's attempt at defense for a driving layup with three minutes remaining. The rest of the afternoon's action was academic.



Lineup Analysis

The Celtics lack of depth was a critical factor in their loss to the Lakers in the 1985 Finals. Except for Danny Ainge, the rest of Boston's starters had each played forty-one or more minutes in Game 4, and forty-four or more minutes in Game 5; in the latter game the Celtics bench consisted of nineteen minutes from Scott Wedman and five from Cedric Maxwell. Game 6 was more of the same.

First Quarter Game 6 1985 Finals

Lakers ball	Rambis	Rambis	McAdoo	McAdoo	McAdoo	
	Worthy	Kupchak	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	
	Jabbar	Worthy	Kupchak	Kupchak	Kupchak	
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Cooper	Cooper	
	Scott	Cooper	Cooper	McGee	McGee	
Boston	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	
	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale	McHale	
	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Kite	
	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	Wedman	Wedman	
	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.	
Celtics ball	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	
	Rambis	Rambis	Kupchak	Kupchak	Kupchak	
	Jabbar	Kupchak	McAdoo	McAdoo	McAdoo	
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Cooper	Cooper	
	Scott	Cooper	Cooper	McGee	McGee	
Time left	12:00	3:51	3:23	1:29	0:36	0:00
Score		18-14	21-14	23-20	24-23	28-26

The Lakers used nine players in the quarter, and their four reserves played a total of twelve-and-a-half minutes. The Celtics used just seven players, and their bench contributed a shade over two minutes. Neither side would go deeper into their respective benches during the rest of this game. Overall, the Lakers got 17 points, 9 rebounds and 5 assists from their bench in 63 minutes; the Celtics just 9 points, 6 rebounds and 2 assists, in 26 minutes. The cumulative effect on the Celtics offense—which, like a year earlier, was predicated on being able to outwork the Lakers in the half-court to make up for Los Angeles’s explosiveness on the fast break—was predictable, as the Celtics missed a lot of early shots. In the deciding game of the 1984 Finals, won by Boston, the lineup chart for the first quarter looks quite different:

First Quarter Game 7 1984 Finals

Lakers ball	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	Worthy	Wilkes	Wilkes	Worthy	
	Rambis	Rambis	Wilkes	Wilkes	Worthy	Worthy	Wilkes	
	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Nater	
	Cooper	Cooper	Cooper	Scott	Scott	Scott	Cooper	
	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Magic	Cooper	Scott	
Boston	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Maxwell	Bird	Bird	Maxwell	
	Bird	Bird	Bird	Bird	McHale	McHale	Bird	
	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	Parish	McHale	
	Henderson	Carr	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	Ainge	
	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.	D. J.	Buckner	Buckner	Buckner	
Celtics ball	Rambis	Rambis	Worthy	Worthy	Wilkes	Wilkes	Worthy	
	Cooper	Cooper	Wilkes	Wilkes	Worthy	Worthy	Wilkes	
	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Jabbar	Nater	
	Magic	Magic	Cooper	Magic	Scott	Cooper	Cooper	
	Worthy	Worthy	Magic	Scott	Magic	Scott	Scott	
Time left	12:00	8:30	5:25	3:38	2:58	1:44	0:33	0:00
Score		7-6	18-15	20-16	20-20	24-23	30-27	30-30

In 1984 the Lakers were short-handed due to the absence of Bob McAdoo; Kupchak had played in only two of the first six games of the series and logged just five minutes overall, which was two minutes fewer than he would play in Game 7. In the opening quarter, Wilkes, Scott and Nater played just over nine-and-a-half minutes while Abdul-Jabbar played nearly the entire period. Given the absence of McAdoo, the 46 total minutes played by the Lakers bench (and their 13/6/1 statistics) overall that night was roughly in line with the contributions of the rest of the bench a year later.

But the difference between the 1985 and 1984 Celtics is striking. The four players the Celtics used off the bench in the first quarter of Game 7 in 1984 played over 14 minutes in that period alone, and overall for the game, Celtics reserves scored 22 points with 6 rebounds and 2 assists, and provided 59 minutes of rest for the starters.



In the Celtics locker room after the game, Bird complained about the 2-3-2 format, claiming it had taken away Boston's home court advantage, but made it clear he blamed himself for the loss. "I thought I could carry the team today, but I was just out there. ... I couldn't believe the shots would not go in. I took 29 shots and every one that missed, I said to myself, 'The next one is going in.' But my shots were just falling short. I didn't play my game all day long. I've been the hero. You've got to be the goat sometimes."

Fittingly, Abdul-Jabbar won the Finals MVP award. He had been a Brooklyn Dodgers fan as a kid growing up in New York, and drew a parallel between the Lakers victory and the Dodgers conquest of the Yankees in 1955 after so many disappointments. "I guess I feel like Johnny Podres," said Abdul-Jabbar, invoking the name of the 1955 World Series MVP who won both of his starts, including the clinching Game 7. "This has got to be real satisfying because of the history of it. This is something I'll never forget, ever. It reminds me so much of that '55 series." The Lakers also avoided losing three straight Finals series for the first time since 1968-1970, and evened Pat Riley's personal Finals record at 2-2. "Somewhere along the way, it was bound to happen," a jubilant Riley said afterwards. "Maybe it was meant to be. But if we were ever going to break the domination of the Celtics over the Laker franchise and get all those skeletons out of our closet, it's so much sweeter to do it here."

1985-86

January 22, 1986

Boston 110, Los Angeles 95

[illegible]

The Celtics cruised to victory as Bill Walton, acquired for Cedric Maxwell prior to the season, played arguably his best game of the year so far. "I love playing against those guys," said Walton afterwards. "I've played a lot of my life against the guys on that team. I'm a Southern Californian, and I still consider that my home. I just get fired up for stuff like that." Walton's season-high seven blocks helped Parish control Abdul-Jabbar, and his efficient offense filled a void as Kevin McHale continued to be slowed by a sore left Achilles tendon. Boston also took advantage of a hobbled Magic Johnson, who admitted after the game that his bruised right knee, suffered in a collision with Phoenix's Larry Nance a week earlier, was so sore that he had only played because he did not want to miss a game against Boston (Magic would sit out the Lakers next six games). The Lakers had declined to re-sign Bob McAdoo after the 1985 Finals, and their choice of a replacement, Walton's former Portland teammate Maurice Lucas, made his fourth straight start in place of Kurt Rambis, who was out with a sprained left ankle.

The two teams exchanged runs in the first quarter (8-0 Boston, 14-4 Los Angeles, 7-0 Boston) but the game turned when the Lakers went 2 for 12 from the floor to start the second period. Boston held a double-digit lead through most of the second and third, and then Walton heated up, sparking another Boston run that allowed the Celtics to build a 102-79 lead with just over five minutes left. K.C. Jones pulled most of his starters at that point.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar wore a nameless Number 50 jersey for the second straight game after his customary Number 33 went missing while the Lakers were in Chicago.

Februrary 16, 1986

Boston 105, Los Angeles 99

[illegible]

Attendance: 17505. Referees: Jack Madden, Ed Middleton.

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	30	28	28	19	105
Los Angeles Lakers	29	26	25	19	99

The Lakers were now officially reeling. After dropping this game they were just 8-7 since the start of the late January road trip that had brought them to Boston. Magic Johnson, still plagued with a troublesome knee, failed to make a shot from the floor for just the fifth time in his career. "I don't think I really held him back," Dennis Johnson said later. "Magic held himself back. He was out there limping noticeably. I don't think his knee would allow him to move like he wanted." Meanwhile, the Celtics bench came through as Kevin McHale missed another game with his Achilles injury. With Parish in foul trouble all afternoon, Walton was solid again, and the Celtics smaller lineup forced a shift in strategy by Pat Riley, who left A.C. Green and Maurice Lucas on the bench while Worthy played a season-high (for a non-overtime game) forty-five minutes. "We had to match up on the perimeter," Riley said later, though the outside shooters on the Celtics bench (Jerry Sichting, Rick Carlisle, and Wedman, starting for McHale) shot 14 for 25 from the floor anyway. Boston led 71-59 in the third and were still ahead by six at the end of the quarter despite having to rely on their bench. It was a stunning reversal from the Finals a year earlier.

Los Angeles got within 100-96 with four minutes remaining, but were shutout the rest of the way until Cooper hit a meaningless three-pointer at the buzzer. "We would have proven we were on a par with them if we had won," Abdul-Jabbar said afterwards. "Now, nobody has any reason to see us as the favorite." Boston was now 18-2 since New Year's Day. The Lakers would regroup to post a 23-7 record the rest of the way (just a game off the Celtics pace during that time) but a shocking five game loss to the Rockets in the Western Conference Finals ended their season and deprived fans of a third straight Lakers-Celtics matchup in the Finals.

1986-87

December 12, 1986

Los Angeles 117, Boston 110

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Green	40	2-3	3-4	11	1	1	7	Bird	43	11-13	3-3	3	6	1	26
Worthy	35	12-24	1-2	4	2	0	25	McHale	41	10-17	2-2	11	2	3	22
Abdul-Jabbar	26	11-16	4-4	4	5	4	26	Parish	44	9-19	5-6	8	2	1	23
M. Johnson	42	13-25	5-7	7	8	2	31	Ainge	43	6-13	0-0	3	4	1	12
Scott	34	4-6	0-0	4	3	0	9	D. Johnson	42	10-19	1-2	4	14	3	21
Cooper	31	5-13	0-0	1	2	1	11	Roberts	13	2-2	2-2	2	0	3	6
Rambis	21	2-5	0-1	6	1	2	4	Sichting	6	0-1	0-0	1	0	0	0

Thompson	7	1-6	0-0	1	0	1	2	Carlisle	4	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0
Smrek	4	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2	Thirdkill	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
								Daye	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		51-99	13-18	38	22	11	117	TOTALS		48-84	13-15	32	29	12	110
3-point FG: 2-7 (Scott 1-1, Cooper 1-6). Blocks: 2 (Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson). Steals: 5 (M. Johnson 2, Cooper 2, Thompson). Turnovers: 6 (Green, M. Johnson 2, Scott, Rambis 2).								3-point FG: 1-4 (Bird 1-1, Ainge 0-2, D. Johnson 0-1). Blocks: 9 (Bird, McHale, Parish 5, D. Johnson, Roberts). Steals: 3 (Parish, Ainge, Daye). Turnovers: 14 (Bird 2, McHale 3, Parish 3, Ainge, D. Johnson 2, Roberts, Carlisle, Daye).							
Attendance: 14890.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	35	24	29	29	117
Boston Celtics	39	26	29	16	110

After 48 consecutive victories at the Boston Garden, a streak that had begun a year ago, following a loss to Portland on December 6, 1985, the Celtics succumbed to a 25-10 run by the Lakers in the fourth quarter after having led for much of the game. Magic Johnson scored a game-high 31 points despite a bruised right knee suffered two nights earlier in Milwaukee, and Michael Cooper shut down Larry Bird in the fourth quarter, allowing him just one field goal attempt, a successful turnaround that brought Boston within one at 105-104 with a little over five minutes remaining. But the greatest accolades were reserved for Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who scored 20 in the second half after early foul trouble had sent him to the bench. Jabbar made four skyhooks and a pair of free throws as the Lakers extended a narrow 103-102 edge into a decisive 115-108 lead with two minutes to play. "If you keep thinking that Kareem is over the hill, he's going to get you," Magic Johnson said afterwards. "This is the type of game that Kareem lives for."

A year earlier, the Celtics bench had been superb, but with Walton and Wedman now on the shelf, Boston had little in reserve. Los Angeles's bench posted a respectable line of 19/8/3 in 63 minutes; Boston managed to coax just 6/3/1 out of their bench's 27 minutes, and it showed in the fourth quarter, as the Celtics starters shot just 7 for 19. "The way we were shooting down the stretch," Parish said later, "we couldn't even write two points with a pencil."

February 15, 1987

Los Angeles 106, Boston 103

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
McHale	43	9-17	5-6	10	3	4	23	Green	16	2-3	1-2	2	1	2	5
Bird	43	7-12	5-7	5	7	2	20	Worthy	41	12-16	2-2	7	1	3	26
Parish	37	9-13	2-2	7	2	5	20	Abdul-Jabbar	37	4-11	2-2	6	3	3	10
Ainge	33	3-11	2-4	6	4	4	10	M. Johnson	45	12-20	14-15	7	10	4	39
D. Johnson	43	8-18	6-8	6	10	5	22	Scott	34	4-17	1-1	4	5	1	9
Sichting	15	3-4	0-0	1	0	0	6	Thompson	29	5-7	0-0	4	1	5	10
Kite	13	0-0	0-0	3	0	3	0	Cooper	24	1-7	4-4	6	9	5	7

Vincent	5	1-3	0-0	0	3	0	2	Rambis	14	0-1	0-0	4	0	1	0
Daye	5	0-1	0-0	0	0	1	0								
Roberts	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0								
Henry	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0								
TOTALS		40-79	20-27	38	29	24	103	TOTALS		40-82	24-26	40	30	24	106
3-point FG: 3-7 (Bird 1-2, Ainge 2-4, D. Johnson 0-1). Blocks: 4 (McHale, Bird 2, Parish). Steals: 5 (Bird, Parish, Ainge 2, D. Johnson). Turnovers: 13 (McHale 3, Bird 3, Parish 2, Ainge, D. Johnson 2, Roberts 2).								3-point FG: 2-5 (M. Johnson 1-1, Cooper 1-4). Blocks: 4 (Green 2, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar). Steals: 6 (Green 2, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson 2, Scott). Turnovers: 14 (Green, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar 4, M. Johnson 4, Thompson 3, Cooper).							
Attendance: 17505.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	32	26	23	22	103
Los Angeles Lakers	28	22	27	29	106

The Lakers won in Mychal Thompson's debut as their new backup center and power forward. Boston had become a mediocre road team, and would finish the regular season under .500 (20-21) away from the Garden for the first time in Larry Bird's career. On this Sunday afternoon, the Celtics scored over a third of their points in the first quarter alone, punctuated by a 9-0 run to close out the period. By early in the third, Bird made it 75-58 Boston with a jumper, but Pat Riley claimed later he was not concerned: "Actually, I didn't feel that bad. I knew if we didn't quit—we usually don't, but sometimes when you get down by 17 you start thinking a game might be history—if we could get it down to 10 or 12 points, we'd have a shot." But then McHale and Parish picked up their fourth fouls (both offensive); while the Lakers now had Thompson off the bench, the Celtics could counter only with Greg Kite. Soon the Celtics lead was cut to 78-72. And when Magic found the net with a heave from inside midcourt, the Lakers were within four at 81-77 at the end of the quarter.

Then in the fourth, with Cooper controlling Bird (just one field goal attempt in the fourth quarter for the second straight game against Los Angeles), and Thompson handling his former teammate McHale, with help from an occasional double-team, the Lakers took their first lead at 86-85. Abdul-Jabbar, struggling from the floor but freed from guarding McHale, made three key baskets, the last giving the Lakers a 100-99 lead in the final minute; Los Angeles would remain in front the rest of the way.

June 2, 1987

NBA Finals Game 1

Los Angeles 126, Boston 113

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Bird	42	14-25	4-4	7	6	0	32	Green	34	4-7	2-3	7	0	1	10
McHale	29	6-11	3-4	5	0	3	15	Worthy	40	16-23	1-4	9	10	1	33
Parish	31	7-14	2-4	4	0	1	16	Abdul-Jabbar	34	5-12	4-4	10	0	3	14
Ainge	32	4-6	0-0	3	4	1	11	M. Johnson	39	13-25	3-3	8	13	2	29

D. Johnson	34	3-7	1-2	1	13	4	7	Scott	35	9-15	2-2	5	2	2	20
Vincent	17	2-5	3-4	1	2	1	7	Cooper	23	4-9	1-1	2	4	3	10
Roberts	16	1-2	2-3	5	1	2	4	Thompson	18	1-1	2-2	3	1	4	4
Daye	14	2-4	3-3	3	0	3	7	Rambis	9	0-1	0-0	2	1	4	0
Sichting	7	1-2	0-0	0	1	1	2	Matthews	4	2-2	0-0	0	0	2	4
Henry	6	3-4	2-2	2	0	0	8	Branch	2	1-2	0-0	0	1	0	2
Kite	6	1-1	0-0	1	1	1	2	Smrek	2	0-2	0-0	1	0	2	0
Walton	6	1-1	0-0	0	0	2	2								
TOTALS		45-82	20-26	32	28	19	113	TOTALS		55-99	15-19	47	32	24	126
3-point FG: 3-4 (Ainge 3-3, D. Johnson 0-1). Blocks: 5 (McHale, Parish 2, Vincent, Daye). Steals: 4 (Bird, Ainge, D. Johnson, Vincent). Turnovers: 15 (McHale 4, Parish 2, Ainge 3, D. Johnson, Vincent, Daye 2, Kite, Walton).								3-point FG: 1-5 (Worthy 0-2, Scott 0-1, Cooper 1-2). Blocks: 6 (Abdul-Jabbar 4, M. Johnson, Scott). Steals: 10 (Green, Worthy 2, M. Johnson 2, Cooper 2, Thompson 2, Branch). Turnovers: 13 (Green, Worthy 3, Abdul-Jabbar 4, Scott, Cooper, Rambis 2, Matthews).							
Attendance: 17505.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	26	28	31	28	113
Los Angeles Lakers	35	34	32	25	126

The third 80s Era installment of Lakers versus Celtics in the Finals began with a romp by Los Angeles. Showing no rust at all from a seven-day layoff, the Lakers ran off to leads of 9-0 and 23-13 in the first quarter, and then scored ten unanswered points in sixty-six seconds to build a 49-30 edge that proved insurmountable. The Lakers had won eleven of their previous twelve playoff games, dropping just one game at Golden State, and had finished their sweep of Seattle in the Western Conference Finals on May 25. Meanwhile, the Celtics were pushed to seven games by the Bucks and Pistons, and had just one full day off before the Finals started. "I think it was apparent we had a lot of energy," Pat Riley said. "Our running game was sharp from the beginning. Obviously, it [the rest] helped because our players looked rested."

Bird refused to ascribe the loss to fatigue. "We just didn't play well. We gave them too many easy baskets," Bird told reporters. "If we don't get ourselves playing some better defense, then we're in trouble. We knew they'd come out and run in the first quarter. But we sat around and watched them do it. We just didn't get back quick enough, and the times we did get back we didn't have our heads up and into the play." But there was no denying that with Parish slowed by a sprained ankle and Mchale hobbling on a fractured foot, the Celtics were in trouble.

June 4, 1987

NBA Finals Game 2

Los Angeles 141, Boston 122

BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS		
Bird	36	9-17	4-5	10	4	1	23	Green	25	5-8	2-2	1	0	3	12		
McHale	34	9-12	2-2	2	3	3	20	Worthy	37	10-15	3-5	3	3	2	23		
Parish	35	6-16	5-8	14	4	3	17	Abdul-Jabbar	31	10-14	3-6	3	3	2	23		
Ainge	37	3-4	0-0	2	5	3	6	M. Johnson	31	10-17	2-2	5	20	2	22		
D. Johnson	34	9-18	2-2	4	9	1	20	Scott	29	9-11	6-7	3	5	3	24		
Vincent	13	4-6	2-4	3	3	2	10	Cooper	26	7-10	1-1	4	9	0	21		
Sichting	12	1-3	0-0	1	3	1	2	Thompson	24	2-6	0-1	4	0	3	4		
Roberts	11	6-8	4-6	4	2	0	16	Rambis	20	2-3	4-4	5	2	4	8		
Daye	9	3-4	0-0	1	1	1	6	Branch	6	0-3	2-4	2	0	3	2		
Kite	8	0-1	0-0	1	1	3	0	Matthews	6	0-3	0-0	1	2	2	0		
Henry	6	1-4	0-2	0	0	1	2	Smrek	5	1-1	0-0	2	0	1	2		
Walton	5	0-0	0-0	1	0	2	0										
TOTALS			51-93	19-29	43	35	21	122	TOTALS			56-91	23-32	33	44	25	141
3-point FG: 1-7 (Bird 1-1, Parish 0-1, Ainge 0-1, D. Johnson 0-1, Sichting 0-1, Henry 0-2). Blocks: 6 (Bird, Parish, Ainge, D. Johnson, Kite, Walton). Steals: 5 (Bird, Parish, Ainge, Roberts, Kite). Turnovers: 14 (Bird 3, McHale 3, Parish 2, Ainge 2, D. Johnson 2, Vincent, Walton).								3-point FG: 6-8 (Scott 0-1, Cooper 6-7). Blocks: 8 (Green 2, Worthy, Abdul-Jabbar, Thompson 3, Smrek). Steals: 8 (Worthy, M. Johnson 3, Scott, Cooper 3). Turnovers: 10 (Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson 2, Scott, Cooper 4, Matthews 2).									
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Jack Madden. Ed T. Rush.																	

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	34	22	36	30	122
Los Angeles Lakers	38	37	32	34	141

Game 2 started well enough for the Celtics, with Boston grabbing a 14-8 lead. But the Lakers quickly ground away the deficit, and after a series of lead changes, took the lead for good at 29-27 on a three-pointer by Michael Cooper. Cooper and Magic Johnson each tied a playoff record with eight assists in a quarter (second and third, respectively, though the achievement deserved an asterisk due to the Forum's scorekeepers' assist-friendly reputation) but it was Cooper's record-breaking six three-pointers that proved decisive. After the game, Cooper declared that the three-point shot "can be a big weapon for us because the double team can't leave me or Byron [Scott], then we can get Worthy cutting to the hoop." By halftime Los Angeles led 75-56 and the game was essentially over, as the Lakers had ended the half by making 24 of their last 35 shots. A dispirited Bird told reporters that Cooper "broke our backs" with his long-distance display.

Boston stemmed the tide in the third, but was unable to shave much off Los Angeles's lead, despite shooting nearly 55 percent from the floor; partly because the Lakers were shooting over 60 percent themselves, but also because the Celtics were unable to stop the Lakers vaunted fast break. Los Angeles scored sixty-four of their points on the break, and at one point during the game the Lakers had a 40-4 edge on fast break points. In the fourth quarter, Los Angeles scored the first six points to pull ahead 113-92, and K.C. Jones waved the white flag, sending in Walton, Sichting and Vincent with eleven minutes still on the clock. Only the 1969 Celtics and 1977 Trail Blazers had rallied to win the Finals after trailing 2-0, and a third such comeback looked unlikely.

June 7, 1987

NBA Finals Game 3

Boston 109, Los Angeles 103

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Green	19	1-3	0-0	5	0	3	2	Bird	44	10-24	10-11	12	4	2	30
Worthy	44	6-18	1-4	3	3	2	13	McHale	43	8-15	5-5	10	5	2	21
Abdul-Jabbar	38	9-16	9-13	7	0	5	27	Parish	26	6-7	4-7	2	0	4	16
M. Johnson	43	12-18	8-8	11	9	0	32	Ainge	43	5-11	2-2	4	5	4	12
Scott	29	2-9	0-0	0	3	5	4	D. Johnson	42	11-22	3-4	7	4	3	26
Cooper	35	6-10	0-0	2	3	5	15	Kite	22	0-3	0-0	9	2	5	0
Thompson	27	4-7	2-2	3	0	3	10	Sichting	11	0-1	0-0	1	3	0	0
Rambis	5	0-0	0-0	1	0	1	0	Daye	4	1-2	0-0	2	1	0	2
								Roberts	4	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
								Walton	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	1	0
TOTALS		40-81	20-27	32	18	24	103	TOTALS		42-86	24-29	48	24	21	109
3-point FG: 3-11 (Scott 0-5, Cooper 3-6). Blocks: 4 (Abdul-Jabbar, Cooper, Thompson 2). Steals: 8 (Worthy 3, Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson, Scott, Cooper 2). Turnovers: 10 (Green, Worthy 3, Abdul-Jabbar 2, M. Johnson, Scott 2, Cooper).								3-point FG: 1-5 (Bird 0-1, Ainge 0-2, D. Johnson 1-2). Blocks: 4 (Bird, McHale, Parish, Kite). Steals: 4 (Parish 3, Ainge). Turnovers: 13 (Bird 4, McHale 2, Parish, Ainge 3, D. Johnson, Kite, Walton).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Joe Crawford.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	29	27	22	25	103
Boston Celtics	22	38	26	23	109

It took a nearly flawless second quarter to prevent the Celtics from falling behind 3-0 in the series. The Celtics pulled in front with a 24-15 run in which they scored on 13 of 14 possessions and shot 12 for 13 from the floor; they shot 81 percent (17 for 21) from the floor during the second quarter overall. Here's how the *Boston Globe* described the action during Boston's best sequence of the series, which gave the Celtics the lead for good in Game 3:

Time	Play	Score
7:24	D. Johnson 16-foot fallaway from top of key	Lakers 39-32
7:06	Bird 19-footer from left of key from Ainge	Lakers 39-34
6:46	Abdul-Jabbar layup in middle from M. Johnson	Lakers 41-34
6:28	Ainge 19-footer from left corner from Bird	Lakers 41-36
6:00	Bird reverse layup following rebound of D. Johnson miss	Lakers 41-38
5:41	M. Johnson layup after McHale block of Abdul-Jabbar's shot	Lakers 43-38
5:23	Ainge 19-footer from left corner from Bird	Lakers 43-40
5:13	M. Johnson 21-footer from left of key	Lakers 45-40
4:59	Bird 13-foot baseline pull-up	Lakers 45-42
4:33	D. Johnson scoop after spinning into middle	Lakers 45-44
4:05	Abdul-Jabbar sky hook from right lane	Lakers 47-44
3:44	McHale fouled by M. Thompson, hits 2 free throws	Lakers 47-46
3:32	Abdul-Jabbar 3-second violation	Lakers 47-46
3:20	Bird offensive foul	Lakers 47-46

2:46	D. Johnson 21-footer from left sideline	Celtics 48-47
2:15	D. Johnson 18-footer from left of key	Celtics 50-47
2:11	Abdul-Jabbar fouled by D. Johnson, hits 1 of 2 free throws	Celtics 50-48
1:51	Bird 16-footer from right of key	Celtics 52-48
1:40	Cooper 3-pointer from right sideline	Celtics 52-51
1:27	D. Johnson 18-footer from left of key	Celtics 54-51
1:19	Abdul-Jabbar spins for layup, plus foul, hits free throw	Tied 54-54
1:02	Bird fallaway from foul line	Celtics 56-54

Even the oft-maligned Greg Kite contributed nine rebounds and solid defense on Abdul-Jabbar while playing a playoff-high twenty-two minutes, mostly in the place of Parish, who picked up two early fouls. "I thought he [Kite] did a great job of not letting Jabbar get good position," Bird commented after the game. "He set the picks, got the rebounds, played good defense. That's his game." Meanwhile, the Lakers, who came out running in the first quarter and appeared to be picking up right where they left off in Los Angeles, were disappointed in their effort. "We lost this game on second shots and hustle plays," explained Michael Cooper. "They got back quickly and they did a great job picking up Magic on the outlet. In LA, we threw the ball in over their heads. This time, they stopped us."

Still, the Lakers, who outshot the Celtics from the floor for the game despite their second quarter surge, were very much in the game in the fourth quarter. A three-point play off a drive by Magic Johnson cut the Celtics lead to 104-99 with three minutes remaining, but Boston withstood the challenge and got back in the series with the victory.

June 9, 1987

NBA Finals Game 4

Los Angeles 107, Boston 106

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Green	20	3-4	1-2	5	0	3	7	Bird	47	7-19	5-5	10	7	3	21
Worthy	43	9-18	3-3	3	2	2	21	McHale	45	10-14	5-8	13	0	5	25
Abdul-Jabbar	36	5-17	6-10	11	1	0	16	Parish	36	9-14	0-0	7	0	5	18
M. Johnson	41	12-20	5-6	8	5	0	29	Ainge	42	11-21	0-0	3	4	3	23
Scott	26	3-10	2-2	6	2	4	8	D. Johnson	45	6-15	3-3	2	14	3	15
Cooper	35	3-6	2-2	2	5	3	10	Kite	13	0-0	0-0	1	0	2	0
Thompson	33	6-9	4-7	9	2	3	16	Sichting	9	1-2	0-0	1	1	0	2
Rambis	6	0-1	0-0	2	0	1	0	Daye	3	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS		41-85	23-32	46	17	16	107	TOTALS		45-86	13-16	37	26	21	106
3-point FG: 2-4 (Scott 0-1, Cooper 2-3). Blocks: 4 (Worthy 2, Abdul-Jabbar, Cooper). Steals: 4 (Abdul-Jabbar, M. Johnson, Thompson 2). Turnovers: 11 (Abdul-Jabbar 3, M. Johnson 5, Cooper 3).								3-point FG: 3-11 (Bird 2-3, Ainge 1-7, D. Johnson 0-1). Blocks: 8 (Bird 2, McHale 2, Parish, Ainge, D. Johnson, Kite). Steals: 5 (Bird, Ainge, D. Johnson, Sichting 2). Turnovers: 12 (Bird 5, McHale, Parish, Ainge 2, D. Johnson 2, Sichting).							
Attendance: 14890. Referees: Earl Strom, Hugh Evans.															

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles Lakers	22	25	31	29	107
Boston Celtics	29	26	30	21	106

Prior to the game, Pat Riley told Brent Musburger of CBS that the Lakers needed to play with more defensive intensity. He had to wait until the final twenty minutes of the game, but the Lakers did just that, setting up one of the signature moments of Magic Johnson's career and propelling Los Angeles to a commanding 3-1 lead in the Finals. Boston led 79-63 with 4:54 left in the third quarter but Los Angeles clawed back to within seven at 85-78 by the end of the period. The Celtics were struggling in the half-court, and their offense deteriorated in the fourth in the face of the Lakers defense. Kevin McHale, who had made ten of his previous eleven field goals, failed to take a shot over the last nine minutes as he was blanketed by Mychal Thompson. Pat Riley took notice, saying later that, "Thompson did a great job. If we had a game ball, he would get it. He earned his paycheck with this one game." Despite briefly losing Magic when he banged his left knee against Bird's knee under the Celtics basket, the Lakers tied the game at 93-93 with six minutes left. Then the Celtics appeared to retake control with an 8-0 run punctuated by a coast-to-coast drive by Ainge (after a Kareem air ball hook shot attempt over Kite) with 4:22 left.

Over the next two minutes, the action bogged down, with a difficult turnaround by Bird and a free throw by Jabbar the only scoring. The defensive pressure by the Lakers contributed mightily to Boston's troubles down the stretch, as the Celtics were so incapable of getting the ball passed into their frontcourt—and too slow to drive against the Lakers off the dribble—that they attempted just one free throw over the final three minutes. "I think we got too cautious at the end," Ainge said afterwards. "We were too concerned with running the clock all the way out instead of going at them and attacking." The Celtics were still leading by six, with the ball, with less than two minutes left, when Parish was stripped and Cooper hit a three-pointer on the ensuing break. It was a turning point. When Bird threw the ball away on the Celtics next possession, Worthy brought the Lakers within one. After a Boston timeout, Bird forced a deep baseline jumper over Abdul-Jabbar, and Thompson grabbed his ninth rebound with forty-four seconds left. Magic then fed Abdul-Jabbar for an alley-oop dunk over D.J. and Parish to give Los Angeles their first lead since 5-4. Then, Bird brought the Garden fans to their feet with a three-pointer in front of the Lakers bench with twelve seconds remaining; Los Angeles' aggressive defense hurt them on this play, as Thompson was late picking up Bird when Worthy left him to *triple-team* Ainge at the top of the key.

Time	Play	Score
1:59	Thompson hits second of two free throws	Celtics 103-97
1:36	Abdul-Jabbar and Cooper strip Parish of the ball	Celtics 103-97
1:32	Cooper hits three-pointer	Celtics 103-100

1:19	Bird's pass for McHale goes out of bounds off McHale	Celtics 103-100
0:59	Worthy connects on 12-foot turnaround	Celtics 103-102
0:43	Bird misses a jumper and Thompson rebounds	Celtics 103-102
0:29	Abdul-Jabbar dunks off M. Johnson's alley-oop pass	Lakers 104-103
0:12	Bird hits three-point basket from left corner	Celtics 106-104
0:08	Abdul-Jabbar fouled by McHale, hits first of two free throws	Celtics 106-105
0:07	McHale knocks rebound of Abdul-Jabbar's miss out of bounds	Celtics 106-105
0:02	M. Johnson hits running right-handed hook in the lane	Lakers 107-106
0:00	Bird is long on jumper from left corner as game ends	Lakers 107-106

McHale then fouled Abdul-Jabbar, who made the first free throw but missed the second. McHale and Parish had established inside position on the rebound, but Thompson got a hand on the ball and deflected it off McHale out of bounds. It was Los Angeles ball with seven seconds left. Following a timeout, Cooper inbounded to Magic Johnson who was picked up by McHale on a switch. "I thought my best choice was to drive on him," Magic said later. The drive brought him into the paint, where he was surrounded by McHale, Parish and Bird, but Magic uncorked a "junior sky hook" (launching himself on his left leg) which fell through the basket and silenced the crowd. Later Magic admitted that the result was a surprise: "I didn't really see it go in because there was somebody in front of me." It was his only basket of the quarter.

With only two seconds remaining, D.J. inbounded the ball (with the much taller Thompson guarding him) over to Bird in front of the Lakers bench. Bird immediately shot a three-pointer from essentially the same spot as the shot he had hit seconds earlier. "I was floating to the left when I took it," a somber Bird said after, "but I was sure it was on target. It was either short, or long, or in the hole." The ball rimmed out, and the game, and effectively the series, was over.

June 11, 1987

NBA Finals Game 5

Boston 123, Los Angeles 108

LOS ANGELES	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS	BOSTON	M	FG-A	FT-A	RB	A	PF	PTS
Green	22	5-10	0-1	6	0	4	10	Bird	44	7-18	8-9	12	7	2	23
Worthy	38	6-19	0-0	7	3	2	12	McHale	40	8-15	6-8	14	2	1	22
Abdul-Jabbar	35	8-21	2-2	7	0	4	18	Parish	28	10-12	1-2	7	1	5	21
M. Johnson	40	12-21	4-4	8	12	4	29	Ainge	39	7-11	2-2	4	6	3	21
Scott	33	3-10	0-0	3	0	1	7	D. Johnson	43	11-22	3-4	2	11	3	25
Thompson	32	4-6	10-11	3	0	5	18	Kite	21	0-3	1-2	5	1	4	1
Cooper	26	4-5	0-0	2	1	3	10	Sichting	11	1-3	0-0	1	3	0	2
Rambis	10	1-2	0-0	3	0	1	2	Daye	7	1-2	2-2	1	1	0	4
Matthews	2	0-1	1-2	0	0	1	1	Roberts	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	2	0
Branch	1	0-0	1-2	0	0	0	1	Walton	2	1-1	0-0	0	1	1	2
Smrek	1	0-0	0-0	1	0	1	0	Vincent	1	0-1	2-2	0	0	0	2
								Henry	1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		43-95	18-22	40	16	26	108	TOTALS		46-89	25-31	46	33	21	123

Steals: 6 (Bird 2, Parish, Ainge, Daye, Kite). Turnovers: 18 (Bird 4, McHale 3, Parish 2, Ainge 2, Daye 2, Walton 2, Kite, Henry, Vincent).	Johnson, Thompson 2). Steals: 11 (Worthy 3, M. Johnson 3, Scott, Thompson, Cooper 3). Turnovers: 11 (Green, Worthy 3, M. Johnson 3, Thompson, Cooper 2, Smrek).
Attendance: 17505. Referees: Darrell Garretson, Joe Crawford.	

	1	2	3	4	F
Boston Celtics	32	24	12	25	93
Los Angeles Lakers	25	26	30	25	106

The 80s Era came to a close with the Lakers fourth championship in eight years. As usual at the Forum when the Celtics were in town, the Lakers were introduced while Randy Newman's signature tune "I Love LA" blared from the arena's speakers. The Los Angeles fans would get to hear the song later in the fourth quarter when the outcome was no longer in doubt. Boston played well in the first half, riding a 15-2 run in the opening quarter to build a seven point lead, and were still ahead by five at the break. Holding the Lakers to 51 first half points was unexpectedly good news: the Celtics entered the game on 1-7 skid on the road in the playoffs, during which they had surrendered 128.9 points per game. Both teams were weathering new injuries in the backcourt; Ainge, who averaged over 18 points a game in the three contests in Boston, sprained his left ankle in practice on the day before the game and shot just 1 for 9 from the floor, while Cooper would hit only 3 out of 10 shots due to the effects of a sprained right knee suffered in Game 5.

But the third quarter belonged to the Lakers. James Worthy got much of the credit, tipping away a poor entry pass by Kevin McHale and then diving head first into the seats near midcourt, saving the ball and setting up a fast break that ended with a Magic Johnson dunk and a 57-56 lead for the Lakers. "How big is that play?" K.C. Jones rhetorically asked reporters later. "As big as when Larry dives out of bounds to save a ball for us. It peps up everybody. It is most inspiring. It pumps up the bench, so everybody is jumping up and down. It fires up the crowd, so they are screaming and yelling. It's called hustle." However, it was the Lakers defense that held the Celtics to 1 for 10 shooting during the first seven minutes of the second half. Meanwhile, Los Angeles outscored Boston 18-2 to take a 69-58 lead. Bird later lamented the Celtics failure to sustain their first half performance after halftime: "Our offensive assignments broke down. We didn't get nowhere. We didn't get back on defense." The Lakers led by thirteen at the end of the quarter, and extended their lead to eighteen midway through the fourth. The party was officially on at the Forum.

Afterward, while Riley was guaranteeing a Laker repeat in 1988, Magic Johnson took time to reflect on his teammates. "Because of the fact of what we did in the regular season, our record, what we did in the playoffs, this is a super team," Johnson said, "the best team I've played on." Throughout the series, there was plenty of discussion about the Celtics lack of depth and their underdog status. In the second half of Game 6, Mychal Thompson grabbed several key rebounds, emulating what Bill Walton had done for the Celtics a year earlier

during their championship run. Bird knew that the Celtics were short-handed, but refused to use it as an excuse: "I think the Lakers have a really great basketball team. I would [have] loved to have played them with a [healthy] Bill Walton and a Scott Wedman. They probably would still have beaten us, you know . . . but we would have given it a helluva try."

Acknowledgements

Once again, let me start by recognizing the role that public libraries and archives played in shaping this book. To the librarians and staff at the Boston Public Library, Milford Public Library, Southborough Public Library, and the Free Library of Philadelphia, thank you. The online newspaper archives maintained by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (*Boston Globe*) and the Free Library of Philadelphia (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) were particularly convenient and valuable.

This book also would not have been possible without the variety of resources on the internet; the Bibliography lists the major websites that I used, but the *Sports Illustrated* archive provided easy access to several important articles, and the sites Basketball-Reference.com and ShrpSports.com deserve mention for their always useful and complimentary content. The *Los Angeles Times* online archive was surprisingly easy to use. And YouTube allowed me to relive many of the key moments of the 80s Era.

One of the true joys of this project was reading (or re-reading) the stories written by sportswriters in Boston, Los Angeles and Philadelphia and during the 80s Era. Thanks to Bob Ryan, Dan Shaughnessy, Thomas Bonk, Gordon Edes, George Shirk and the many others whose bylines appear in the notes section. Your words have provided information and entertainment to legions of fans over the years.

Notes

Introduction – Red, White and Forum Blue

- 3 **Forty-Eight Minutes:** The Celtics-Cavs game in Ryan and Pluto's book actually went to overtime, so it was 53 minutes long, not 48, but *Forty-Eight Minutes* is a better title anyway.
- 3 **in the history of sport:** Kahn, *The Era*, p1.
- 4 **league attendance record:** "Celtics Notebook: Sixers Pay Price Now," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/19/1980. The league reported attendance of 9,898,521 for the season.
- 9 **eighty Roman columns:** See "Lakers Have Celtics In Their Site; Higher Court," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/2/1985. Each of the eighty columns weighed 57 tons and were 57 feet high, 19 feet long and 17 feet wide.
- 9 **building cost 33 percent more:** Construction figures for Forum \$16 million, Spectrum \$12 million, taken from: "Lakers Moments: Jack Kent Cooke makes big dreams a reality," by Hans Tesselaar, posted 5/23/2011 on the *Los Angeles Times* "Sports Now" blog: http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/sports_blog/2011/05/lakers-moments-jack-kent-cooke-makes-big-dreams-a-reality.html; and "After Spectrum roof blew off, Snider took a big risk," by Terry Bivens, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7/29/1985, reprinted on 7/15/2008 and posted at: http://articles.philly.com/2008-07-15/news/24990661_1_edward-m-snider-city-owned-arena-spectrum.
- 10 **Bird's back trouble:** Bird, *When The Game Was Ours*, p167-168. "The canal in which the nerves led to his spinal cord was too narrow, which caused all that unbearable pain. It was truly remarkable, his surgeon told him after watching Bird play basketball, that he managed for as long as he did."
- 10 **bar fight:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball: The NBA According to The Sports Guy*, p173.
- 10 **explored swapping James Worthy:** May, *The Big Three: Larry Bird, Kevin McHale, and Robert Parish: The Best Frontcourt in the History of Basketball*, p202; May, *The Last Banner: The Story of the 1985-86 Celtics, the NBA's Greatest Team of All Time*, p243; "The Greatest Team That Never Was," by Jonathan Abrams, *Grantland.com*, posted 11/8/2012, available at: http://www.grantland.com/story/_/id/8600657/an-oral-history-hakeem-olajuwon-ralph-sampson-1980s-houston-rockets
- 10 **seemingly random events:** I've omitted mentioning Magic's "baby sky hook" game in the 1987 Finals as a "random occurrence" for two reasons. First, the shot is evidence of Magic's all-around skills, and not as lucky a play as Henderson's steal was in 1984. More importantly, the loss in the 1987 Finals was much less painful for Celtics fans than the defeat in 1985. By 1987 the Celtics had little on the bench, and the Lakers starters could run the Celtics into the ground. Even if Magic's shot had not fallen in, or if Bird's subsequent shot had not rimmed out at the buzzer, it would have been difficult for Boston to win that series when Games 6 and 7 were taking place in Los Angeles.

Chapter One – Flashback: 1974

- 12 **Larry Costello:** *The Sporting News*, 12/23/1967, p20. Despite his injury, the Bucks drafted Costello in the May 1968 expansion draft, then offered him the head coaching position when Al McGuire of Marquette was not allowed to interview for the job.
- 13 **would not change his name:** Lazenby, *The Lakers: A Basketball Journey*, p197. Abdul-Jabbar's conversion to Islam had started in 1968, but it was not until 1971 that he chose to change his name, adopting a new name that meant "noble, generous, powerful servant of God".
- 13 **Eastern Finals:** The NBA expanded from two divisions (Eastern/Western) to four (Atlantic/Central in the Eastern Conference, and Midwest/Pacific in the Western Conference) in 1970-71. Prior to that season, I refer

to the “Eastern Finals” instead of the “Eastern Conference Finals” because “Eastern” (and “Western”) was the name of a division, rather than the name of a conference.

- 13 **Robertson ruptured an Achilled tendon:** Robertson, *The Big O: My Life, My Times, My Game*, p282-283.
- 14 **lack of coaching experience:** Ryan, *Celtics Pride: The Rebuilding of Boston's World Championship Team*, p15-16.
- 14 **always get the last word:** Ryan, *Celtics Pride*, p125.
- 14 **before rejoining Fitch in Boston:** “Rodgers, Fitch Together Again,” by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 9/7/1980. “Pro Basketball,” by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 10/5/1980. “Celtics Confirm Jones as Coach,” by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1983. Rodgers regretted staying in Cleveland, partly because the composition of the Cavaliers ownership group changed frequently in the early months of 1980.
- 15 **Jimmy Rodgers:** Rodgers surprised many people—including Fitch—by deciding to stay with Boston after Fitch departed and went to Houston in 1983. The explanation at the time was that Rodgers liked living in Boston and his son Matt was playing quarterback for an excellent high school coach. Matt would go on to start at the University of Iowa, but speculation was that Jimmy Rodgers thought it was time to make a break after over a decade by Fitch's side.
- 15 **had to be physically restrained:** May, *The Last Banner*, p70-73.
- 15 **Cowens became:** Auerbach with Fitzgerald, *On & Off The Court*, p26-27.
- 15 **preferred to linger closer to the basket:** Robertson, *The Big O*, p293.
- 16 **Hank Finkel:** Sullivan, *The Picture History of the Boston Celtics*, p89.
- 16 **The 1974 series earned a 13.5 rating:** NBA Finals TV Ratings, 1974-2008, posted at: <http://tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/2009/05/22/nba-finals-tv-ratings-1974-2008/19324/> The 1985 Finals would be the next series to match the 13.5 rating.
- 16 **tape delay:** “It's NBA on CBS—If You Like Tape Delay,” by Jack Craig, *The Sporting News*, 4/25/1981. “Good Video Things In Small Packages,” SporTVView column by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 6/6/1982.
- 17 **Lucius Allen out:** Ryan, *The Boston Celtics: The History, Legends, & Images of American's Most Celebrated Team*, p72
- 17 **skyhook by Abdul-Jabbar:** A video posted on YouTube shows how Abdul-Jabbar drove towards the endline, parallel to the lane, and made a sweeping sky hook over Hank Finkel, who was forced into the game when Dave Cowens fouled out. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6K2MOvLV3M>
- 17 **greatest sporting event:** Connelly, *Rebound! Basketball, Busing, Larry Bird, and the Rebirth of Boston*, p91.
- 17 **turning point:** Sullivan, *The Picture History of the Boston Celtics*, p106.
- 17 **blackened out in New York:** Bell, *The Legend of Dr. J: The Story of Julius Erving*, p109. Game 2 detail based on search of contemporary newspapers using Google News.
- 18 **Loughery felt that coaching:** Bell, *The Legend of Dr. J*, p91-92. Loughery was hired by his former Pistons teammate Dave DeBusschere, who had agreed to become the Nets General Manager but would play out his contract with the Knicks in 1973-74 before starting the Nets job the following season.

Chapter Two – Agents of Change

- 19 **January 15, 1967:** Box score from <http://www.basketball-reference.com/boxscores/196701150DET.html>; League standings from Basketball-Reference and www.shrpsports.com. I have omitted listing a reference for every box score consulted since the basketball-reference web site is fairly intuitive to navigate.
- 19 **Wiley retired:** Wiley would attempt a brief comeback in 1967 in the ABA, playing just 9 games.
- 20 **only a couple of years away from retirement:** “Rimming the NBA,” by Phil Elderkin, *The Sporting News*, 1/21/1967, p10. Schaus's comment was made *before* the trade, and referred to both Elgin Baylor and LaRusso. LaRusso retired in 1969 after averaging 20+ points a game during his final two seasons; Baylor would not retire until 1971.
- 20 **Board of Governors' meeting:** “NBA Toots Whistle on LaRusso, Loop Out of Bounds, Says Rudy,” by Murray Janoff, *The Sporting News*, 2/11/1967, p13. According to box scores from *The Sporting News*, Counts's first

game with the Lakers was against the Bullets on January 28. Scott had debuted with the Bullets the day before in San Francisco. And note that the Lakers and Bullets had played each other on January 25, the last day before the decision was made.

- 20 **The Sporting News:** "New Pro Cage Loop Warms Up in 10 Cities," *The Sporting News*, 2/11/1967, p13.
- 20 **Franklin Mieuli ... Rudy LaRusso:** "Rimming the NBA," by Phil Elderkin, *The Sporting News*, 3/4/1967, p34. The Lakers tried to trade John Block and a second round pick instead, but the Pistons refused. "Warriors Negotiate With Rudy LaRusso," *St. Petersburg Times*, 8/10/1967 describes how Franklin Mieuli of the Warriors had bought LaRusso's rights and was negotiating a new contract. Basketball-Reference.com states that the official transaction occurred on 8/31. The Pistons used the Lakers 1967 pick to select Lloyd "Sonny" Dove; see <http://www.prosportstransactions.com/basketball/DraftTrades/Years/1967.htm>
- 20 **We studied his activities:** Pluto, *Loose Balls: The Short, Wild Life of the American Basketball Association*, p191.
- 21 **wanted to play in New York:** Abdul-Jabbar, *Giant Steps*, p191.
- 21 **The negotiation process:** Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p191-192. The failure to land Alcindor was one of many factors in the ABA's decision to replace Mikan as Commissioner with Jack Dolph.
- 21 **three-year, \$450,000 contract:** Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p182-183.
- 21 **Braves then selected Haywood:** Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p182. "Buffalo Selects Spencer Haywood," *Schenectady Gazette*, 3/30/1971. Kennedy warned the Braves not to pick Haywood, but general manager Eddie Donovan made the move because the SuperSonics had not used a draft pick on Haywood that year; he provided a tortured rationale that "If Seattle had taken him on the first round as an act of good faith we would have backed off."
- 21 **Julius Erving:** This paragraph is based on several sources, including, Woolf, *Behind Closed Doors*, p93-96; Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p222-225; and Mallozzi, *Doc: The Rise and Rise of Julius Erving*, p53-54; Specific dates for the signing of Erving come from newspaper articles including "ABA Rides Again, Signs a Collegian," *The Milwaukee Journal*, 4/6/1971, combined with information in *Loose Balls* that states Erving signed the contract after sleeping on it.
- 21 **to Virginia as a "regional franchise":** "Yes, Rick, There Is A Virginia," by Peter Carry, *Sports Illustrated*, 8/24/1970.
- 22 **it was scandalous to be involved:** Woolf, *Behind Closed Doors*, p94.
- 22 **Erving, Squires, Hawks, Bucks legal fiasco:** This paragraph is based on Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p230-233; and Woolf, *Behind Closed Doors*, p99-101. Court case information taken from Associated Press wire service articles in *The (Charleston, South Carolina) News and Courier*, 9/13/1972 (states that the judge was Ernest Tidwell) and *The (Fredericksburg, Virginia) Free Lance-Star* 10/2/1972. Also see United States Court of Appeals, Second Circuit "468 F.2d 1064: Julius W. Erving, Plaintiff-appellant, v. the Virginia Squires Basketball Club, a Limited Partnership, defendant-appellee" downloaded from <http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/468/1064/284113/> Note: Associated Press articles cited in the remainder of these notes are labeled as (AP) and United Press International as (UPI).
- 22 **spent his second choice, at number eleven:** The Bucks also owned the sixth overall pick as a result of a trade with the Houston Rockets, and selected swingman (and Boston native) Russ Lee from Marshall University. Lee played just 97 games over three seasons in the NBA.
- 22 **September 20, 1972:** "Hawks to Fight Decision Giving Erving to Bucks," *Milwaukee Journal*, 9/22/1972.
- 22 **two exhibition games:** The game on 9/23 took place in Frankfort, Kentucky while the 9/24 game was played in Atlanta. These games were part of an ongoing series of exhibition games between the two leagues. "Hawks Pay Heavy Price for Playing Julius Erving," (AP) *(Meriden, CT) Morning Record*, 9/26/1972.
- 22 **rejected Erving's claims:** "Erving Will Join Squires Pending Suit," (AP) *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 10/20/1972. The article claims that the Court of Appeals would not respond for one to six weeks, but they announced a decision on 10/24.
- 22 **I admired Julius's attitude:** Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p232.
- 23 **Details of Erving trade:** Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p234.
- 23 **took nearly three years to settle:** "McGinnis can't play for Knicks," (AP) *St. Petersburg Times*, 6/6/1975. One of the two picks turned out to be Hall of Fame forward Alex English, who the Bucks lost to the Pacers two

years later as a free agent when they refused to match the Pacers offer. The story also mentions that the Knicks were penalized for illegally signing George McGinnis, whose rights were owned by the 76ers. The Knicks forfeited their 1976 first round pick.

- 23 **Larry Creger:** Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p523. Creger also tried to sign Robert Parish out of high school, but unlike Malone's parents, Parish's parents were adamant about their son attending college.
- 23 **Malone's high school stats:** "Holy Moses! \$3.3 Million!" (AP) *The (Washington, PA) Observer-Reporter*, 8/30/1974. Note that Reggie Harding had been drafted by the NBA's Detroit Pistons in 1962 without having attended college, but was forced to sit out until the 1963-64 season to adhere to the league's rules for underclassmen; see "Pistons Can't Use 7-Foot Prep," (AP) *Lawrence Journal-World*, 7/3/1962.
- 23 **Malone was sold to the Spirits:** Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p409.
- 23 **Oscar Robertson suit:** Oscar Robertson was the president of the NBA Players Association when the suit was filed on April 16, 1970.
- 23 **The ABAPA's rationale:** "New Orleans must wait for Malone," (AP) *Beaver County Times*, 12/9/1975; "Warriors Nab Wise In Draft," (AP) *The Spartanburg (South Carolina) Herald*, 12/31/1975.
- 24 **surrendering their first round pick:** The article "Warriors Nab Wise In Draft" specifically mentions that other than the Jazz and Lakers, "No other club was willing to surrender its *next available* first-round choice..." (italics are mine).
- 24 **talks ended unsuccessfully:** "Warriors Nab Wise In Draft"; and uncredited wire service notes item in *Eugene Register-Guard*, 1/8/1976.
- 24 **1976 dispersal draft:** "Cage Merger Set, Draft For Talent," (AP) *Toledo Blade*, 6/17/1976.
- 24 **If we can come to a dollar figure:** "Jazz pursue Malone," (AP) *The Michigan Daily*, 6/19/1976.
- 24 **O'Brien abruptly ended those negotiations:** "Player distribution to be decided today," (AP) *The (Bowling Green, Kentucky) Daily News*, 6/24/1976. Another AP story that appeared on 6/18/1976, the same day that the Jazz announced their intention to try to sign Malone, alludes to an agreement (that was not officially announced) that the entire supplemental draft was "voided" due to the merger. See, for example, "Merger Helps Bulls, Hawks" in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 6/18/1976. The Jazz and Lakers both kept their first-round selections, as Malone went into the dispersal draft, and Olberding stayed with the Spurs as they moved to the NBA. However, the NBA still confiscated the second, third and fourth-round picks from the 76ers, Warriors and Braves, respectively (see <http://www.prosportstransactions.com/basketball/DraftTrades/Years/1976.htm>), which leads the author to believe that there was a compromise where those three players (of lesser talent) remained with the teams that drafted them. Bennett's team had not been accepted into the NBA, so he would have been eligible for the dispersal draft anyway. Basketball-Reference.com lists Bennett as being signed by the 76ers as a free agent in "June 1976"; Bennett was traded by the 76ers to the Indiana Pacers in November 1976 and played portions of four seasons in the NBA. At the time of the trade, an AP wire story stated that Bennett was signed by the 76ers as a free agent during the summer but the author could not find any evidence of this in newspaper articles that appeared in June. Wise never played pro ball again, but a wire story that appeared in the *Spartanburg (South Carolina) Herald* on 9/2/1976 mentions that "The NBA rights to Wise were obtained by Golden State last winter, and he took part in rookie camp with the team this summer. They invited him back when regular training camp beings later this month." The phrase "last winter" is a clear reference to the supplemental draft. Charlie Jordan suffered a left knee injury during the ABA playoffs in April 1976 and never played again.
- 24 **NBA then assigned price tags:** Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p435. "Player distribution to be decided today," (AP) *The (Bowling Green, Kentucky) Daily News*, 6/24/1976. The AP story refers to the Spirits as the "Utah Rockies" since the Spirits had announced plans to move to Utah before the NBA-ABA merger was finalized. Pluto mentions the Lucas trade and the overall draft order, in which teams selected in the same order as the 1976 NBA college draft except that the Bulls, who had lost the coin flip for the number one pick in the college draft to the Hawks, were given the first choice in the dispersal draft. Twelve of the nineteen eligible players were selected.
- 24 **We're open for a deal:** "Beneficiaries In The Will," by Barry McDermott, *Sports Illustrated*, 8/16/1976.
- 24 **Glickman dealt him:** "Portland peddles Malone to Buffalo," (UPI) *Eugene (Oregon) Register-Guard*, 10/19/1976.

- 25 **Braves sent Malone:** The Blazers used the Braves pick (number 3) to move up to number 1 to take Mychal Thompson (bypassing Larry Bird, among others). The Braves took Wesley Cox in 1977 and used the other pick as part of a deal to acquire the injured Nate Archibald, who would end up in Boston in the infamous John Y. Brown / Irv Levin franchise swap that also resulted in the Braves moving to San Diego.
- 25 **the trading of picks accelerated:** 1971 would be the last year that no first round picks were traded.
- 25 **Table of draft pick transactions, 1977-1981:** Based on data from Basketball-Reference.com's draft pages and <http://www.prosportstransactions.com/basketball/DraftTrades/Years/index.htm>
- 25 **Four year period where teams would be compensated:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p126; After 1980, free agency rules were modified from "negotiated compensation" to "right of first refusal," where trades still happened in exchange for convincing a team to waive their first refusal rights. However, the new system took the commissioner out of the picture; see Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p144.
- 25 **free agent compensation deals:** Note that the pick that the Golden State Warriors used to take Robert Parish in 1976 was acquired from the Lakers as compensation for signing free agent Cazzie Russell.
- 25 **trade between New Orleans Jazz and the Los Angeles Lakers:** This section is drawn from May, *The Big Three*, p34-42.
- 25 **Lakers then offered the picks back:** Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p224.
- 26 **junior-eligible:** May, *The Big Three*, p31.
- 26 **Auerbach and Volk knew the rules:** Shaughnessy, *Ever Green: The Boston Celtics: A history in the words of their players, coaches, fans & foes, from 1946 to the present*, p173, explains how Volk telephoned NBA legal counsel David Stern to confirm the details of the new "junior-eligible" rule.
- 26 **Bird was determined to return:** Bird, *When the Game Was Ours*, p31-35.
- 26 **Portland also had the seventh pick:** In addition to moving up to the top pick, Portland also traded their own first round pick, number 22 (last in the first round) to Golden State for a future number one pick in 1979 or 1981. The Sonics had acquired the Pistons choice two years earlier for (a fading) Archie Clark.
- 26 **The original thought process:** May, *The Big Three*, p35-36.
- 26 **changed the junior-eligible rule again:** May, *The Big Three*, p57.
- 26 **Magic spoke with Julius Erving:** Bird, *When the Game Was Ours*, p64-65.
- 26 **considered taking Sidney Moncrief:** Bird, *When the Game Was Ours*, p66.
- 26 **exuberance that registers an 8.5:** "Two For The Show," by Douglas S. Looney, *Sports Illustrated*, 10/15/1979.
- 27 **Rockets agreed to trade Malone to the 76ers:** Houston hoped that Cleveland, the worst team in the NBA in 1981-82, would be bad enough in 1982-83 to qualify for the coin flip for the top pick, which was expected to be Ralph Sampson (or perhaps Patrick Ewing, who was rumored to be considering leaving Georgetown early). Cleveland finished three games ahead of the Indiana Pacers, thus giving Houston the third pick, which they used on Rodney McCray. But the Rockets "earned" the number one pick on their own, partly by deliberately losing games, a tactic that eventually led to the NBA establishing a draft lottery in 1985. Had Cleveland finished behind Indiana, Houston would have been awarded the top two picks and no coin flip would have been necessary. AP Story in *Anchorage Daily News*, 9/16/1982.

Chapter Three – The 80s Era in Review

- 31 **1979-80 At a Glance:** The Above .500 charts and Win/Loss sparkline charts were inspired by the baseball season charts found in Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, p174. These charts were created by the author using data from <http://www.shrpsports.com>, processed by custom Perl scripts written by the author, and drawn using Microsoft Excel 2013. In the sparkline charts, the blue bars depict victories and the red bars depict losses; the taller bars are for home games, the shorter bars are for road games. There is a lot of information on the web about the Perl scripting language; start at <http://www.Perl.org> for an overview.
- 32 **Off the Court:** Events in these sections took place during the corresponding NBA season. Notes have been provided for selected events only.

- 33 **Kemper Arena collapsed:** "Kansas City Arena Roof Caves In During Storm," (AP and UPI), *The Milwaukee Journal*, 6/5/1979.
- 33 **could cost them up to \$500,000:** "Kings' fate in K.C. to be decided today," (AP) *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, 6/29/1979.
- 33 **turned down an offer:** "Kings will stay in Kansas City next season," (AP) *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 6/30/1979. The team's owners cited financial concessions from business owners and the city as the primary reason they stayed. St. Louis, Missouri, which had hosted three Kings games in 1978-79 and four in 1979-80, was also considered as a temporary home.
- 33 **Kings returned to Kemper:** "Kings reopen Kemper in style," (UPI) *The Nevada Daily Mail*, 2/21/1980.
- 34 **Opening Tip** refers to players, cities, rules, etc. which made their debut during the season; **Final Buzzer** refers to those who made their final appearance during the season.
- 34 **Seattle SuperSonics average home attendance:** Attendance figures from http://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_1980.html. Seattle averaged 18,225 fans during their championship run in 1978-79, but reportedly lost over \$700,000 that season; see "The National Basketball Affliction - The NBA: A Major League With Major Problems; High Salaries For Players Wipe Out Gate," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/31/1982. By the end of the 80s Era, Seattle had averaged under 9,000 fans per game for three consecutive seasons; after drawing just 7,399 fans per night in 1983-84, the team moved from the Kingdome back to the 17,000 seat Seattle Center Coliseum for the 1985-86 season. Attendance rebounded to 12,008 for 1987-88 but would not be filled to capacity except for four years in the late 1990's. In 2008 the team moved to Oklahoma City to become the Thunder.
- 35 **Basketball court graphic:** taken from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NBA_court_dimensions_2008.pdf and cropped to focus on the three-point line. Image protected by a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>
- 35 **ABL:** ABL statistics taken from the APBR ABL statistics page: <http://apbr.org/ablstats.html>. The league disbanded midway through what was supposed to be its 1962-63 season. In all tables in this section, "3/FGA" refers to the number of three point attempts as a percentage of all field goal attempts.
- 35 **Tony Jackson:** "Tony Jackson, 65, Who Led St. John's Basketball, Dies," by Richard Goldstein, *New York Times*, 11/2/2005. Jackson was a First Team AP All-American in 1960, and made the Second Team in 1961. A teammate of future NBA center Leroy Ellis, Jackson led St. John's to the NIT championship in 1959 and was named the tournament's MVP. Jackson was drafted by the Knicks in the third round in 1961 but NBA Commissioner Maurice Podoloff banned him from the league.
- 36 **NBA adopted the rule:** http://www.nba.com/analysis/rules_history.html Note that the line was shortened to an even 22' away from the basket for the 1994-95 season but was restored to the original distance for the 1997-98 season. Thus, several single-season NBA three-point records were set during these three seasons. Another article used for basic background information for this section was "The Evolution of the Usage of the Three Point Shot," originally published at NBCSports.com on 3/3/2007, but later updated to include the 2006-07 season (by David Freeman) at: <http://20secondtimeout.blogspot.com/2007/09/evolution-of-usage-of-three-point-shot.html>
- 36 **ABA and NBA team averages:** Derived by the author using statistics obtained from <http://www.basketball-reference.com>; unless otherwise noted, this site was the source of all statistics used in this book.
- 37 **NCAA began experimenting:** "Three-point project: Southern," *The (Illinois) News-Gazette*, 3/19/2012, posted at <http://www.news-gazette.com/sports/illini-sports/mens-basketball/2012-03-19/three-point-project-southern.html>. Ronnie Carr of Western Carolina made the first three-pointer in NCAA history against Tennessee State on November 29, 1980.
- 37 **located at 19'9":** The NCAA has since moved the line to 20'9" for men, leaving the line at 19'9" for women. See NCAA 2009 court diagram: http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/rules/mbb/2009/Court_NEW_FOR_2009.pdf
- 37 **American high schools:** "High School Basketball Draws Line, Adopts 3-Point Rule," by John Lynch, *Los Angeles Times*, 3/27/1987.
- 37 **I detested the three-point shot:** "Cooper On Offensive With 3-Point Barrage," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 6/5/1987. The original quote begins: "Four years ago, I detested the three-point shot..."

- 38 **1987 Finals:** The Celtics and Lakers set a Finals record with fifteen combined three-point field goal attempts in game two of the 1987 Finals, broke the record by attempting sixteen in Game 3, and broke the record *again* with eighteen attempts in Game 5.
- 38 **let Dunleavy leave after the season:** Dunleavy signed with Milwaukee and never played even a quarter of a season again due to injuries. He made just 38 more three-pointers in his career over 43 games.
- 39 **You're the road team:** Bird with Ryan, *Drive: The Story of My Life*, p202-203. The italics are in the original text.
- 39 **second-biggest psychological advantage:** "Cooper On Offensive With 3-Point Barrage," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 6/5/1987.
- 43 **Maxie the Miner:** http://www.nba.com/history/uniforms_nuggets.html
- 43 **Johnson suffers knee injury:** The Lakers defeated the Kings anyway on November 18, to raise their record to 15-5.
- 44 **Demographics:** All of the graphics and tables in this section were created by the author, using data from John Grasso's biographical database, available online at <http://apbr.org/NBAData1.xls> and <http://apbr.org/NBAData2.xls>
- 46 **October 18, 1979:** One Year After Pacers-Pistons Fight, Tough Questions of Race and Sports," by Harvey Araton, *New York Times*, 10/30/2005; the article was adapted from Araton's book, *Crashing the Borders: How Basketball Won the World and Lost Its Soul at Home*. The *New York Times* article is available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/30/sports/basketball/30borders.ready.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>
- 46 **Racial composition:** Racial data taken from John Grasso's biographical database.
- 49 **Money Ball:** All salary figures are taken from contemporary newspaper reports and represent base salaries without bonuses. The figures in the right-most column were obtained by adding each players' points, rebounds and assists during the 1981-82 season (as listed on <http://www.basketball-reference.com>) and then dividing their salary by the sum of those statistics.
- 49 **Malone, Thompson, Webster, Gilmore, Lanier, McGinnis, Cartwright, Johnson, Dantley:** Big Contrast in Pay in N.B.A. and N.F.L.," *New York Times*, 8/20/1981.
- 49 **Abdul-Jabbar, Magic:** "Bird leads list of 10 really deserving big bucks," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 7/5/1981. Magic's 25-year, \$25-million contract did not take effect until 1984.
- 49 **Birdsong, Edwards:** "The National Basketball Affliction - The NBA: A Major League With Major Problems; High Salaries For Players Wipe Out Gate," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/31/1982. Birdsong and Edwards were newly signed as free agents for the 1981-82 season. Birdsong had reportedly earned between \$150,000 and \$165,000 the year before in Kansas City and had initially wanted to stay there until a bidding war emerged for his services, stoked by the Cleveland Cavaliers. Bob Woolf negotiated the new contract. See "Family Ties Still Binding For Birdsong," by Sam Goldpaper, Special to the *New York Times*, 6/17/1981.
- 49 **Erving:** "For Julius Erving of the 76ers, It's all a Philadelphia Story," by Roy S. Johnson, *New York Times*, 10/11/1981. "Pro Basketball: Will Moses Lead NBA Into Ruin?," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 9/19/1982
- 49 **Gervin:** "Spurs' President Would Love To Shell Out Cash," (AP) *Boston Globe*, 2/19/1981.
- 49 **Bird:** May, *The Big Three*, p57. Bird's rookie contract was the largest ever signed at that point in time: five years, \$3.25 million.
- 49 **Williams:** "Scouting: Rookie of Year Wants Pay Parity," by Neil Amdur and Lawrie Mifflin, NYT, 7/22/1982.
- 52 **Keeping it Close:** Chart covers the entire 80s Era. 1979-80 Bucks (29) and Cavaliers (28) came the closest to joining this list. Data obtained using game results from <http://www.shrpsports.com> and Perl scripts written by the author. Results were double-checked using the Team Game Finder on the <http://www.basketball-reference.com> website.
- 53 **AT&T agrees:** Gertner, *The Idea Factory*, p301.
- 53 **hands over Panama Canal:** See <http://www.justice.gov/marshals/history/panama/>. April 1 was the official transfer date.
- 54 **record for assists by an MVP:** Magic broke his own record two years later in 1988-89 with 12.8 assists per game. That record still stands as of 2013.

- 55 **All Heads above Water:** 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).
- 56 **ARPANET:** <http://www.internetsociety.org/internet/what-internet/history-internet/brief-history-internet>
- 57 **Peak Production:** 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 San Antonio Spurs scored 100 or more points in 129 consecutive regular season games from December 12, 1978 through March 14, 1980. The third longest streak is 81, set by the Cincinnati Royals from November 18, 1960 through November 21, 1961. The Nuggets also scored 100 or more points in each of their three playoff games during the streak, for 139 games overall; second-place for most consecutive regular season and playoff games with 100 or more points is 93, held by the Philadelphia 76ers (November 8, 1966 through October 27, 1967). Denver's streak of allowing 100 or more points is the second-longest streak. The record belongs to the New York Knicks: 190 games from November 11, 1959 through January 21, 1962. Not surprisingly, the Knicks never made the playoffs during that period. The Basketball Reference Team Streak Finder (<http://www.basketball-reference.com/play-index/tstreak.cgi>) was essential to this research, and game results and W-L records were obtained from <http://www.shrpsports.com>.
- 58 **Rolling Doubles:** 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 "Jabbar's Streak Gets Deep-Sixed," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/7/1982. Pollack also lists Jamaal Wilkes as scoring in double figures in 79 of 80 games, and World B. Free in 72 of 73 games, but the author chose to omit them from this table because unlike English and Vandeweghe, Wilkes and Free did not play a complete 82-game season.
- 59 **135 Days and 3 Seconds:** Sources for this section include several wire story reports from December 1982 and April 1983. Also see "Pro Basketball: Don't Rule Out Spurs' Protest," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/5/1982.
- 59 **while on the air:** "From High Above The Western Sideline," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/9/1984.
- 59 **I just wanted to get everyone:** Quoted from 12/1/1982 *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/>)
- 59 **both teams had clinched:** Team records as of 4/13/1982 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.
- 60 **successful protests:** coincidentally, all three games involved overtime. The Nets originally lost to the 76ers 137-133 in double-overtime on 11/8/1978; on 3/23/1979 they lost 123-117 in regulation. See "Nets Awarded Protest In Nov. 8 Loss to 76ers," *New York Times*, 11/23/1978, 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 12/19/2007. They would also lose 114-111 in overtime when the game resumed on 3/8/2008. 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>.
- 60 **Original vs. Official Box Score:** 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.

- 65 **NBA Head Coaches:** All charts were created by the author using data from <http://www.basketball-reference.com>. The nine new coaches for 1983-84 was 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.
- 66 **peaked in 1984-85:** See table at http://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_stats.html; 1984-85 remains the twelfth-highest as of 2013.
- 66 **longest such streak:** The Basketball-Reference.com Team Streak Finder makes this kind of research easy to do: <http://www.basketball-reference.com/play-index/tstreak.cgi>. The Warriors had a three-game streak of this kind which began with the final two games of the 1978-79 season and carried over to the first game of the 1979-80 season. The Knicks would have a three-game streak in November 1985.
- 68 **Kansas City's last home game:** Kings led 43-28 after the first quarter and 97-93 after three, but lost anyway. The NBA had not officially approved the franchise's move to Sacramento, but that was considered a formality. A home game three days earlier against the Rockets drew just 7,396 fans, and two days before that, only 3,862 paid to watch the Kings last home win, 117-105 over the Mavericks.
- 69 **breaking the mark of 19:** "Lakers finish strong," (AP) *The (Fredericksburg, Virginia) Free Lance-Star*, 4/15/1985 mentions the Bullets old record.
- 69 **clinched the division title:** "Champion Lakers Get Close Win Over Spurs," by Randy Harvey, *Los Angeles Times*, 3/16/1985.
- 70 **coin flips in consecutive years:** Portland would have participated in the coin flip for four straight years from 1971 through 1974 but they traded their 1973 pick to Cleveland. Portland won the flip in 1972 and 1974. The Nets would have been part of three straight coin flips from 1976 to 1978, but they traded *all of these picks* including the 1977 and 1978 picks that went to the Kings in a deal for Tiny Archibald. See *Philadelphia 76ers 1983-84 Statistical Yearbook*, p108 for list of coin flip details from 1966 through 1983.
- 70 **Win Shares:** Win Shares figures taken from <http://www.basketball-reference.com/about/ws.html> as calculated in 2013. Basketball Win Shares are based on Bill James's theory of Baseball Win Shares. The Basketball-Reference.com site uses the following formula for Win Shares = Offensive Win Shares + Defensive Win Shares. The formula for Offensive Win Shares from 1977-78 through the present, which is sufficient for players drafted in 1977 and beyond, is as follows:

Offensive Win Shares are credited to players based on Dean Oliver's points produced and offensive possessions. The formulas are quite detailed, so I would point you to Oliver's book Basketball on Paper for complete details. The process for crediting Offensive Win Shares is outlined below (using LeBron James of the 2008-09 Cleveland Cavaliers as an example):

1. **Calculate points produced for each player.** In 2008-09, James had an estimated 2345.9 points produced.
2. **Calculate offensive possessions for each player.** James had an estimated 1928.1 offensive possessions in 2008-09.
3. **Calculate marginal offense for each player.** Marginal offense is equal to (points produced) - 0.92 * (league points per possession) * (offensive possessions). For James this is $2345.9 - 0.92 * 1.083 * 1928.1 = 424.8$. Note that this formula may produce a negative result for some players.

4. **Calculate marginal points per win.** Marginal points per win reduces to $0.32 * (\text{league points per game}) * ((\text{team pace}) / (\text{league pace}))$. For the 2008-09 Cavaliers this is $0.32 * 100.0 * (88.7 / 91.7) = 30.95$.

5. **Credit Offensive Win Shares to the players.** Offensive Win Shares are credited using the following formula: $(\text{marginal offense}) / (\text{marginal points per win})$. James gets credit for $424.8 / 30.95 = 13.73$ Offensive Win Shares.

And the following is their formula for Defensive Win Shares from 1973-74 to the present:

Crediting Defensive Win Shares to players is based on Dean Oliver's Defensive Rating. Defensive Rating is an estimate of the player's points allowed per 100 defensive possessions (please see Oliver's book for further details). Here is a description of the process (once again using LeBron James in 2008-09 as an example):

1. **Calculate the Defensive Rating for each player.** James's Defensive Rating in 2008-09 was 99.1.

2. **Calculate marginal defense for each player.** Marginal defense is equal to $(\text{player minutes played} / \text{team minutes played}) * (\text{team defensive possessions}) * (1.08 * (\text{league points per possession}) - ((\text{Defensive Rating}) / 100))$. For James this is $(3054 / 19780) * 7341 * ((1.08 * 1.083) - (99.1 / 100)) = 202.5$. Note that this formula may produce a negative result for some players.

3. **Calculate marginal points per win.** Marginal points per win reduces to $0.32 * (\text{league points per game}) * ((\text{team pace}) / (\text{league pace}))$. For the 2008-09 Cavaliers this is $0.32 * 100.0 * (88.7 / 91.7) = 30.95$.

4. **Credit Defensive Win Shares to the players.** Defensive Win Shares are credited using the following formula: $(\text{marginal defense}) / (\text{marginal points per win})$. James gets credit for $202.5 / 30.95 = 6.54$ Defensive Win Shares.

70 **1977 the first true post-merger draft:** This is an important consideration, since a similar analysis of Win Shares earned by NBA draft picks during the ABA era would be deeply flawed due to the fact that many players were selected by both leagues, and in some cases, an NBA team would use a late-round pick to select a player with first round talent who had already signed with an ABA team.

72 **group them into rough buckets:** Any player within plus-or-minus 25% of the average is characterized as "average" and listed in black. Colors are used to denote 25% or 50% above or below the average.

74 **Barlow:** "It's All In The Cards," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/3/1986.

74 **Monti Davis:** Davis's agent, Don Cronson, talked him up incessantly, including this quote in September 1980: "He's strong. He's tough and he's real good people. He's got some outstanding physical talent. Greater probably, in a potential sense, than all but two or three players in the draft." Cronson also dismissed NBA scouting guru Marty Blake's assessment that Davis was only the eighteenth-best forward in the draft that year. Blake turned out to be correct. See: "Davis Leaps," by Dick Weiss, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 9/5/1980.

75 **Well-Traveled:** Based on research using John Grasso's biographical database.

75 **There's always some guy:** "That's Good Home Cookin'," by Alexander Wolff, *Sports Illustrated*, 6/9/1986.

78 **Running Away (Again):** "Magic show gives Lakers division title," (AP) *Spokane Chronicle*, 3/10/1986. Lakers ended the night 18 games ahead of the Trail Blazers with 18 games remaining, but had already clinched the season series by winning the first four meetings between the two teams.

79 **shocked by their physicalness:** "Better By Leaps And Bounds," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 6/6/1983.

79 **plus-minus ratio:** 1983-84 *Philadelphia 76ers Statistical Yearbook*, p42. Five players had had a negative plus-minus during the regular season: Edwards, Anderson, Schoene, McNamara and Reggie Johnson. For comparison, during the 1981-82 playoffs, three players had a negative plus-minus, two of which were significant contributors: Caldwell Jones, Cureton and Toney. See 1982-83 *Philadelphia 76ers Statistical Yearbook*, p141.

79 **the only team:** May, *The Last Banner*, p 286-287.

79 **overrated:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p651-652.

79 **the best team I ever coached against:** May, *The Last Banner*, p284.

79 **our greatest:** "Big Man, Big Game," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/15/1987.

80 **all the games we blew:** May, *The Last Banner*, p274.

80 **Win Quality/Loss Quality:** For example, if Milwaukee played all 82 games of its season against a 45-37 team, Milwaukee's Win Quality would be 45 regardless of how many wins they actually accumulated (as long as

they won at least one game). Their Loss Quality would be 37. But in real life Milwaukee will play every team in the league. The average Win Quality or Loss Quality is best applied to compare two teams who won or lost a similar number of games, to eliminate cases where a single win or loss by a team with few victories (or few wins) skews the data.

- 84 **D.J. was three points better:** Seattle (14.2 vs. 17.9), Phoenix (17.5 vs. 20.4) and Boston (12.6 vs.16.5).
 85 **Lonely at the Top:** The Spurs streak reached sixteen years in the 2012-13 season.
 87 **The two Florida applications:** "NBA Expands By Four; Surprise Addition: Two Florida Teams," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 4/23/1987. In addition to the four selected cities, Toronto, St. Petersburg and Anaheim had also been candidates. Each of those potential ownership groups had paid the NBA a \$100,000 fee for the privilege of being considered for a franchise.
 89 **realign their divisions in 1980:** "Pro Basketball: An NBA Surprise; Realignment Smart," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/9/1980. All charts in this section were created by the author based on data from <http://www.basketball-reference.com>
 93 **won at least 55 games:** The 1981-82 Lakers (4.9) are the only missing championship team. The six teams that failed to reach the conference finals are the 1981 Suns, 1981 Bucks, 1982 Bucks, 1985 Bucks, 1987 Hawks and 1987 Mavericks. Those Bucks teams lost to the 76ers in semifinals in all three years, and in the first two years, to a 76ers team that also appears on this list.

Chapter Four – Name Game

- 97 **brawled with M.L. Carr:** "Rollins Raps Rep; I'm Not Dirty, Just Aggressive ... What Bite?" by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1983. Rollins eventually sued Carr for allegedly pulling a knife on him after the game, but the two sides agreed to apologize and the case was dropped.
 97 **At the beginning of the game:** "Tree's Bite Proves Worse Than His Bark; Rollins Chews On Ainge As Celtics Finger Hawks," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1983.
 97 **I put a fist in his chest:** "Who Would've Believed It Could Happen Here?" by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1983.
 97 **Rollins bit Ainge:** See video on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCaaIAS1NUA>. You can hear the crowd chanting "Rollins, Rollins" after the announcement is made that only Ainge and Glenn were ejected.
 97 **Danny turned around:** "Rollins Raps Rep; I'm Not Dirty, Just Aggressive ... What Bite?" by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1983.
 97 **Rollins was fined:** "Melee due to cost Rollins, \$30,250," wire story in *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 4/26/1983. "O'Brien Reduces Rollins' Suspension To 2 Games," (AP) *Ocala Star-Banner*, 10/15/1983.
 98 **Boerwinkle stepped on Archibald:** Ryan, *The Pro Game*, p145.
 98 **Tiny was sullen:** Boston Is Winging Once More," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/3/1979.
 98 **Dallas valued youth over experience:** "NBA Clubs Lining Up For Free Agent Maxwell," by Will McDonough, *Boston Globe*, 5/29/1980. Archibald was left exposed because he was turning thirty-two that fall and did not have a contract for the 1980-81 season. He would not sign one until three days before opening night; see "Atlantic Division," John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 10/20/1980.
 99 **so handsome:** "Chicago Is Bullish On Reggie T.," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/10/1983.
 99 **I'm just one member:** "Celtics Break Out Of Slump, Rifle Theus, Bulls," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/23/1982.
 99 **I just play:** "Storm Cloud Over A Sitting Bull," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/9/1984.
 100 **If it was something I did:** "Storm Cloud Over A Sitting Bull," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/9/1984.
 100 **Mileti sold out:** "Mileti Sells Cavaliers," (AP) *The Evening Independent*, 2/5/1980. Mileti had moved to Beverly Hills in 1979 and wanted to go into the movie business.
 101 **I saw how things were going:** "World B. Free's Game-Changing Name Change," 10/10/2011, posted on Sixers.com and available online at <http://www.nba.com/sixers/stories/exclusive-interview-with-world-2011-10-10.html>

- 101 **World brought talent:** Ryan and Pluto, *Forty-Eight Minutes*, p193.
- 101 **Guilford College:** Guilford College All-Americans: <http://www.guilfordquakers.com/history/AllAmericans>
- 102 **defensive and leadership capabilities:** May, *The Big Three*, p95.
- 102 **Pistons had acted in bad faith:** May, *The Big Three*, p96-97.
- 102 **Jack McCloskey was then hired:** "Detroit Rolls Out A Hot Model," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/22/1982.
- 103 **Leon Douglas:** Douglas was out of the league by November 1982.
- 103 **Frank Tripucka:** "Frank Tripucka, 85, a Star at Notre Dame, Is Dead," by Richard Goldstein, *New York Times*, 9/14/2013. Tripucka was about to retire from the CFL in 1960 when he signed with the Denver Broncos. He threw the first touchdown pass in AFL history and led the AFL in passing yardage that season.
- 103 **It's not an ideal situation; I've never been the kind of player:** "Detroit Rolls Out A Hot Model," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/22/1982.
- 103 **Pistons regressed:** Daly's first three years show why a lack of progress sparked the trade: 1984 49 wins, loss in first round of playoffs; 1985 46 wins, loss in second round; 1986 46 wins, loss in first round. You can argue that Dumars, Rodman and Salley (and even Rick Mahorn) had more of an immediate impact than the Dantley-Tripucka swap, but the eventual trade for Aguirre would not have been feasible without having Dantley on the roster.
- 103 **They're just making changes:** "Pro Basketball Notebook," *The Sporting News*, 9/8/1986.
- 104 **I felt I had let:** "Oh, What Might Have Been," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/1/1982.
- 105 **bruised ribs:** "The NBA's Unsung Heroes," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/9/1987.
- 105 **basketball fundamentals; vertical leap** "Moncrief: Knee's Fine," by Tracy Dodds, *The Milwaukee Journal*, 7/23/1979.
- 105 **He does everything:** "There's No Stopping The Bucks," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/22/1982.
- 105 **Bucks fell in seven games to the 76ers:** "76ers Advance; Bucks Lose the Rerun, Too," by Dick Weiss, *The Sporting News*, 5/2/1981.
- 106 **A year later:** Nelson was so desperate to fill roster spots in 1981-82 that he signed former Celtic teammate Kevin Stacom in November. Stacom was working as a bartender in Newport, Rhode Island at the time. "There's No Stopping The Bucks," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/22/1982.
- 106 **Bucks got back the three youngest:** May, *The Big Three*, p256-257. Cummings was 23, Hodges 24, Pierce 25; Johnson was 28 (he would turn 29 in February), Bridgeman 31, Catchings 33.
- 106 **I've had more fun coaching this season:** "The Bucks Got a Fine-tuning," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/21/1984.
- 107 **Southern California Pro Summer League:** "A Trip With A Journeyman," by Alexander Wolff, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/24/1983.
- 107 **Nets agreed to take him back:** "For The 76ers, It Was Almost A Net Loss," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/30/1984.
- 108 **You can get by one defender:** "For The 76ers, It Was Almost A Net Loss," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/30/1984.
- 108 **We're a team on a mission:** "Hawks edge Bucks to deadlock series," (AP) *Gadsden Times*, 4/25/1984.
- 108 **That statement that Doc made:** "Doctor J and the Sixers fail to deliver," by Tony Zonca, *Reading Eagle*, 4/26/1984.
- 108 **drained the entire team:** "The Bucks Got A Fine-tuning," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/21/1984.
- 108 **Williams was sent to Portland:** The Nets had earned the sixth pick in the 1989 draft but had shipped it to the Bulls three years earlier as part of a compensation package for free agent Orlando Woolridge. Woolridge led the 24-58 Nets in scoring in 1986-87, then played just 19 games the following season. He signed with the Lakers as a free agent in August 1988.
- 109 **five arrests:** "Bernard King And His Courts," (AP) *The St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, 10/4/1979.
- 109 **This guy moves away from the ball:** "It's Whooooosh! Boom! Whoop! Time," by Curry Kirkpatrick, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/20/1978.
- 109 **assault charges and possession:** "King arraigned on sex, drug charges," wire story in *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 1/8/1980.

- 109 **King responded:** "King pleads guilty, gets \$2,000 fine and probation," wire story in *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 6/5/1980.
- 109 **possession charge was dropped:** An untitled wire story in *The Palm Beach Post*, 6/21/1980 states: "King, who pleaded guilty to two reduced counts of attempted forcible sexual abuse, also was cited for possession of cocaine. But the court says it will dismiss the drug charge if the Jazz reactivate the three-year veteran with the purpose of trading him."
- 109 **It took the events of a year ago:** "As The World Turns, So Do The Warriors," by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/15/1980.
- 109 **The Warriors wanted to match:** "Warriors trade King to Knicks," (AP) *The Spokesman-Review*, 10/23/1982.
- 110 **back-to-back 50 point games:** "It Was A 50-50 Proposition," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/13/1984.
- 110 **We tried fronting him; I learned each player's deficiency:** "Hero Of A Showdown In Motown," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/7/1984.
- 110 **he ain't getting 40 on us:** "This Bird, It's Plain, Is Really Superman," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/21/1984.
- 111 **The Knicks ride with Bernard:** "This Bird, It's Plain, Is Really Superman," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/21/1984.
- 111 **Knicks injuries in 1984-85:** "Knicks Resume Rivalry Tonight With Depleted Cast," *Boston Globe*, 11/14/1984.
- 111 **Knicks injuries in 1985-86:** "Horror Show In The Big Apple," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/18/1985.
- 112 **University of Southwestern Louisiana:** The college was renamed the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 1999.
- 112 **When Shipley recruited:** This paragraph and the quotes within it are drawn from "An Accidental Hero, Beryl Shipley, 1926-2011," by John Ed Bradley, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/2/2011. Shipley later coached a half season for the San Diego Conquistadors in the ABA in 1974-75; the team's second-leading scorer was Bo Lamar, who played for Shipley at USL and posted the fifth-best career scoring average in NCAA history (32.7). Shipley later contributed to a book by Ron Gomez (*Slam Dunked: The NCAA's Shameful Reaction to Athletic Integration in the Deep South*) that chronicled his experiences and those of other coaches during this turbulent time.
- 112 **it was obvious; My parents had come all the way:** "A Classy Guy With Ball And Books," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/28/1980.
- 112 **Doug Collins suffered:** "Collins back on the shelf," by Ira Kaufman (UPI), *Nashua Telegraph*, 11/08/1980.
- 113 **In his fifth start:** "Sixers Explode Behind Rookies," (AP) *Reading Eagle*, 11/4/1980. The other rookie was Earl Cureton, who scored 15 and added 14 rebounds in place of an injured Darryl Dawkins.
- 113 **career-high 46 points:** Highlights available on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vA1hEt06-NQ>). Also see "The 76ers: Bridesmaid Revisited," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/12/1982.
- 113 **I thought I was in the game:** "The 76ers' Rallying Cry: Let's Win One For Us," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/24/1982.
- 114 **He just was hitting some shots:** "How Andrew Toney became the 'Boston Strangler'," by Ed Barkowitz, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 5/28/2012.
- 114 **only man in the NBA who could truly stop him:** Toney later said that "DJ was a good defender, but I thought he was a little too slow for me. The guy that played me the best on the Celtics was Gerald Henderson. He was good at reading my moods and playing me that way. But that's not to say he stopped me. I don't think anyone could really stop me." For this and his comments on T.R. Dunn, see "Ex-76er Toney now fights pain, bitterness," by Jackie MacMullan, *Boston Globe*, 3/31/1991.
- 114 **a source of distraction; I didn't have any swelling:** "Ex-76er Toney now fights pain, bitterness," by Jackie MacMullan, *Boston Globe*, 3/31/1991. Toney's injury foreshadowed what eventually happened to Kevin McHale after playing through a different kind of foot injury in 1987. The 76ers wanted Toney to play or have surgery, but Toney rejected the surgery option. See "The Pain That Won't Go Away," by Richard Demak, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/27/1987.

- 114 **kept his distance from the franchise:** "Elusive Sixers great Toney finally returns," by John Finger, *CSNPhilly.com*, 1/7/2012.
- 115 **It never should have happened like this:** "Ex-76er Toney now fights pain, bitterness," by Jackie MacMullan, *Boston Globe*, 3/31/1991.
- 115 **Chest-first shooting style:** Writer Anthony Cotton compared Toney's shooting style to Captain America in "Better Luck The Next Time, Celtics," *Sports Illustrated*, 11/28/1983. For one example, see a highlight montage from Game 4 of the 1982 Eastern Finals on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Im-x2kxBlk> (his first jumper is at 1:25 in the clip).
- 115 **a speeding bullet; being phased out:** The previous incarnation of the Baltimore Bullets played from 1947 to 1954 and used a logo featuring a basketball with a gun barrel sticking out of it. The 1967-68 team photo shows that the speeding bullet is no longer on the front of the jerseys, except for Tom Workman, whose number 41 jersey includes the bullet. Workman was a rookie that season, and while no one had wore number 41 in 1966-67, Jim Barnes had worn that number in 1965-66. Barnes and Workman were similar in size (Barnes 6'8"/210, Workman 6'7"/218) so it seems conceivable that the jersey in the photo was a reused Barnes jersey from two seasons earlier.
- 116 **80s jerseys have since made a comeback:** As of 2013 the Wizards primary logo features a basketball as the "dot" on top of the "i" in Washington or Wizards, and their alternative "dc" logo includes with a single hand formed on top of the "d" which is reaching for a basketball.
- 116 **nonconsecutive terms with the same team:** Other significant examples: Motta coached the Mavericks from 1980-87 and again from 1994-96, Don Nelson coached the Warriors from 1988-95 and 2006-10, Phil Johnson was with the Kings 1973-78 and 1984-87, and Cotton Fitzsimmons with three terms in Phoenix, 1970-72, 1988-92, and 1996.
- 118 **Carter got back on board:** "A look back at the birth of the Dallas Mavericks," by Brad Townsend, *Dallas Morning News*, 5/1/2005.
- 118 **a vocational school on Coney Island:** The vocational school was the William E. Grady Vocational School. See Porter, David L., ed. *Basketball: A Biographical Dictionary*, p44.
- 118 **College/Olympic experience:** "Collected wisdom: Rolando Blackman, former Kansas State and NBA standout," by Berry Tramel, *The Oklahoman*, 5/21/2011.
- 118 **SMU's Moody Coliseum:** "The Mavericks Mark the 25th Anniversary of the Wackiest Game in Franchise History," by Richie Whitt, *Dallas Observer*, 4/16/2009, available at: <http://www.dallasobserver.com/2009-04-16/news/the-mavericks-mark-the-25th-anniversary-of-the-wackiest-game-in-franchise-history/>.
- 118 **Nimphius to the Clippers ... for Donaldson:** Meanwhile, Nimphius lost his starting center job with the Clippers after the 1985-86 season.
- 119 **three playoff series:** During the 80s Era the Mavericks were 11-24 in the regular season against the Lakers, almost evenly split home/road (5-12 in games at the Forum). But in the playoffs Dallas was 3-2 against them at home and 0-6 in Los Angeles. They fared little better against the Celtics (1-13, first win 3/10/1986 at home despite 50 points by Bird and a 13-point Boston lead in the fourth quarter) or the 76ers (4-10, though 4-4 starting with a win on 2/15/1984). Data taken from <http://shrpports.com>.
- 119 **about as showy:** "All-around play, soundness put Vandeweghe among NBA's top forwards," *Christian Science Monitor*, 11/8/1982.
- 119 **Colleen Kay Hutchins:** "Former Miss America Vandeweghe left legacy of family, faith," by Sara Lenz, *Deseret News*, 4/6/2010.
- 119 **on both sides of the family:** Kiki did not get all of the athletic genes in the family. His freshman year coincided with his sister Tauna's first appearance in the 1976 Olympics as a member of the swimming team. Eight years later, she competed on the 1984 Olympic volleyball team.
- 119 **Sam Gilbert:** "U.C.L.A. On Probation In Basketball," (UPI) *New York Times*, 12/9/1981. The core of the charges against the basketball program were: "arranging apartments for players at reduced rental rates; co-signing a promissory note so that a player could purchase a car; arranging for a player's complimentary basketball tickets, to be sold at higher than face value; arranging the use of cars at reduced costs; giving a recruit money for personal use, and providing meals and entertainments for some recruits and their families." UCLA was also cited for minor infractions such as giving a recruit a UCLA T-shirt.

- 119 **Donnie Walsh and Doug Moe:** Walsh's career is an example of the tightness of the coaching fraternity. Walsh had replaced his former teammate, and Moe's friend, Larry Brown as the Nuggets head coach midway through the 1978-79 season. When Walsh was fired in December 1980 Moe replaced him as head coach. Behind the scenes, Walsh was fighting a battle with alcoholism, but a year later Moe rehired Walsh as an assistant. After a year out of the game, Walsh was hired by the Indiana Pacers head coach George Irvine as an assistant; they had both been assistants under Brown in Denver. By 1986 Walsh was named the Pacers general manager. See "The Don: Players and coaches grab the headlines, but the real power behind the Pacers is President Donnie Walsh," by Brian D. Smith, *Indianapolis Monthly*, 6/29/2012 (originally published in November 2000).
- 120 **I wasn't afraid of making trades:** "Recent Nuggets blockbuster trade recalls Kiki deal in 1984," by Irv Moss, *Denver Post*, 3/7/2011.
- 120 **He had been traded again:** Drexler had replaced Paxson in the starting lineup during the 1985 season, but the only other member of that team who was on the 1990 Western Conference champions was Jerome Kersey, a little used reserve in 1985. Ironically, Wayne Cooper was brought back by the Trail Blazers as a free agent in 1989 to back up Kevin Duckworth.
- 121 **Mieuli moved his Warriors:** "San Francisco Warriors Will Change Name, Play At Oakland," (AP) *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, 8/3/1971. The story mentions earlier speculation that the Warriors would play half of 1971-72 season in San Diego. The team's 2012-2013 media guide shows that the Warriors played six games in San Diego in 1971-72, but then abandoned that practice.
- 121 **torn right Achilles tendon:** "Celtics Top Warriors," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/1/1980. "As The World Turns, So Do The Warriors," by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/15/1980.
- 121 **Eric "Sleepy" Floyd:** "'Sleepy' Is Just A Nickname," (AP) *Spartanburg (South Carolina) Herald-Journal*, 3/1/1982. "'I was playing baseball in elementary school, and someone hit a ground ball past me. They said I was asleep, and the nickname just stuck—all this time,' Floyd says."
- 121 **1982 NCAA championship game:** "Nothing Could Be Finer," by Curry Kirkpatrick, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/5/1982. Additional information from the Georgetown Basketball History Project at <http://www.hoyabasketball.com>.
- 122 **Russell Cross:** Cross held out as a rookie and averaged just 3.7 points per game. The Warriors released him the following fall, and then the Nuggets signed him. But Cross had suffered a left knee injury that needed surgery, and he never invested the effort required to rehab his knee and was released in July 1985. Nuggets head coach Doug Moe was as perplexed as anyone: "I don't know what it is. He seemed like a nice kid, but he's got an attitude problem from the point where he doesn't have any mental toughness. He was in shape to do a few things, but he's still in bad shape. He's got a long, long way to go. He's going to have to really work and push himself." See "Russell Cross Is Crossed Off List by the Nuggets," by Jim Armstrong, *Denver Post*, 7/24/1985, available at: http://articles.latimes.com/1985-07-24/sports/sp-4850_1_russell-cross. Cross eventually played in the CBA and with teams in Italy and Spain; see "Knicks GM Grunwald, former HS star Cross and what could've been," posted 5/2/2012 on the Comcast Sports Net Chicago website: <http://www.csnchicago.com/blog/bulls-talk/knicks-gm-grunwald-former-hs-star-cross-and-what-couldve-been>
- 122 **first Warriors All-Stars in five years:** Bernard King had been the Warriors last All-Star back in 1982.
- 122 **When they dunk it in your face:** "Sleepy Floyd's 51 Points Turn Off Lakers' Lights," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 5/11/1987.
- 123 **That's when we decided they were just going to go away:** "Sleepy Floyd's 51 Points Turn Off Lakers' Lights," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 5/11/1987. Highlights available on YouTube, including: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3D5x0Ve4pUk>
- 123 **Sampson ankle injuries:** "They Can't Get Off The Ground," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/19/1987; **Knees/back:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p195.
- 123 **Sampson/Fitch relationship:** "The Center Of Their Hopes," by Hank Hersch, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/18/1988. Sampson's last game with Houston was an 0-6 FG, 0 point, 3 rebound clunker against Utah on December 10, 1987. Houston won the game anyway, 98-93, but reportedly Fitch told Rockets general manager Ray Patterson to make the deal or he would quit.

- 123 **Akeem Olajuwon:** Olajuwon later corrected the spelling of his first name from Akeem to Hakeem in 1991. For this book I have chosen to use the contemporary spelling, as it was spelled during the 80s Era.
- 124 **Rockets-Lakers 1981:** Bird, *When The Game Was Ours*, p85.
- 124 **injured right thumb:** Connelly, *Rebound!*, p272.
- 124 **He'll be seeing my number in his sleep:** "So Far, So Miraculous," by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/18/1981.
- 124 **Bird made one the highlight plays of his career:** You can watch most of Game 1 on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIEKRhTmiSc>. Bird's play is at 1:21:30 on the video.
- 124 **Reid's defensive work was considered overrated:** May, *The Big Three*, p147. Bird nearly matched Malone on the boards—92 to 94. Moses averaged 14.8 rebounds per game during the regular season, so his performance was expected, but Bird had averaged just 10.9 a game that season.
- 124 **Reid was more effective this time around:** Bird scored 23 and 24 points against Houston during the 1980-81 regular season. In 1980, the Rockets were in the Eastern Conference and played the Celtics six times in the regular season, including Bird's NBA debut. Bird averaged 18.8 in those six games.
- 124 **could get four guys off the street:** "Once More, With A Lot Of Feeling," by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/25/1981.
- 124 **It got so I had to run a gauntlet:** Original quote from *Miami Herald* quoted in "A Calling: The Rockets' Robert Reid Is On A Mission For The Crown," by Jere Longman, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/1/1986.
- 124 **leave of absence in December 1981:** "The Rockets Need A Lift," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/11/1982.
- 125 **I think that in the long run:** "Rockets' Reid Retires," *New York Times*, 10/2/1982.
- 125 **a rough part of town:** "Robert Reid Used to Believe He Was Sinning by Playing Pro Basketball," by Scott Ostler, *Los Angeles Times*, 3/3/1985.
- 125 **Tom Heinsohn:** "Pro Basketball: Forget History; It's Sixers in 6 – Finally," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/22/1983. Shaughnessy writes that Heinsohn's lawyer was negotiating a contract with the Rockets "and Heinsohn is expected to be announced as the Rockets coach this week." An AP story that appeared in papers on 5/16 quoted Rockets GM Ray Patterson as saying that Heinsohn was their "No. 1" choice. A UPI wire story on 6/1 stated that Fitch was the Rockets second choice behind Heinsohn, who had turned down the job because the Rockets did not offer a lucrative enough contract.
- 126 **closed out the series in Game 6:** One difference was that the Lakers won Game 6 by thirteen points after a close three point win at home in Game 5. The Rockets blew out the Nuggets in Game 5 of their series 131-103; they led by 26 at halftime.
- 126 **inevitable:** "No Shot For The Rockets," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/19/1986.
- 126 **Rockets-Lakers:** The Lakers lost their 1986-87 season opener at Houston, 112-102, then won the remaining four meetings between the two teams—a perfect reversal of the 1986 Western Conference Finals.
- 126 **Rockets-Lakers Game 5 1986 Western Conference Finals:** YouTube has the final 37 seconds of the game here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LF740MqYbOs>. Reid missed his first three-point attempt, but the Rockets got the rebound and a second chance for Reid. Scott missed a jumper at 112-112, and Leavell got the rebound at the foul line and called timeout with one second left, setting up the Sampson play. Olajuwon and Kupchak were ejected with five minutes remaining in the game for fighting, so if the game would have gone to overtime, the Rockets would have been undermanned.
- 126 **had better wear his hard hat:** May, *The Big Three*, p203. Bird wrote in his autobiography *Drive* (p149-150) that the day before Game 6 he saw television footage of the Rockets arriving at the Garden for a workout and saw how the fans outside the building were heckling Sampson: "[W]hen I saw the look on Ralph's face I knew we weren't going to have to worry about him the next day."
- 127 **Fitzsimmons bio sketch:** "Suns Mourn Loss of Coaching Legend, Cotton Fitzsimmons," posted 6/24/2004 at http://www.nba.com/suns/news/cotton_release_040724.html
- 127 **After being fired late in 1977; I was tired of being a vagabond:** "Behold The New Kings Of The Midwest," by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/11/1978.

- 128 **1980-81 Kings:** Former Celtic Jo Jo White played 13 games for the Kings early in the season before retiring in the first week of November. His next-to-last game was at Boston Garden on October 31, where he scored 11 points in a 115-110 loss.
- 128 **the ugliest that I've ever coached:** "A look back at the last meeting between the Suns and Kings," by Joe Gilmartin, *Suns.com*, 4/19/2001. **More on Kings-Suns series:** "A Kingdom Of Believers," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/20/1981.
- 129 **Mo really wanted the ball today:** "Malone, Rockets Burn K.C.," (AP) *Palm Beach Post*, 4/27/1981.
- 129 **Powder blue uniforms:** Data in table based on baseball uniforms displayed at SABR.org's Hall of Fame "Dressed to the Nines" uniform database. http://exhibits.baseballhalloffame.org/dressed_to_the_nines/database.htm The Cardinals had stopped wearing powder blue in time to avoid another such series in 1985.
- 130 **Wilkes grew up in Ventura:** "Ventura High honors Jamaal Wilkes, a UCLA and Lakers legend," by Rhiannon Potkey, *Ventura County Star*, 1/28/2013; "Jamaal Wilkes defined smooth," by Bruce Jenkins, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8/29/2012.
- 130 **Wilkes name change:** "Wilkes Wants Name Changed to Jamaal Abdul-Lateef," (AP) *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, 7/26/1975; "Like Snow On A Bamboo Leaf," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/9/1981.
- 130 **Coming out of UCLA:** "Jamaal Wilkes defined smooth," by Bruce Jenkins, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8/29/2012.
- 130 **The transition game is suited to me:** "Like Snow On A Bamboo Leaf," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/9/1981.
- 131 **when Kareem is out:** "Like Snow On A Bamboo Leaf," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/9/1981.
- 131 **He played such a quiet game; Jamaal's shot was the ugliest:** "Jamaal Wilkes defined smooth," by Bruce Jenkins, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8/29/2012. A high school coach tried to get him to shoot normally, but Wilkes couldn't make the adjustment, and proved that he didn't have too. A short YouTube clip of Wilkes shooting a free throw is an excellent example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_fMXG2wE5U
- 131 **A heart ailment...daughter Taara:** "Wilkes Finding Star Status Again," (AP) *Toledo Blade*, 12/24/1978.
- 131 **Sabreen Wilkes bio:** http://www.uclabruins.com/ViewArticle.dbml?DB_OEM_ID=30500&ATCLID=208191598; **Omar Wilkes bio:** http://www.calbears.com/ViewArticle.dbml?DB_OEM_ID=30100&ATCLID=208187246; "Cal's Wilkes says it's his last year," by Rusty Simmons, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/10/2009.
- 131 **collided with the Knicks Ernie Grunfeld:** "Jamaal Wilkes Plays in Summer League as He Works Way Back to the Lakers," by Steve Springer, *Los Angeles Times*, 7/25/1985.
- 131 **I feel emptiness and some hurt:** "Wilkes Waived, Ending an 8-Year Laker Career," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 8/29/1985.
- 132 **Slam dunk contest:** "This Was Some Kind Of Jam Session," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/6/1984. **\$10,000 prize winnings:** "Basketball Bulletin" column, by Mike Douchant, *The Sporting News*, 3/19/1984. He was also quoted in "NBA West" notes by Jan Hubbard, *The Sporting News*, 4/2/1984: "I don't want to be thought of as a slam dunker... I really like doing that, but there are other things—shooting, blocking shots, rebounding. I'm trying to concentrate on getting better. I'm not worried about dunking. I'm just worried about wins."
- 132 **Larry was a great player:** "Life After Hoops Is A Drag," by L. Jon Werheim, *Sports Illustrated*, 7/12/1999.
- 132 **Stepping on Kevin McHale's right foot:** May, *The Big Three*, p215-217.
- 133 **I love playing against them:** "They're Hooking And Cooking," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/28/1984.
- 133 **cost the Suns 266 player-games:** "Crippled Suns Have a Chance Against Lakers, Adams Says, but It Isn't a Very Good One," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 4/18/1985; the table also comes from this article.
- 134 **We can lose and we can be embarrassed:** "Crippled Suns Have a Chance Against Lakers, Adams Says, but It Isn't a Very Good One," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 4/18/1985.
- 134 **Los Angeles had topped 140 points:** The Lakers would score a season-high 153 points against the Nuggets in the Western Conference Finals.
- 134 **Suns 1985 and 1986 drafts:** In 1985 the Suns passed on Karl Malone (13th pick, three spots after Pinckney) and in 1986 they could have taken Roy Tarpley (who, like Bradford, had drug problems but was a far better player when he stayed sober) or Ron Harper. But the Suns partially made up for their mistakes by grabbing

- guard Jeff Hornacek with the 46th pick in 1986—he played six years in Phoenix, fourteen overall in the NBA, and averaged 14 points a game (15,659 total).
- 135 **Jack Ramsay Eastern League statistics:** “CBA restores statistics from post-World War years,” CBA press release posted 9/4/2007 <http://www.oursportscentral.com/services/releases/?id=3537120>. The Eastern League would be renamed the Continental Basketball Association in 1978, which served as a feeder league for marginal players to the NBA for decades. Ramsay played from 1949 through 1955.
- 135 **We never got the great players:** “A Man Who Never Lets Down,” by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/1/1982.
- 136 **was kind of looking forward to it:** “A Man Who Never Lets Down,” by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/1/1982. Paul Westhead also played for Ramsay at St. Joseph’s and became McKinney’s assistant there before following him to Los Angeles. Ramsay also coached future 76ers coach Matt Guokas at St. Joseph’s.
- 136 **Ramsay was sheer joy to work with:** Walton with Wojciechowski, *Nothing But Net*, p178.
- 136 **The game is unified action:** Quoted in “A Man Who Never Lets Down,” by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/1/1982.
- 136 **a team for all time:** “Going Like Blazers,” by Curry Kirkpatrick, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/13/1978. Nelson had played with Russell, Havlicek and Cowens on some of the greatest teams in NBA history, so he presumably knew what he was talking about.
- 136 **Mike Schuler:** “Report Blazers will hire Schuler,” wire story, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 5/28/1986. In “Ramsay satisfied with his accomplishments,” (UPI) *The (Bend, Oregon) Bulletin*, 5/29/1986, Ramsay took a few shots at his former team, declaring center Mychal Thompson “too soft” and complaining about a lack of support from team management. Schuler, in his introductory press conference, echoed many of Ramsay’s other comments about the roster, specifically the Drexler/Paxson conflict at shooting guard and the lack of rebounding on the frontline.
- 137 **Trick Baby:** IMDB page <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0070833/>
- 137 **finger roll:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p438.
- 137 **a shot every 1.69 minutes:** “An Ear To The Ground,” by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/3/1986.
- 137 **George Gervin bio sketch:** http://espn.go.com/nba/player/bio/_id/4131/george-gervin
- 137 **Eastern Michigan vs. Roanoke:** “Eastern Michigan Player Suspended,” (AP) *Bangor (Maine) Daily News*, 3/17/1972; “1 Punch Knockout Mars Upset,” (AP) *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 3/17/1972.
- 137 **Pontiac Chaparrals:** “Virginia Picks Gervin in ‘Draft,’” (AP) 1/15/1973; “Squires Will Sign Gervin To Contract,” (AP) *Lewiston (Idaho) Morning Tribune*, 1/18/1973. The ESPN/NBA.com bio of Gervin lists the Chaparrals name but unlike the “Virginia Picks Gervin in ‘Draft’” story, ESPN gets the name of the league wrong. The Chaparrals were part of the Continental Basketball League, which existed from 1970-71 through 1973-74 according to a page on the APBR website (<http://www.apbr.org/leagues.html>). This is not to be confused with the Continental Basketball Association, which succeeded the Eastern Basketball League in 1978-79.
- 137 **January 27:** “Gervin excels in debut,” (AP) *The (Fredericksburg, Virginia) Free Lance-Star*, 1/27/1973.
- 137 **I used to try to go:** “The Iceman Speaketh: George Gervin on the Spurs, Playing With Dr. J, and Which Modern Player Is Most Like Him,” by Zach Lowe, *Grantland.com*, 6/17/2013.
- 138 **ABA All-Star Game:** Gervin scored 9 points as the East won 128-112; Erving had 14 points and 11 rebounds. Nater put on a show for his former fans, scoring 29 points with 22 rebounds for the West, both game highs.
- 138 **injunctions:** The injunctions were issued on 2/6 (10 days), 2/16 (10 days), and 2/20 (indefinitely). See “Judge Denies ABA Motion In George Gervin Battle,” (AP) *Palm Beach Post*, 2/13/1974; “Gervin Stays With Spurs - For Awhile, Anyway,” (AP) *St. Petersburg Times*, 2/16/1974; “Gervin To Remain With San Antonio,” (AP) *The (South Carolina) News and Courier*, 2/20/1974.
- 138 **The franchise debuted:** “A Look Back: The Beginning,” <http://www.nba.com/spurs/look-back-beginning>
- 138 **more-or-less intentional:** In 1987 the Spurs had the fourth-worst record in the league, and in 1997, the third-worst. If the coin-flip system had still been in place, San Antonio would not have qualified for the number one pick in either year.

- 139 **Ice's game:** "Washington Weathers A Late Ice Storm," Curry Kirkpatrick, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/28/1979. In the article, writing about how Gervin's wife gave birth to premature daughter Tia during the Bullets series, Kirkpatrick refers to his wife as "Mrs. Ice".
- 139 **versus Dudley Bradley:** "Best Team You've Never Seen," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/8/1982. Larry Kenon missed the game with a back injury, and James Silas added 32 points.
- 139 **Alvin Robertson:** "The Spur Of The Moment," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/21/1986.
- 139 **throwing up for two days:** "It's A Not-So-Grand Finale For The Hero," by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 4/23/1986.
- 140 **Mel Elliott:** "Bingo Smith Regains Cage Shooting Skill," wire story, (*Kingsport, Tennessee*) *Daily News*, 12/4/1974.
- 140 **San Diego:** Smith played just 18 playoff games in his career, all from 1976 through 1978. San Diego native Art "Hambone" Williams also played for two San Diego professional teams, the Rockets and the ABA Conquistadors.
- 140 **without consulting a financial advisor:** "Cloudy Skies, Ill Winds Loom On League's Horizon," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/27/1982.
- 140 **tried to move the team:** "Owner Says He Will Move Clippers to LA," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1982.
- 141 **if Nixon had stayed healthy:** "They're Trying To Trim The Lakers' Sales," by Alexander Wolff, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/3/1984. Jack Nicholson bought Clippers season tickets so he could watch Norm Nixon, one of his favorites (on and off the court) with the Lakers. Dancing Barry even tried to get the Clippers interested in bidding for his entertainment services, but the Clippers wisely declined.
- 141 **got back a first-rounder:** The Clippers also got shooting guard Phil Smith from the Warriors, but he proved disappointing and was traded to the SuperSonics a year later.
- 142 **I was a late bloomer:** "Still Walking Tall," by Joel Brigham, *Illinois Wesleyan Magazine*, Spring 2008 <http://www.iwu.edu/magazine/2008/spring/Sikma.html>. Their 1976-77 schedule included Jacksonville, Florida, Bradley and DePaul (all losses).
- 142 **he was reluctant to move:** Wilkens called Sikma a few days before the 1977 draft and Sikma told him that Seattle was "not my first choice" but Seattle took him anyway. See "Jack Sikma, Sonics Center," by Elizabeth Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 9/17/2001.
- 142 **Wilkens was elevated to player-coach:** "Double Duty For Wilkens," (AP) *St. Petersburg Times*, 8/6/1969.
- 142 **Wilkens shook up the Sonics immediately:** Ryan and Pluto, *Forty-Eight Minutes*, p36.
- 142 **You always expect a little surge:** "Add Super To The Sonics," by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/9/1978.
- 143 **playoff career-high:** "Seattle Advances To Finals," by Tony Baker (AP) *Gettysburg Times*, 5/18/1979.
- 143 **Jack is huge in this community:** "A Buck, For A Change," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/3/1986.
- 143 **SuperSonics briefly shopped him:** The Bulls and Hawks took Michael Jordan and Kevin Willis instead. See "SuperSonics sign Sikma to \$7.5 million contract," by Jim Cour (AP) *The Day*, 6/15/1984. On June 8, another wire service story reported that the Bulls were considering sending their pick *plus* David Greenwood and Quintin Dailey to Seattle, but a story on June 9 quoted SuperSonics General Manager Les Habbegger as saying "If we trade Jack, it would be for next year's picks. Say we get two high first rounds for Sikma—that means we would have three high first-round picks because [Seattle would be terrible in 1985 without Sikma]." This suggests that the SuperSonics would only trade Sikma if they were overwhelmed with an offer. Still, Seattle did not have a first-rounder in 1984 because they had traded it to the Clippers in a deal for Tom Chambers, so perhaps the Bulls could have made a deal around their 1984 pick if they truly wanted to do so. Also see Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p210, which describes how the 76ers tried to get the Bulls pick by offering Julius Erving or a package of Andrew Toney and the fifth pick (which they used instead on Charles Barkley).
- 144 **made Artis Gilmore look like a baby kangaroo:** "Pro Basketball," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 11/20/1983.
- 144 **Eaton's college career:** "A New Tune For The Jazz," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/16/1984.
- 144 **I've always had a great body:** "They Said It," edited by Robert W. Cramer, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/9/1984.
- 145 **I don't care who you are in the NBA:** "Eaton: More to this gentle giant than simply being tall," by Brad Rock, *Deseret News*, 9/29/1994.
- 145 **I've already lost 220 pounds:** "An Ear To The Ground," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/3/1986.

145 **For a few years there:** "Seriously, Folks, It's A Wonderful Life," by Bob Ottum, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/16/1985.

Chapter Five – Building a Rivalry

- 148 **swapping the thirteenth pick:** "Celtics to Deal for Westphal? Fitch, Auerbach Deny Rumor," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/8/1980. The Celtics might have lost their chance at the number one pick had the Dallas Mavericks expansion ownership group been able to convince the NBA to award them that selection. But Auerbach and owner Harry Mangurian helped quash that proposal. The Mavericks got the eleventh pick instead. See *Boston Globe*, "Celtics, Suffolk Downs Zero In On New Arena," by Will McDonough, *Boston Globe*, 2/7/1980.
- 149 **one of the top center prospects:** "Celtics Get Parish from Golden State," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/9/1980. Parish and Carroll were both represented by Bob Woolf, who had represented many Boston-based athletes and had negotiated Larry Bird's rookie contract a year earlier.
- 149 **likely would have reached:** Michael Brooks, taken ninth by the Clippers, was the last rebounder of any note taken in the first round. It is unlikely that the Celtics would have used the thirteenth pick (or traded down) to select Larry Smith or Jeff Ruland, who were the first two picks in the second round, or Rick Mahorn, who went in the middle of that round; the Celtics had traded away their own first-round pick a year earlier, which ended up being the twenty-third and last pick.
- 149 **He had excellent hands:** "Celtics Take McHale, Hallman, Then Perry," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/10/1980.
- 149 **Cedric Maxwell:** On 6/11/2012, Cedric Maxwell, while a guest on WEEI-FM 93.7 in Boston (*Big Show with Glenn Ordway and Michael Holley*), stated that before the Warriors traded Parish and the #3 pick to the Celtics, Al Attles of the Warriors called him and said that Golden State was thinking of signing Maxwell as a free agent and drafting Kevin McHale. While the author believes Maxwell's story, the Celtics would have been owed compensation if the Warriors signed Maxwell, and Parish's name undoubtedly would have come up due to Boston's interest in him; this may have derailed the Warriors plan.
- 149 **Earl Tatum:** Connelly, *Rebound!*, p181-182. Auerbach traded Tatum to the Pistons for Chris Ford and a 1982 second-round pick three games into the 1978-79 season out of spite for Brown's blunder.
- 150 **USF alumni:** The Celtics also signed former USF center Eric Fernsten as a free agent in 1979.
- 150 **Cartwright:** "Pro Basketball," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 11/2/1980. Cartwright helped himself after his rookie season by dropping some weight. Ryan wrote: "The newer, slimmer Bill Cartwright is a big improvement over last year's model. He really takes it to the hoop now, instead of relying too much on his Elvin Hayes turnaround jumper imitation ..."
- 151 **Washington was tainted; negotiate ... over dinner:** Feinstein, *The Punch: One Night, Two Lives, and the Fight That Changed Basketball Forever*, p98-99 and p99-101, respectively.
- 152 **Kevin Kunnert:** It is an indication of Auerbach's opinion of Washington that he would sign Kunnert, the Rockets center who was the antagonist in the Tomjanovich fight, to play alongside him. A postscript to the franchise swap: the Celtics ended up having to give up a second-round pick to Houston as compensation for having signed Kunnert even though he never played for them.
- 152 **Levin chose Williams:** Connelly, *Rebound!*, p 176-177 says that Levin's attorney Frank Rothman convinced him to take Williams. Also see "Freaky Friday, N.B.A. Style: When the Clippers Were the Celtics," by Peter May, *New York Times* 'Off the Dribble' blog posting, 5/22/2012. (May had covered the Celtics for several years for the *Boston Globe*.)
- 153 **Celtics shopping Robey:** "Celtics Notebook," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1983.
- 153 **The place you win in this league:** "Suns looking to rise higher with Robey's added muscle" wire story, *Reading Eagle*, 6/28/1983.
- 153 **We've solidified our backcourt:** "Robey Traded For Johnson," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/27/1983.

- 155 **That summer:** *1984-85 Los Angeles Lakers Media Guide*, p143. West replaced Sharman as coach on August 19, 1976, with Sharman announced as the Lakers assistant general manager, but Newell then resigned on September 17. Before hiring West, Jack Kent Cooke reportedly tried to hire Jerry Tarkanian from UNLV.
- 156 **raising the price:** "Lakers Have Celtics In Their Site; Higher Court," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/2/1985.
- 156 **It's been tough:** "Journey's End For A.d.?" by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/24/1979. Jazz coach Tom Nissalke is quoted in the story as saying "I don't think anyone in the league thinks Wilkes is a better player than Dantley" and statistically he was proven correct. But Dantley never won an NBA title, and ten years later the Pistons decided to trade a still-productive Dantley to Dallas for Mark Aguirre to get the final piece they needed for their championship run.
- 156 **Haywood lasted just one season:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p142.
- 156 **McKinney/Westhead tennis game:** Bird, *When The Game Was Ours*, p81.
- 156 **Worthy in NCAA title game:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p176.
- 157 **the fastest big man:** "Lakers Make Worthy Draft Pick", (AP) *The Lewiston Daily Sun*, 6/30/1982.
- 157 **Butch Lee:** Butch Lee—All Things Lakers <http://projects.latimes.com/lakers/player/butch-lee/> viewed 1/20/2013.
- 157 **Don Ford:** "An Office Party To Remember," by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/23/1979. Papanek wrote about Ford's performance in the 1979 playoffs against the Nuggets, stating that "Next to Abdul-Jabbar's domination of the final two games, Ford's defensive job on Issel was the key to the series."
- 157 **I'm going to be working:** West's quote is from "Los Angeles Fires Westhead," wire story, *Toledo Blade*, 11/20/1981. "Magic turns the boos to cheers," (AP) *The Miami News*, 11/21/1981, also mentions the details of the supposed co-coaching arrangement, but mentions that Riley "apparently has been charged with directing the team."
- 157 **I could not make a basketball decision:** "Lakers' 1981 Coach Won't Be McKinney," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/14/1980. Still, Westhead would not be officially named as the Lakers head coach for 1980-81 until after the 1980 Finals were over.
- 158 **His experience in Detroit:** "Mac Has Been A Real Blast From The Past" by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/24/1982.
- 158 **People still don't believe me:** "McAdoo: Requiem For A Heavyweight" by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 5/18/1982.
- 158 **We made that trade:** Lazenby, *Jerry West: The Life and Legend of a Basketball Icon*, p371.
- 158 **a celebrity lineup:** "No Glitz, But Maybe Glory," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/21/1983.
- 158 **season-ending knee injury:** Nixon suffered the knee injury while playing in a charity softball game in Central Park in New York along with members of the cast of *Sweet Charity*, a Broadway show that starred his wife, Debbie Allen. "An Ear To The Ground," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/3/1986.
- 160 **Johnson had quickly befriended Thompson:** Bird, *When the Game Was Ours*, p19-20, 206.
- 160 **Thompson is a shooter who can fit:** "Lakers Trade a No. 1 to Find a No. 2 : L.A. Gets Mychal Thompson in Exchange for Picks, Players," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/14/1987.
- 160 **draft lottery:** In 1987 the original lottery rules were still in place, so each of the seven teams that didn't make the playoffs had an equal shot at the top pick. At the time of the trade, the Spurs were five games out of the playoffs; they ended the season nine games back. Robinson had to honor a two-year military commitment, so he could not join the Spurs until the 1989-90 season. Brickowski and Gudmundsson helped fill the void until Robinson arrived, playing on two of the worst San Antonio teams in their history.
- 160 **They made changes and we didn't:** "Celtics Can Smile Despite Sad Ending", by Roy S. Johnson, *New York Times*, 6/15/1987.
- 161 **Pat Williams bio sketch:** "Pat Williams helped save pro basketball in Chicago," by Sam Smith, bulls.com; posted at <http://www.nba.com/bulls/history/pat-williams-helped-save-pro-basketball-chicago.html>
- 162 **1973 and 1974:** "Pat Williams helped save pro basketball in Chicago," by Sam Smith, bulls.com. The 76ers and Trail Blazers were involved in two consecutive coin flips in 1973 and 1974. 76ers called Tails in 1973 and won; they called Heads in 1974 and lost. *Philadelphia 76ers 1983-84 Statistical Yearbook*, p108. Portland participated in the coin flip for four years in a row—1971-1974, winning the flip in both even-numbered years.

- 162 **Boe offered Erving to the Knicks:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p179.
- 162 **Dixon then gave Erving:** "The Dr. Doubled His Fee," by Curry Kirkpatrick, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/1/1976.
- 163 **In all fairness to Shue:** "Good, But Why Not The Best?" by Curry Kirkpatrick, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/21/1977. Also see "That Fitz, He's A Honey," by Douglas S. Looney, *Sports Illustrated*, 11/6/1978.
- 163 **George McGinnis and Lloyd Free:** Curry Kirkpatrick of *Sports Illustrated* once wrote that the shot-happy Free "was known to start shooting before the concluding notes of the national anthem." See "Good, But Why Not The Best?," Curry Kirkpatrick, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/21/1977.
- 164 **playoff series against the Bullets:** The *Philadelphia 76ers 1978-79 Statistical Yearbook* provides their statistics against the Bullets on page 136: McGinnis 29-75, .386, 13.8 ppg; Free 26-74, .351, 14.0 ppg. While Erving and Collins also saw their FG% drop in the Bullets series, from .502 to .473 and .526 to .477, respectively, their declines were far less severe.
- 164 **In the first game:** "The Doctor Opens Up His Medicine Bag," by Pat Putnam, *Sports Illustrated*, 5/17/1976.
- 164 **Dixon was rumored to be willing to fire:** "Hey, What's Up With The Doc?" by Curry Kirkpatrick, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/26/1979.
- 164 **Instead of thinking about the game:** "Blood, Sweat And Cheers," by Anthony Cotton, *Sports Illustrated*, 10/31/1983.
- 165 **That is nothing:** "Born Free And Living Up To His Name," by John Papanek, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/22/1979. Free would finish second in the NBA in scoring in both of his seasons in San Diego, and made the 1980 All-Star team. But after the 1979-80 season both Shue and Free were gone. Free was dealt to the Warriors for Phil Smith and a 1984 first-round pick; that pick replaced the one that had gone to the 76ers, but ended up as the #8 selection which they used to take 6'3" guard Lancaster Gordon who played just 201 games in the NBA. Meanwhile, the 76ers used the Clippers original pick at #5 to take Charles Barkley.
- 165 **McGinnis trade:** "Big Mac To Go," (AP) *The Evening Independent*, 8/16/1978. The story says that the McGinnis/Jones deal "has been in the works for three months" but was held up because they both had no-trade clauses and "the primary problem has been the matter of special bonus payments to the two." Another AP Story on 8/17, "McGinnis' Trade To Denver Completed," quotes Pat Williams as saying it was "the longest transaction in the history of pro sports" and states that "negotiations began June 9." The article continues: "Williams disclosed that the deal also involved an exchange of draft choices that had previously been made. The 76ers first pick last June went to the Nuggets who chose Mike Evans of Kansas State. He was subsequently dealt to the Kansas City Kings later in June. In return, the 76ers will get a future No. 1 draft selection from Denver." AP stories back in June stated that the 76ers had originally traded their #1 Pick in 1978 for the Nuggets #1 in 1980.
- 165 **To Blazers for Lionel Hollins:** 76ers were desperate when Collins could not stay healthy in 1980. Hollins helped the 76ers to the Finals. Pick later got flipped to Bulls, then Hawks, who took Al Wood.
- 165 **To Rockets as part of Moses Malone compensation:** 76ers won the 1983 title. Rockets used the pick to select Rodney McCray and reached Finals in 1986. Furlow was traded to the Hawks and the Jazz and died in a car crash in May 1980; Furlow was a star at Michigan State but never prospered in the NBA. His college career is described here: "Flint legend Terry Furlow deserves to have his jersey number retired at Michigan State" by Eric Woodyard, posted at: http://www.mlive.com/sports/flint/index.ssf/2012/11/column_flint_legend_terry_furl.html
- 166 **I remember times; egos will not interfere:** "Malone Is Now in Philadelphia To Lead 76ers to Promised Land," by Roy S. Johnson in *New York Times*, printed in *The Palm Beach Post*, 10/18/1982. Salary figures are taken directly from quotes in that story from 76ers owner Harold Katz.
- 168 **June 17, 1986 Headlines:** Vanderbilt Television News Archive <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/tvn-month-search.pl>
- 168 **1986 draft lottery:** "A Red Scare," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/12/1986. In 1985 Stern had pulled the envelopes from the drum. In 1986, the team reps did, to avoid any charges of impropriety by the commissioner. See "Second Guessing; Field Is Narrowed To Four Big Men To Become Celtics' No. 1 Choice," by Will McDonough, *Boston Globe*, 5/12/1986. In the McDonough article, Bias is presented as an unlikely choice, since Red wanted a center (Daugherty, Washburn, Bedford) but this was a smokescreen—Auerbach knew Bias well as a player (and unfortunately thought he knew him well as a person) and was always inclined

- to take him. Clip of Auerbach's reaction from "Top 10 Draft Lottery Moments" posted on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAJ9FXrZZqY>. Note that the 76ers won the lottery but lost Game 7 to the Bucks that afternoon, ending their season.
- 169 **there was absolutely no question; nobody was excited by the guy:** "Draft Day Deals Doomed Sixers; Moves To Land Ruland, Hinson Make Team's Future Look Bleak," by Paul Domowitch, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 4/20/1988.
- 169 **Malone-Katz strained relationship:** "Back To Haunt The Sixers," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/16/1987.
- 169 **We had many questions about Ruland's health:** "76ers Trade Malone And Top Pick Deals Net Hinson, Ruland," by Mike Bruton, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/18/1986: http://articles.philly.com/1986-06-18/sports/26047166_1_sixers-north-carolina-s-brad-daugherty-trade
- 169 **if you factor in the college ball he didn't play:** "Back To Haunt The Sixers," by Jack McCallum, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/16/1987. The implication was that because Malone had jumped from high school to the ABA, he had played more pro seasons than a typical 31-year-old, and pro seasons were longer and more physically taxing than college seasons.
- 169 **76ers had grounds to cancel the trade:** The Sixers and Bullets agreed to a two-week medical examination window during which time either side could cancel the trade. "Escape Clause Was Part Of Ruland's Trade," by Phil Jasner, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 11/19/1986.
- 171 **Roy Hinson was a good player:** "Draft Day Deals Doomed Sixers; Moves To Land Ruland, Hinson Make Team's Future Look Bleak," by Paul Domowitch, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 4/20/1988.
- 171 **Yesterday morning, when I went into work:** "76ers Trade Malone And Top Pick Deals Net Hinson, Ruland," by Mike Bruton, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/18/1986: http://articles.philly.com/1986-06-18/sports/26047166_1_sixers-north-carolina-s-brad-daugherty-trade

Chapter Six – Sounds of the Game

- 174 **right of first refusal:** mentioned in the decision in the case: FIRST NORTHWEST INDUSTRIES OF AMERICA, INC. v. COMMISSIONER. DOCKET NO. 8899-73., 70 T.C. 817 (1978). FIRST NORTHWEST INDUSTRIES OF AMERICA, INC., SUCCESSOR IN INTEREST TO SEATTLE SUPERSONICS CORPORATION, PETITIONER v. COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL REVENUE, RESPONDENT United States Tax Court. Filed September 6, 1978. Decision can be read online at: http://www.leetcode.com/decision/197888770catc817_1809
- 174 **took the league to court:** "ABC Challenges NBA's Dial Flip," by Jack Craig, *The Sporting News*, 3/24/1973 and "SportView," by Jack Craig, *The Sporting News*, 5/12/1973. The suit named the league, Ned Irish of Knicks, Alan Rothenberg of Lakers, and Frank Mieuli of Warriors as defendants.
- 174 **counter-programmed:** David Friedman, in an excerpt from his chapter in the 2005 anthology "Basketball in America: From the Playgrounds to Jordan's Game and Beyond," edited by Bob Batchelor, quotes David Halberstam's classic, "The Breaks of the Game" to make this case. The excerpt is available at: <http://20secondtimeout.blogspot.com/2010/12/nba-in-1970s-roones-revenge.html>
- 174 **prime time ratings:** "Slam-dunked By The Ratings," by William Leggett, *Sports Illustrated*, 10/16/1978.
- 175 **Finals ratings:** Ratings/share data taken from: <http://tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/2009/05/22/nba-finals-tv-ratings-1974-2008/19324/>. Listings of game times for NBA on CBS telecasts taken from postings at: <http://classicsportsmedia.blogspot.com/2013/05/the-nba-on-cbs-late-night-and-tape.html> and <http://the506.com/yabb/YaBB.pl?num=1241634999> but then verified by the author using newspaper articles found via Google News.
- 175 **Cable television contract details:** Summarized in <http://www.insidehoops.com/nba-tv-contracts.shtml>
- 175 **pushed back the start:** "It's NBA on CBS – If You Like Tape Delay," by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1981.
- 175 **outperforming every other major sport:** "NBA Stock Becomes A Blue Chip For CBS," by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 12/22/1985.

- 175 **CBS contract details:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p131 (1978 CBS contract), and p148 (1982 CBS contract). "NBA Stock Becomes A Blue Chip For CBS," by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 12/22/1985 (1986 CBS contract).
- 176 **Brent Musburger:** His stint at the *Chicago American* is mentioned in the blog posting, "After Forty-four Years, It's Time Brent Musburger Apologized to John Carlos and Tommie Smith," by Dave Zirin, available at: <http://www.thenation.com/blog/168209/after-forty-four-years-its-time-brent-musburger-apologized-john-carlos-and-tommie-smith#> After Carlos and Smith gave their black power salute on the Olympic media stand in 1968, Musburger wrote that they were "a pair of black-skinned stormtroopers."
- 176 **Dick Stockton:** "A Play-by-play Man Who Makes His Points," by William Taaffe, *Sports Illustrated*, 6/10/1985.
- Celtics 1974-75 broadcasting team:** *Boston Celtics 1974-75 Yearbook*; **Left Channel 4 for Red Sox:** "Santos Rates As A National Leaguer," by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 6/2/1985. 1975 marked the first season of Red Sox games on WSBK; previously, the rights were owned by WBZ. The team of Stockton and Ken Harrelson replaced Ken Coleman and Johnny Pesky.
- 176 **Carlton Fisk's legendary home run:** You can watch Game 6 of the 1975 World Series in its entirety on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQzL34qH7uo>
- 176 **Now I realize:** "A Play-by-play Man Who Makes His Points," by William Taaffe, *Sports Illustrated*, 6/10/1985.
- 176 **Stockton's broadcast partners:** Kevin Loughery joined Russell as a color commentator for the 1982-83 season (creating a three-man booth). Otherwise, Stockton worked alone with Russell or Heinsohn until the latter was demoted for the 1987-88 season and replaced with Billy Cunningham. A good summary of Heinsohn's skills and detractors can be found in two articles from the 1987 Finals. "Who Knows What Tom Heinsohn Will Come Up With Next?" by Larry Stewart, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/5/1987 complains about Heinsohn's "gravelly voice," his proclivity for strange turns of phrase (saying after Worthy blew past Fred Roberts for a layup, "And the priest can bring the rosary beads, too.") In "Foul Praise By Heinsohn; He Went Overboard on Lakers," by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 6/7/1987, Craig writes that Heinsohn had been overdoing his praise of the Lakers and criticism of the Celtics, but Craig also writes that Heinsohn was much less even-handed during local Boston telecasts: "A Detroit reporter confided that the Pistons were studying a SportsChannel tape of Game 5 of their series with the Celtics and were very put off by Heinsohn's one-sided description. They wondered how CBS could let him work Game 6. Heinsohn did, and as he usually does on national television, he leaned toward Celtic opponents to prove his neutrality."
- 177 **having a "watermelon grin":** <http://classicsportsmedia.blogspot.com/2012/05/looking-back-on-rick-barry-watermelon.html>
- 178 **Johnny Most bio sketch:** Article in *The Official Boston Celtics Greenbook '88-'89*, p55-60.
- 178 **Most's early career:** 1952 debut and 37 year career details also reported by "Voice of Celtics retires from booth," (AP) *Bangor Daily News*, 10/9/1990. Most had missed the 1989-90 season after triple bypass surgery.
- 178 **Examples of nicknames bestowed by Most:** Ryan, *The Boston Celtics*, p203-206.
- 178 **Mrs. Ruland, if you're listening:** "To Celtics fans, Johnny was the Most," by Phil Jackman, *Baltimore Sun*, 1/6/1993. http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1993-01-06/sports/1993006236_1_johnny-boston-celtics-celtics-fans
- 178 **some professor sits back:** "A Raspy Voice, A Hacking Cough And 'Havlicek Stole The Ball!'," by William Taaffe, *Sports Illustrated*, 1/14/1985.
- 178 **had a series of on-air partners:** Former Celtic Rick Weitzman was the color man in 1980-81 and 1981-82.
- 179 **A completely unnecessary foul:** Carey, Mike and Jamie Most, *High Above Courtside: The Lost Memoirs of Johnny Most*, p330.
- 179 **estimated at 15,000:** "SporTVView: Celtics Put Many Fans Out Of The Picture," by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 3/5/1983.
- 180 **did not engage in overt tactics:** Ryan and Pluto, *Forty-Eight Minutes*, p67.
- 180 **Jick's resume:** "Different tacks on stadium story," by Will McDonough, *Boston Globe*, 10/4/1997; "Jick a natural as Celtic voice," by Joe Burris, *Boston Globe*, 5/9/1991; "Daddy Mass; Villanova's Massimino Is A Vocal Father Figure," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 1/9/1982. While some sources list Weldon Haire as Jick's predecessor, the name Steve Smith comes directly from a quote by Andy Jick himself, and Haire, who served as PA announcer from 1949 to 1972 for the Celtics, and worked for the Bruins until his death in 1982, was

- reassigned as "broadcasting coordinator" for the Celtics in 1972; see "Haire's voice missed at Celtics' games," by Sam Weisberg, *Lowell Sunday Sun*, 2/4/1973.
- 181 **anybody who doesn't think:** "From High Above The Western Sideline," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/9/1984.
- 181 **Al Michaels:** "This Mouth Talks Back," by Franz Lidz, *Sports Illustrated*, 2/15/1988.
- 181 **sought Riley out:** Riley profile in the 1981-82 *Los Angeles Lakers Media Guide*, p8.
- 181 **I think a lot of what I do:** "From High Above The Western Sideline," by Bruce Newman, *Sports Illustrated*, 4/9/1984.
- 182 **Packer and Ramsey:** "John Ramsey, Voice of L.A. Sports, Dies," by Mal Florence, *Los Angeles Times*, 1/26/1990.
- 182 **Lawrence Tanter bio sketch:** "Lawrence Tanter sets the tone for the Lakers, and jazz station," by Chris Erskine, *Los Angeles Times*, 3/23/2011. The one basketball game Tanter had announced was a high school game.
- 182 **I think I'm different:** "Broadcasting Live: Lawrence Tanter, Basketball and All That Jazz," posted at http://www.nba.com/lakers/news/tanter_011108.html
- 182 **Laker Grrrrrrls:** For an example, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exEaQn16vww> (you can skip to the last few seconds, unless you are also interested in the Laker Girls' performance).
- 183 **WCAU radio:** "10 Won't Bank," by Jim O'Brien, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 5/8/1979.
- 183 **Guokas left the booth:** Guokas and Riley were both former shooting guards who transitioned to the broadcast booth for a former team, and then became assistant coaches for the first time in mid-season (Guokas because of Daly's job opportunity in Cleveland and Riley because of McKinney's unfortunate accident) before eventually becoming head coaches. One point of divergence: Riley also moved up to head coach in mid-season, 11 games into the 1981-82 campaign, while Goukas was hired prior to the start of the 1985-86 season.
- 183 **76ers broadcast teams:** *Philadelphia 76ers Statistical Yearbook*, 1980-81, 1982-83, 1983-84; "PRISM Unites Old Neighbors On Sixers Team," by Bill Fleischman, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 7/25/1986; "Prism: Decade Of Success," by Bill Fleischman, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 8/29/1986. "Channel 17 Drops Funk Replaces Him With Musser For 76ers' Games," by Kevin Mulligan, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 6/4/1985. **Gene Shue:** "For Stan Major, Phoenix Proves A Quick Fall," by Gail Shister, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7/22/1986.
- 183 **Hysterical Harry:** Ryan, *The Boston Celtics*, p206.
- 184 **I was trying to announce:** "The Last Word In P.A. Announcers Is Pronounced Daaaave Ziiiink-offfff!" by Lisa Twyman, *Sports Illustrated*, 3/12/1984.
- 184 **Scheinfeld had resigned:** "Sixers rumored sold," (AP) *The Rochester Sentinel*, 7/9/1981; Scheinfeld bio in the 1980-81 *76ers Statistical Yearbook*, p2; note about his resignation in 1982-83 *76ers Statistical Yearbook*, p4. Scheinfeld had been part of the group that built the Spectrum in 1966, and was credited with giving the building its unique name because he liked that the word meant "images displaying everything colorful under the sun." See "Radnor's Lou Scheinfeld, the man who named the Spectrum, says Philly Live! closer to reality," by Bruce Adams, *Main Line Media News*, 11/1/2011, available at: <http://www.mainlinemedianews.com/articles/2011/11/01/sports/doc4eafefe06b32c432052907.txt?viewmode=default>
- 184 **Jim Wise:** "Following In The Footsteps Of A Legend," by John Corr, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1/4/1986.

Chapter Seven – Celtics vs. 76ers

- 185 **Box scores:** Sources for box scores in this chapter, and the succeeding chapters, include: *Boston Globe*, *The Sporting News* (via *Paper of Record* archive available via <http://sabr.org>), <http://www.basketball-reference.com>, a collection of official NBA scoresheets from the 1979-80 season which were posted online by Justin Barraso on the Boston Sports Media Watch web site (best accessed now via one of the following archive links: <http://www.bostonsportsmedia.com/author/justin> or <http://www.bostonsportsmedia.com/category/bsmw-original-column/celtics>), NBA Finals box score archive available at

alice.fr/finals/1980.htm (every season is available on similarly named pages), *Sports Illustrated* 12/14/1992 (box scores for all Bird vs. Magic games), the 1981-82 Boston Celtics Media Guide which provided some details for the 1980-81 Celtics, and box scores for Game 7's in the playoffs are provided in Woten, *Game 7*. To the best of the author's knowledge, all information provided in the box scores in this book is accurate, except for the following known inconsistencies:

- 11/10/1979: Boston Celtics Team TURNOVERS mismatch (Team total=16, Sum of Players=15)
- 11/10/1979: Philadelphia 76ers Team TURNOVERS mismatch (Team total=17, Sum of Players=16)
- 12/22/1979: Boston Celtics Team TURNOVERS mismatch (Team total =21, Sum of Players=18)
- 05/16/1980: Los Angeles Lakers Team TURNOVERS mismatch (Team total =18, Sum of Players=17)
- 05/03/1981: Boston Celtics Team MIN mismatch (Team total =240, Sum of Players=234)
- 12/04/1981: Philadelphia 76ers Team AST mismatch (Team total =22, Sum of Players=17)
- 05/31/1983: Los Angeles Lakers Team AST mismatch (Team total =26, Sum of Players=20)
- 186 **Doug Collins:** "Bird's Rookie Year—Game 33 vs. the 76ers," by Justin Barrasso, posted on <http://www.bostonsportsmedia.com> on 12/19/2012.
- 188 **There was one time:** "A Game Played At Full-Blast," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 2/7/1980. Robey had been scoring effectively since Cowens's injury, but Robey was an inferior defender.
- 188 **We stopped checking out:** "Celtics Ruffle 76ers, 129-110," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/7/1980. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Notebook: Maravich Isn't Ready Yet," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/7/1980; "Celtic Pressure Buckles 76ers," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 2/7/1980; "Celtics' Explosion Rips 76ers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/7/1980—Ryan wrote that it was "The most enthusiastic Garden crowd since John Havlicek Day..."
- 189 **Jones had spent four days in bed:** "A Matter of Pride," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/7/1980. Caldwell Jones played but was ineffective: 0 FGA, 0 FTA, 6 Rebounds, and 6 Fouls.
- 189 **Doc is playing better:** "Celtics Shut Off 76ers, 111-92," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/8/1980. Celtics fans gave Erving a standing ovation when he left the game.
- 189 **Maravich ended the scoring:** "Celtics Notebook: Collins Leaves Impressed," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/8/1980.
- 190 **Rebound totals:** "76ers Win ... But So What?," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/31/1980.
- 191 **We take what the team:** "Dawkins a Killer," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 4/19/1980. Other sources for this game: "The First Epic Goes To Sixers, 96-93," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/19/1980; "Celtics Notebook: 76ers Made Right Moves," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/19/1980.
- 192 **If you put your hand up; the thing that makes Bird so dangerous:** Untitled game story, by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 4/21/1980. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Put Up A Great Front, Catch Sixers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/21/1980.
- 192 **I was telling them:** "There's No Room For Nice Guys," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 4/21/1980.
- 193 **Ralph Sampson:** "Sampson Issues Final No," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 4/24/1980.
- 193 **We were guilty:** "Celtics Notebook: Carr Stands Ground, Jams with Dr. J," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/24/1980.
- 193 **In the first two quarters:** "Warning: Don't Fool With The Doctor," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 4/24/1980. Other sources for this game: "76ers Hang On, Go One Up," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/24/1980.
- 194 **I tried to deny him the ball:** "Defense Did It For Sixers," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 4/26/1980.
- 194 **locker room mirror:** "Celtics Notebook: Sixers Deserved Breaks," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/27/1980. Other sources for this game: "Sixers Leave Celtics Gasping, 102-90," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/26/1980; "It Just Wasn't the Celtics night in City of Brotherly Love...", by Ray Fitzgerald, *Boston Globe*, 4/26/1980.
- 195 **We had the best record:** "A Sour End To A Super Debut," by Ray Fitzgerald, *Boston Globe*, 4/28/1980.
- 195 **The Celtics did hold Julius:** "76ers Put Celtics—And Series—Away, 105-94," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 4/28/1980. Other sources for this game: "No More Games... And No Title Either," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/28/1980.
- 196 **foul trouble:** Untitled game story, by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 11/2/1980.
- 197 **numbness in that leg:** "Celtics Notebook: Archibald Wins Coach's Ball," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 1/29/1981.

- 197 **the big guy in the middle:** "Next Week, After A Rematch in Philadelphia, it May...", by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 1/29/1981. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Move To First, 104-101," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 1/29/1981.
- 198 **a "mess"; In the four years:** "Sloppy Celtics Bow," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/5/1981. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Notebook: Here's Some Of The Greatest," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/5/1981.
- 199 **Max and I decided:** "Celtics Notebook: Fitch—What Zone?" by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/2/1981. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Win The Showdown," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/2/1981.
- 199 **made his last seven shots:** "Yes, Celtics Were Awful," by Ray Fitzgerald, *Boston Globe*, 3/23/1981.
- 199 **He can also shoot very well:** "Sixers Humble Celtics; It's a Rout," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/23/1981.
- 200 **We did spend some time; You knew right away:** "Title on the Line, Celtics Reel it in," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 3/30/1981.
- 201 **Andrew Toney:** "Celtics Notebook: Toney (35 points) Made it a Ballgame," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/30/1981. Other sources for this game: "Win Over 76ers Means a Title—And a rest," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/30/1981.
- 201 **We needed somebody to pull us up:** "Ouch! 76ers 105, Celtics 104," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/22/1981.
- 202 **We looked a half-step slow:** "Giant, Economy-Sized Trouble," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 4/22/1981.
- 202 **We talked a lot about the second quarter:** "Celtics Even Matters, 118-99," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/23/1981.
- 202 **I played as hard as I could:** "Bird No Smoothie, But Gets Job Done," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/23/1981.
- 203 **They played it the way a home team should:** "Chapter 3: Sixers humble Celtics," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1981. Parish, hampered by a bad back in addition to the Philadelphia defense, shot 1 for 14. See Will McDonough column, "Sullivan Asks Cunningham to Rejoin Patriots," *Boston Globe*, 4/30/1981.
- 204 **I never worry about:** "Dr. J Wins This Skirmish," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1981.
- 204 **If they don't win on Sunday:** "Celtics Must Shake Philly Jinx," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/26/1981.
- 204 **Give Philadelphia credit:** "For Celtics, It's Almost Unthinkable; Must Beat Sixers 3 Times in a Row," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 4/27/1981. Also see: "A Tiny Error Ruins Celtics, 107-105; Jones' Steal Puts Sixers Up, 3-1," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/27/1981.
- 204 **I should have stopped:** "No Timeout... Then No time," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 4/27/1981.
- 204 **I was open for a second:** "Bird, Celtics Feel Crunch," by Ray Fitzgerald, *Boston Globe*, 4/27/1981.
- 204 **People were saying at halftime:** "For Celtics, It's Almost Unthinkable; Must Beat Sixers 3 Times in a Row," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 4/27/1981.
- 206 **May 1, 1981:** Sources include: "Revived Celtics Seek Sixer KO," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/3/1981; "Celtics Bring It Back To Boston," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/2/1981.
- 206 **forced to watch on tape delay:** "They're Going Back To Boston," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/3/1981. Two weeks earlier, the station had agreed to broadcast Game 6 of the Eastern Conference Semifinals at Milwaukee on a Friday night, but reversed course since Game 6 of the Eastern Conference Finals was a home game. Game 5 of the Boston-Philadelphia series was broadcast live in the home cities but tape delay elsewhere; memorably, the halftime show during the delayed broadcast, hosted by Brent Musberger, was produced live at 1am. This was made obvious when Musberger plugged the fact that the two teams would play again tomorrow night, which gave away the result of the game. "SporTVView," by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 5/3/1981.
- 207 **if I had to give out a game ball:** "... Thanks to Maxwell," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 5/4/1981.
- 208 **I understand that in a playoff game:** "The Final 5:23—The Sixers Ask: Why?" by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/4/1981.
- 208 **three-to-make-two:** The three-to-make-two (or two-to-make-one) rule was introduced along with the 24-second clock in 1954-55; the extra penalty free throw was awarded after a team's sixth foul in a quarter in order to discourage teams from fouling at the end of a game to get the ball back. Originally the penalty free throw was only awarded for backcourt fouls, but was later expanded to include flagrant fouls and fouls on missed field goals. The rule was eliminated completely after the 1980-81 season. See http://www.nba.com/analysis/rules_history.html and <http://www.apbr.org/forum/viewtopic.php?f=27&t=4035>.

- 208 **turned the ball over on three of four consecutive possessions:** Lineup analysis, and much of the rest of this section is drawn from watching Game 7 on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Boston Celtics, The Complete History*. The turnovers were: Bird steals Erving pass (Archibald fouled by Bobby Jones, makes two free throws); Parish steals Bobby Jones pass (Parish makes turnaround rainbow); Dawkins loses ball (Bird fouled by Erving, makes two free throws). Other sources for this game: "The Improbable Dream: Celtics' Third Straight Win Makes It Complete, 91-90," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/4/1981.
- 214 **December 4, 1981:** Sources for this game include: Untitled game story, by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 12/5/1981; "Celtics Notebook: A Fast-Sputtering Break," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 12/5/1981.
- 214 **Chuck Daly:** "Daly Is Cavs Coach," by Chuck Melvin (AP), *The (Portsmouth, Ohio) Daily News*, 12/5/1981.
- 215 **Does he do this to everybody?:** "Celtics Lose To 76ers In Overtime," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 12/20/1981.
- 216 **Parish first quarter stats:** "Celtics Notebook: Carr's Top Effort Saved The Victory," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 1/9/1982.
- 216 **Jack Madden:** "Earning Their Stripes," by Ray Fitzgerald, *Boston Globe*, 1/9/1982.
- 216 **I really didn't get upset:** "Late surge gives Boston win over depleted 76ers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 1/9/1982.
- 216 **The rest helped me:** "Celtics Notebook: Bird May Stay a Sub," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/22/1982.
- 217 **was the culmination:** "Goodby, Sixers: Celtics Bury Philly, 123-111," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/22/1982.
- 217 **I could tell even before the game:** "What's Wrong Here?" by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 3/22/1982.
- 218 **Division standings:** *1982-83 Philadelphia 76ers Statistical Yearbook*, p31-34.
- 218 **We'd lost big leads:** "Celtics Fall With a Thud," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 3/29/1982.
- 218 **This win was just good for the soul:** "Sixers Talked It Over," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 3/29/1982.
- 218 **refusal to pay deferred compensation:** "Celtics Notebook: Boycott Was Avoided," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/29/1982.
- 219 **April 11, 1982:** Sources for this game include: "Celtics Earn Philadelphia Glory," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/12/1982; "Celtics Notebook: Parish Was Missing, but Spark Wasn't," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/12/1982.
- 219 **It felt good to get running:** "Celtics Roll It Up," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/10/1982.
- 220 **If we play on all the cylinders:** "Celtics Roll It Up," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/10/1982.
- 220 **cautionary tale:** "Celtics Notebook: Very Impressive ... But Remember '73," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/10/1982.
- 221 **We could have survived a loss:** "76ers Breathe Fresh Air After Sunday's Bomb," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 5/13/1982.
- 221 **Tonight Caldwell knew:** "Caldwell Picks Right Shots," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/13/1982; Also see "Touche! Jones, 76ers Square Series," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/13/1982.
- 222 **The thought came through my head:** "Oh-Oh, Things Have Changed," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 5/16/1982.
- 222 **Maxwell was unable to convert:** "Max: It Felt Like Death," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/16/1982.
- 222 **Marco Polo:** "SporTVView," by Jack Craig, *Boston Globe*, 5/12/1982. The miniseries ran from Sunday through Wednesday night, and bumped Game 5 to local television in Boston, but neither of the Celtics regular broadcast partners picked up the broadcast. WBZ Channel 4 declined because they were the local CBS affiliate, and preferred to broadcast "Marco Polo" to protect their audience for the first three nights, while cable outlet PRISM deferred to the USA Network cable broadcast that would pick up the game outside of Boston. WLVI Channel 56 bought the rights instead, and arranged to use Channel 4's announcing team of Gil Santos and Bob Cousy.
- 223 **Henderson had replaced him as the starter:** "Celtics Notebook: Tiny Won't Give Up," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/16/1982.
- 223 **There is no question:** "For Starters, 76ers Look To Bench," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/19/1982.
- 224 **Facing up helps me:** "Celtics 114, 76ers 85: It's Back To Philly For Game 6," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/20/1982.
- 224 **I felt we came out tight:** "Sixers Insist They Don't Believe In Ghosts," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/20/1982.

- 225 **My shooting hasn't been what it should:** "Celtics Notebook: Defense Strangles Toney," by Larry Whiteside and Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/22/1982.
- 225 **It's good that we're playing:** "The Eyes Didn't Have It," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 5/22/1982.
- 225 **we have to go and win another game:** "76ers Can't Tell What Hit Them," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/22/1982.
- 226 **There were enough bad passes; Those two turnovers:** "It Was Nothing To Choke About; The 76ers Finally Get The Celtics Off Their Backs, 120-106," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/24/1982. Lineup analysis, and much of the rest of this section is drawn from watching Game 7 on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Philadelphia 76ers, The Complete History*.
- 230 **just wanted to thank:** "It Was Nothing To Choke About," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/24/1982. An example of a less classy display took place earlier in the game and was briefly broadcast by CBS—a small group of fans dressed as "The Ghosts of Celtics past" in hooded white sheets that caused a few of the 76ers players to briefly mistake them for the Ku Klux Klan. Watching the video thirty years later, before reviewing the game stories or other references for the 76ers' comments, the same thought also crossed the author's mind. But Erving acknowledged the lack of ill will during his farewell speech at the Garden on March 30, 1987 (see later footnote related to that game).
- 231 **November 7, 1982:** "Celtics Lose In Double OT," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 11/7/1982.
- 232 **December 10, 1982:** "Bird, Parish Stuff Malone & Co.," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/11/1982.
- 233 **The best thing for us to say:** "76ers Smoke Out Celtics, 122-105," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/22/1982. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Notebook; Where Is Bird's Shot?" by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/22/1982.
- 234 **What was important; There's no doubt Philly:** "Sure play a mean pinball," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 3/5/1983.
- 234 **They try to intimidate us:** "Celtics Notebook; Team Effort Puts Sixer Series at 2-2," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/5/1983.
- 234 **collective bargaining talks:** By the end of March, the players and owners reached an agreement that established the modern NBA salary cap in exchange for a split of revenues that gave the players 53 to 57 percent; but four years later, the NBA players filed an anti-trust suit to force a renegotiation of the deal. See "Labor Pains Nothing New To The NBA," by Robert Bradley, <http://www.apbr.org/labor.html>
- 234 **I don't think for the players:** "Celtics Notebook; Mangurian Encouraged By Meeting," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/17/1983.
- 235 **We knew it would be Larry:** "Celtics' Losing Streak Hits 4, 105-100," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/17/1983.
- 236 **I knew my timing would be off; We played this one** "Celtics Polish Off Season And 76ers," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 4/18/1983.
- 236 **Parish illness:** "Celtics Notebook; Atlanta's Welcome As First-Round Foe," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 4/18/1983.
- 237 **exhibition game altercation:** A small sample of the action is posted on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ht0ZP-zr6tA>
- 237 **I went down there:** "NBA Levels Fines At Auerbach, Bird," by Will McDonough, *Boston Globe*, 10/19/1983. Auerbach was fined \$2500, Bird \$2000, Iavaroni \$1000, and Gerald Henderson \$500.
- 237 **police protection:** "Celtics Win Referee's Decision, 99-86," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 10/17/1983.
- 237 **Let's put it this way:** "Setting Traps For The Champs," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 11/20/1983.
- 237 **pinched nerve in his leg:** "Celtics Notebook," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 11/20/1983. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Come Up Short, 92-91," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 11/20/1983.
- 238 **third period:** "Celtics Notebook," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/5/1983.
- 239 **I was trying to get back on defense:** "76ers Pull Away From Celtics In OT; Boston Blows Lead, Bows 121-114," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/5/1983.
- 239 **I just caught the ball and shot it:** "Cunningham Demands Perfection," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 12/5/1983.

- 240 **The way these two teams play:** "Celtics Notebook," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/14/1984. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Outpoint The Sixers, 105-104," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/14/1984.
- 240 **Malone injury:** "Celtics Notebook; Malone Will Miss All-Star Game," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/26/1984. Malone did not return to the lineup for the 76ers until February 17.
- 240 **Clemon Johnson:** Johnson was dumped by Indiana because they were trying to finish the season as poorly as possible to earn a chance at the number one pick (it worked, but they lost the coin flip); he joined the 76ers on the same day that forward Reggie Johnson (no relation) was purchased from Kansas City.
- 240 **That's his bread-and-butter time:** "76ers Left In Limbo Without Malone," by Bob Duffy, *Boston Globe*, 1/26/1984.
- 241 **Charlie Jones:** "Often Cut But Never Bleeding," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 2/13/1984.
- 241 **The way we played; It was really a poor effort; It was a lot of fun:** "Celtics' Image Clouds; 76ers Saving Face, 109-91," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 2/13/1984.
- 242 **I guess you can see why:** "A Winning Combination," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 3/26/1984.
- 242 **If you're asking me:** "Celtics Notebook," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/26/1984. Other sources for the game: "Another Dilly In Philly; Celtics Fall to 76ers in Two OTs, 119-114," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/26/1984.
- 244 **I don't think people expect to see it:** "Star War Created Scary Moments," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 11/10/1984.
- 244 **When he has to throw elbows:** "Bird-Erving Fight Mars Celtics' Win," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 11/10/1984.
- 244 **eighteen fines in all:** "They Shook Hands And Came Out Exciting," by Alexander Wolff, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/24/1984. For details about the new fine amount, see http://www.nba.com/analysis/rules_history.html
- 244 **It's over:** "They Shook Hands And Came Out Exciting," by Alexander Wolff, *Sports Illustrated*, 12/24/1984.
- 245 **Spectrum fan reaction:** "Erving, Bird Bury The Hatchet," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/13/1984.
- 245 **punctured a tire:** "Hoopla Heightens Rivalry," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/31/1985. In response, the Spectrum posted a guard at the Celtics bus during the game on January 20.
- 245 **My ankle felt better tonight:** "Toney Writes His Usual Ending," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 12/13/1984. Other sources for this game: "76ers Edge Celtics At The Wire," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/13/1984.
- 246 **What do you mean:** "Bird—Artistry And Artillery," by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 1/21/1985.
- 246 **Larry is playing as well:** "A Doctoral Thesis; Erving Diagnoses New Roles For Himself, Bird," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 1/21/1985.
- 246 **I'm just happy:** "Celtics Send 76ers Home Sick, 113-97," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/21/1985.
- 247 **total relentlessness:** "Sixers Thump Celtics," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/31/1985.
- 247 **He's the kind of player:** "Moses Assumes Command," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 1/31/1985.
- 248 **Ray Williams:** "Celtics Notebook: 76ers Press Their Luck," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/30/1985.
- 248 **first quarter:** "Cunningham Hamstrung," by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 3/30/1985.
- 248 **We had to start playing against the zone:** "Celtics Notebook: 76ers Press Their Luck," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 3/30/1985.
- 249 **I think we should have just forfeited:** "76ers Flatten Celtics; Boston Out Of Gas; Philly Up, 113-104," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 4/10/1985.
- 250 **The Celtics have always presented:** "Celtics, 76ers Bristling For A Paint Brush; Mixing And Matching With The Green Team," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 5/14/1985.
- 250 **this probably was Robert's best:** "Rustle Up The Memories," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 5/13/1985.
- 250 **Cheeks team-high 27:** Cheeks' playoff career high was 33, set in 1979 against the Spurs; the only other game in which he had scored more than 27 was a 32 point effort against the Warriors in February 1983.
- 251 **I don't know, probably:** Quote from "Bird Reluctant To Let Fly," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/15/1985. For more on his injury woes, which included floating bone chips in the elbow and a sore ankle, see "Bird Feels The Changes—And Pain," by Ron Borges, *Boston Globe*, 5/16/1985. Borges quotes Bird as saying: "The elbow is a very minor problem right now. Since I had it drained it's been a lot better. This is the playoffs. One or two little injuries can't stop you. They are not a factor now."

- 251 **fight in a bar:** Simmons, *The Book of Basketball*, p173. Game stories in the *Boston Globe* during the Philadelphia series state that Bird “jammed” his right index finger during the first half of Game 3, and that it was “grossly swollen” prior to Game 4, but the bar fight seems a more likely explanation. Simmons overstates his case that the fight was the sole turning point in Bird’s shooting woes by weighing his performances against the overmatched 36-46 Cavaliers equally with the games he played against the Pistons, 76ers and Lakers, and by ignoring the 8 for 23 in Game 2 of the 76ers series, which took place before the fight. However, it is true that Bird’s postseason shooting performances against the Cavaliers and Pistons mirrored his regular season numbers against those two teams (.564/30.5 and .462/30.4, respectively) while he had fared much better against the 76ers (.598/28.7) and Lakers (.605/26.0) in the regular season than he did in the playoffs.
- 251 **Bird playoff statistics:** *Boston Celtics 1985-86 Media Guide*, p101-104.
- 252 **I think tonight he tried to do too much:** “Toney Kept Putting Them Up—But Not In,” by Bob Duffy, *Boston Globe*, 5/15/1985.
- 252 **starting Clint Richardson:** “New Start For Sixers?” By Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 5/17/1985. The disgruntled Richardson, chafing under Cunningham’s system and his fluctuating role, responded by saying that replacing Toney would be a mistake and would hurt his confidence, and proceeded to take several verbal shots at Cunningham, including, “We should be like Boston. When things are going wrong, we should correct them immediately, instead of just sitting there and trying to correct it at halftime or whenever.”
- 252 **Toney first half:** “Some Sweeping Statements About the 76ers’ Predicament,” by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/19/1985.
- 252 **I’m personally upset at myself:** “Philadelphia Grapple: Wrestling With Failure,” by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 5/19/1985.
- 252 **Boston is not so awesome:** “Game 3; Shaky Prognosis For Philadelphia,” by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 5/18/1985.
- 253 **Playing less than 24 hours apart; I don’t think it matters:** “Freshman’s Board Scores Were Summa Cum Laude,” by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 5/20/1985.
- 254 **I think we just took them lightly:** “On Funday, They Never Got Down To Business,” by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 5/20/1985.
- 254 **We have to play three:** “No Retreat, No Surrender: But Sixer Band On The Run,” by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 5/21/1985.
- 254 **Bird reached in:** The best clips of the final minute of the game are available at YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SbzmUW_Dig and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMldunR3wnU>
- 254 **win \$160:** “Bird With One Hand ... Is Worth \$160 In Larry’s Pocket,” by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/22/1985. Bird was notoriously stingy with money, so betting against him in a competitive situation with money on the line was never a good idea.
- 255 **Cunningham resigned:** “Coach Resigns; Cunningham Leaves 76ers,” (AP) *Boston Globe*, 5/28/1985.
- 255 **Celtics and 76ers:** The two teams would not meet in the playoffs again for seventeen years. In 2002 the Celtics defeated the 76ers 3-2 in the first round; it was Boston’s first playoff series victory against any team in ten years.
- 256 **Pacers/Celtics moves:** May, *The Last Banner*, p51-55. The Celtics had tried to acquire Sichting the previous season for a second-round pick, but when that was rejected, they signed Ray Williams instead. **D.J.’s absence:** “Celtics Hang On; Philadelphia’s Story Changes, But It’s Still Tough, 110-103,” by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 11/23/1985.
- 256 **I thought it was a typical game:** “Is The Rivalry Deep-Sixed?” by Michael Madden, *Boston Globe*, 11/23/1985.
- 257 **November 26, 1985:** “Celtics Dump Sixers; Boston Survives Lethargy, 98-91,” by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 11/27/1985.
- 258 **overhead light fixture:** “76ers Reject Celtics; Boston Folds; Johnson Ejected,” by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 12/22/1985. The section of “high-priced” seats was evacuated during the repairs.
- 258 **sore left Achilles tendon:** May, *The Last Banner*, p145. Other sources for this game: “Oh Yes, Celtics Sink Sixers, 105-103,” by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/27/1986.

- 260 **I detected on their part:** "Doc Gets A Shock," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/17/1986. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Pack Away The Sixers, 118-101," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/17/1986.
- 260 **April 6, 1986:** "Sixers Shoot To Top; Erving Buries Celtics, 95-94," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/7/1986.
- 261 **I felt confidence in him:** "Wedman Rusty In First Effort," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 11/26/1986. Other sources for this game: "76ers Slip Past Celtics," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 11/26/1986.
- 262 **strained right Achilles tendon:** "Roberts The Fill-In Helps Do Philly In," by Michael Vega, *Boston Globe*, 12/6/1986. Bird missed one more game, then returned on December 10, coming off the bench to score 35 points in 30 minutes (on 15 for 21 shooting) at home against the Nets. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Take A Classic From Sixers, 108-106," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 12/6/1986.
- 262 **Scott Wedman:** Wedman would be traded to Seattle the following October with Sam Vincent for a second-round pick. Vincent ended up being traded to Chicago for Sedale Threatt, and then become a serviceable backup guard on the Bulls and later with the Orlando Magic.
- 263 **December 19, 1986:** "76ers Smite Celtics," by Michael Vega, *Boston Globe*, 12/20/1986. The previous season, the Celtics had not lost their ninth game until February 11, when they fell to 38-9 by losing in Sacramento 105-100.
- 264 **We've been playing pretty well:** "Celtics Bowl Over The 76ers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 1/26/1987.
- 264 **Toney's electrifying performance:** Toney scored nine points at the Garden on March 29, then made just one more appearance, on January 31, 1988, scoring nine again. His career ended for good twenty-seven days later in Dallas.
- 265 **really a pleasant surprise; A most respected and admired:** "The Doctor Was The Right Medicine," by Michael Vega, *Boston Globe*, 3/30/1987. Erving also mentioned an incident that had occurred several years earlier during the Eastern Conference Finals: "There have been a lot of wars here, a lot of ghosts in the building . . . When people paraded around with sheets over their heads, we thought people were trying to intimidate us with a Klan-like gesture. Later, we realized they represented ghosts of the past." See "Celtics Give Doc Fond Memory," by Phil Jasner, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 3/30/1987. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Bid Doc Adieu And Then Dispatch 76ers, 118-100," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 3/30/1987 and articles from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.
- 266 **I was fading a little:** "Celtics Squander Chances, Fall In OT, 106-104," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/6/1987.
- 266 **Parish elbow trouble and Erving leaves game:** "Celtics Notebook; More Road Woes," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 4/6/1987.

Chapter Eight – 76ers vs. Lakers

- 267 **January 26, 1980:** AP game summary, *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, 1/27/1980.
- 268 **I think when Lionel gets healthy:** "76ers Get Their Man," (UPI) *Boston Globe*, 2/11/1980.
- 268 **shipped to the Cavaliers:** The 1981-82 *Los Angeles Lakers Media Guide*, p142 lists the Ford trade on 2/14 and the Landsberger trade on 2/15, both of these dates seem questionable. <http://prosportstransactions.com> lists the Landsberger trade on 2/13 and the Ford trade on 2/15. I also found an AP article on 2/12 that announced the Landsberger trade. Ford's last game with the Lakers was on 2/13; he debuted for the Cavaliers on 2/16. Landsberger's last game with the Bulls was on 2/6 and he played his first game for the Lakers on 2/15.
- 269 **We ran two people at him:** "76ers' Freeze Opens Door For Lakers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/5/1980.
- 269 **I ain't afraid:** Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p229.
- 270 **Lionel couldn't get it to Julius:** "76ers Top Lakers, Tie Series," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/8/1980.
- 271 **His presence just makes everybody:** "Jabbar And Lakers Sparkle, 111-101," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/11/1980. Other sources for this game: "Sixers Are Board To Death," by Doyle Dietz, *Reading Eagle*, 5/11/1980.

- 271 **May 11, 1980:** "76ers Pull Up Even, 105-102," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/12/1980. Highlights available on YouTube, including Jones's clinching steal: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ov0P0s6KYWI> and Erving's highlight move: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjdEP7I2fRA>
- 273 **I have never seen Kareem:** "Lakers Are Up ... But Kareem Is Out," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/16/1980. Other sources for this game: "Lakers Go 1 Up On 76ers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/15/1980.
- 274 **Game 6:** Lineup analysis, and much of the rest of this section is drawn from watching Game 6 on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Los Angeles Lakers, The Complete History*.
- 276 **perhaps the best game anybody; The thing that amazed me:** "Lakers Champs In Six, 123-107," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/17/1980.
- 277 **one of our best team efforts:** "NBA Roundup: 76ers Lose Second In Row," wire story, *Boston Globe*, 12/29/1980. Wilkes shot 6 for 8, Abdul-Jabbar 5 for 7 in the third quarter.
- 277 **They were rebounding:** "Gruesome Twosome Eats Up L.A.," by Chuck Newman, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2/9/1981.
- 277 **I don't think there is:** "DD's Improvement No Passing Fancy," by Doyle Dietz, *Reading Eagle*, 2/9/1981.
- 277 **We became a little bit passive:** "Sixers Snap Lakers Jinx, 102-99; Late Slam By Erving Clinches It," by Bill Livingston, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2/9/1981.
- 278 **I feel very sorry:** "Sixers Done In By Jabbar, Lakers," (AP), 2/27/1982. Other sources for this game: "Sixers Fall To Lakers In 2 Overtimes," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2/27/1982.
- 279 **Toney broke us down; A performance like that:** "Toney Explodes for 46, Pulls Sixers Past L.A.," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3/8/1982. Other sources for this game: "Toney explosion lifts Sixers to win," (AP), 3/8/1982.
- 281 **Game 1:** Lineup analysis, and much of the rest of this section is drawn from watching Game 1 on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Los Angeles Lakers, The Complete History*. On the CBS broadcast, Bill Russell mentioned that the Lakers preferred their point man on the break to run straight up the middle of the floor, while the Sixers usually brought the ball up the sideline.
- 281 **three outside shots:** From "Lakers Spring Their Trap On Unsuspecting 76ers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/29/1982: "They were a Norm Nixon drifter at 85- 81, Philly, a Jamaal Wilkes 17-footer at 91-87, LA, and a 12-foot Bob McAdoo baseline jumper at 101-90."
- 281 **We really stuck with our trap:** "Lakers Spring Their Trap On Unsuspecting 76ers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/29/1982. Other sources for this game: "Lakers' Blitzkrieg Rips 76ers, 124-117; Wilkes Sparks Second-Half 40-9 Run," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/28/1982. "Lakers' Guns Open Fire On 76ers—L.A. Rally Seals Win, 124-117," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/28/1982.
- 283 **There is no secret:** "Sixers Rebound, Flatten LA," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/31/1982.
- 283 **did a good job:** "Lakers' Dream Swept By Boards; 76ers Do Homework, Then Tie Series," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/1/1982. Other sources for this game: "76ers Put Skids On L.A. Sweep," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/31/1982.
- 284 **Anything and everything we did; This was the first game:** "Safe At Home, Lakers Rip Sixers; Take Lead After Win, 129-108," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/2/1982. Other sources for this game: "Lakers Slam 76ers, 129-108," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/2/1982.
- 285 **To start the game:** "Lakers One From Title; 76ers Fall, 111-101," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/4/1982.
- 285 **Those two plays:** "Lakers Put 76ers Near The Edge; L.A. Takes 3-1 Lead, 111-101," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/4/1982.
- 286 **first time in 420 games:** The last time was the 1977-78 season opener when Jabbar was ejected for fighting with Kent Benson.
- 286 **They got a second wind:** "Not So Fast, LA: Sixers Still Alive," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/7/1982.
- 286 **When we got behind:** "Abdul-Jabbar At Ebb As Sixers Go With Flow," by Bill Livingston, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/7/1982.
- 287 **affects me in all areas:** "Lakers Figure They're Right On Schedule," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1982.
- 287 **I read a lot about Boston's defensive:** "When It's Winning Time, Magic Is A True Champion," by Bill Livingston, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/9/1982.

- 288 **We were more disappointed:** "Lakers Are Kings Of The NBA; 76ers Fall, 114-104, In Game 6," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/9/1982. Other sources for this game: "Lakers Crown 76ers For Title," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/9/1982. The sequence where the Lakers controlled three offensive rebounds on a single possession is an example of why the 76ers would then covet Moses Malone in the summer of 1982.
- 288 **I was just moving hard; Moses gives them exactly:** "Malone Dominant As Sixers Triumph," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12/6/1982. Other sources for this game: "Malone makes difference," (UPI and AP) *Milwaukee Journal*, 12/6/1982.
- 289 **The play was for Moses or me:** NBA game summaries, (AP) *The (Fredericksburg, Virginia) Free Lance-Star*, 1/6/1983.
- 289 **I knew I had to do:** "Toney Helps Sixers Soar In Overtime," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1/6/1983.
- 290 **I was more fatigued this afternoon:** "Sixers Run Down Lakers," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/23/1983. Other sources for this game: "Sixers Get The Jump On Lakers; Toney, Malone Pace Win," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/23/1983.
- 291 **Clemon Johnson:** "'Twirl Time'—Cureton Is Eager To Step In Against Lakers," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/25/1983.
- 291 **Earl just came in:** "76ers Sink Lakers, Go Up By Two—Cureton Leads Win, 103-93," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/27/1983.
- 291 **\$3,000 fine:** The fine was levied because Riley had continued to criticize Darrell Garretson in the days after Game 2. For example, see "Criticizing Refs Costs Riley \$3000," (UPI) *Boston Globe*, 5/31/1983: "Riley pointed out that Vanek nearly split his calls—15 against Philadelphia to 14 against the Lakers, while Garretson called 15 fouls against Los Angeles and one against the Sixers." NBA records noted in "Vanishing Act Takes Magic Out Of Lakers," by Bill Livingston, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/27/1983.
- 292 **The truth is:** "Lakers Overflowing With Excuses About Losses 1 And 2," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/29/1983.
- 292 **We worked hard:** "Sixers Move To Brink Of A Title—Malone Leads Charge Past Lakers, 111-94," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/30/1983.
- 293 **We will come out:** "76ers Push Lakers To Edge, 111-94," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/30/1983.
- 293 **If we don't win it Tuesday:** "Erving Finally Predicts 'We're Going To Win It,'" by Jere Longman, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5/30/1983.
- 294 **Their fourth quarters:** "It's No Gag: Sixers Are Champs," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/1/1983.
- 294 **We tried as hard:** "76ers Are Kings Of Nba At Last," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/1/1983.
- 294 **Game 4:** Lineup analysis, and much of the rest of this section is drawn from watching Game 4 on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Philadelphia 76ers, The Complete History*. In addition to the articles mentioned below, other articles consulted included: "Happy Feet—Dr. J Kicks Up His Heels And Shows Them To The Lakers," by Bill Livingston, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/1/1983; "Lakers May Suffer Another Loss—Abdul-Jabbar," by Jere Longman, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/1/1983; and "Sixers Take Title," by Marc Schogol, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/1/1983.
- 296 **That shot found me:** "It's No Gag: Sixers Are Champs," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/1/1983.
- 296 **Let me tell you:** "76ers Are Kings Of Nba At Last," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/1/1983.
- 297 **we played extremely well:** "Sixers Offense Self-Destructs As Lakers Win," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2/27/1984.
- 297 **We had some good shots:** "Lakers Hand 76ers 4th Defeat In Row; 'Magic' Johnson Sparks 101-99 Victory," by Keith Groller, *The (Lehigh Valley) Morning Call*, 2/27/1984.
- 298 **Armageddon; I don't know:** "Sixers Get Act Together, Win In L.A.—Fight Off The Lakers, 113-105," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3/8/1984.
- 298 **Katz had ripped his players:** "Sixers Owner Criticizes Efforts Of Malone And Team," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3/3/1984. Katz's rambling comments included a curious criticism of the team's lack of emotion: "I think every guy on this team acts too cool and doesn't show enough enthusiasm. I just don't see why the effort shouldn't be here. I still say that this team is the same team, if not a more talented team, than last year. But we're not showing it. Other teams are out there high-fiving and jumping up and down, and while I don't like a lot of that kind of stuff, I do think there's a happy medium between being too cool and showing

at least some enthusiasm." Malone and Cunningham had no comment, while several players played down the owner's comments, saying that the team had not been an overly enthusiastic team during their 1983 championship run either.

- 299 **The pivotal thing:** "Malone Muscles Sixers Past Lakers; Scores 35 For Sixth Win In Row," by George Shirk, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12/9/1984.
- 299 **We let Malone get inside; They shot well:** "Fastbreak and Offensive Rebounding Let Lakers Down," by John Lowe, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12/8/1984.
- 300 **Since we only meet; It's still us:** "Lakers Defeat 76ers, 109-104: Abdul-Jabbar, Scott Are Keys to Big Victory," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 1/26/1985.
- 300 **it was total domination; Tonight was just:** "134-100 - That's Magical Enough: Without Johnson, Lakers Pull Off an Unlikely Rout of Surging 76ers," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/1/1986.
- 301 **activated McAdoo:** "McAdoo joins Philadelphia," (AP) *The Lewiston Daily Sun*, 2/1/1986.
- 301 **We had to have this game:** "Magic's 3-Pointer Puts Lakers Back on the Right Track," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/24/1986.
- 302 **It was like a shot:** "Magic's 3-Pointer Puts Lakers Back on the Right Track," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/24/1986. Other sources for this game: "Magic 3-pointer rescues Lakers," wire story in *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 2/24/1986.
- 302 **Charles' missed dunk:** "Lakers Rock the 76ers With Easy Win, 111-85," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 12/29/1986. Other sources for this game: "Sixers Blitzed By L.A. Lakers Race To 111-85 Triumph," by Mike Bruton, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12/29/1986.
- 303 **Earvin was relentless:** "Sixers' offense hits rock bottom," (AP) *Miami News*, 12/29/1986.
- 304 **We've been so accurate; This team is on the brink:** "The Lakers Are Worthy Winners," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/23/1987. Other sources for this game: "Worthy gives Lakers OT win," by Mark Lukens, *Reading Eagle*, 2/23/1987. This story also included a denial from Jerry West of a quote attributed to him by Peter Vescey of the *New York Post*, in which West supposedly said that Abdul-Jabbar "is killing us" due to a lack of leadership and hustle.

Chapter Nine – Lakers vs. Celtics

- 306 **neither was instrumental:** "Like magic, Johnson bests Bird," (AP and UPI) *Milwaukee Journal*, 12/29/1979.
- 306 **difference in this game; our best individual:** Both quotes from "Defense Keys Lakers Past Boston, 123-105," by Frank Brown (AP), *The (Sumter, South Carolina) Daily Item*, 12/29/1979. Other sources for this game: "Magic vs. Larry, NBA style, began 30 years ago today," by Steve Aschburner, NBA.com, 3/25/2010 http://www.nba.com/2009/news/features/steve_aschburner/12/28/bird.magic/
- 306 **Our defense triggered it:** "Great Game, Tough Call Go Lakers' Way; Celtics Stall After Half, Fall, 100-98," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 1/14/1980.
- 307 **I couldn't have stopped him:** "Cooper Was Super Guarding Bird," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 1/14/1980.
- 307 **The man has both hands:** "Great Game, Tough Call Go Lakers' Way; Celtics Stall After Half, Fall, 100-98," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 1/14/1980.
- 308 **When you hold a team:** Game story by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 1/19/1981.
- 308 **February 11:** "Celtics Notebook; A Tired Group Arrives In LA After OT Loss," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/12/1981; "It's All Bird, 105-91," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/12/1981.
- 309 **We got a hot hand:** "Celtics Fold Up, 119-113," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/8/1982.
- 309 **We stayed with it:** "Fitch Feels Sting Of Collapse," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 2/8/1982.
- 310 **He was the key; may have been carrying:** "Celtics Trip Lakers," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/15/1982.
- 311 **one of the best games; Tiny's just a great:** "Clash Of Titans: Celtics Whip Lakers, 110-95," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/31/1983.

- 311 **The thing that I think; Kareem is still the best:** "Parish, Jabbar Renew A Rivalry," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 1/31/1983.
- 312 **Quincy, M.E.:** The episode of *Quincy, M.E.* was the conclusion of a two-part episode that featured the remarriage of the lead character, played by Jack Klugman. The twenty minute preemption on local NBC affiliate WBZ-TV Channel 4 is mentioned in "Cheerleaders Missed As Celtics Hit Slide," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 2/24/1983.
- 312 **You can use any:** "Celtics Snap Out Of It, Rip Lakers, 113-104," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 2/24/1983.
- 313 **The people here:** "Abdul-Jabbar, Records Becoming Synonymous," by Larry Whiteside, *Boston Globe*, 2/9/1984. Other sources for this game: Lakers Halt Celtics, 111-109," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 2/9/1984.
- 314 **We just didn't do:** "Lakers Roll Over The Celtics," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 2/25/1984.
- 315 **opening of a great play:** Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p244.
- 315 **as good a period; They threw caution to the wind:** "Lakers Break Faster, 115-109," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/28/1984.
- 315 **lulled into complacency:** "News Analysis; Lakers Got Celtics On The Run," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/28/1984.
- 316 **I don't ordinarily do that:** "Celtics Notebook; Favorable Conditions In Forum," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/3/1984.
- 316 **I don't think Byron:** "Reliving A Golden Fleece," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/2/1984. Other sources for this game: "Grand Theft Motto," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 6/1/1984.
- 317 **It's a great feeling; We played like sissies:** "Celtics Break Down, 137-104," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/4/1984.
- 317 **They're relentless:** "News Analysis; Simply, The Lakers Are Breaking Away," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/4/1984.
- 318 **unleashed Dennis Johnson:** K.C. Jones later said that D.J. had not told him how disappointed he was in not getting to guard Magic until after K.C. announced the switch. "I wish D.J. had said something to me sooner. If he had, I would have let him take Magic." Bird, *When The Game Was Ours*, p135.
- 319 **Game 4:** Lineup analysis, and much of the rest of this section is drawn from watching Game 4 on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Boston Celtics, The Complete History*. Also see "Celtics Get Square In OT," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/7/1984.
- 319 **I played a lot of perimeter defense:** "Celtics Notebook; Another Lengthy Pause Before Series Resumes," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/1/1984.
- 321 **You've got different defensive matchups:** "News Analysis; Lakers Got Celtics On The Run," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/28/1984.
- 321 **Rambis...hyperextended elbow:** "On Riley's Hair, Kareem's Goggles, Bird's Feet," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 5/30/1984. "The Lakers' power forward wears a bandage around his forearm and a bandage around the muscle on his upper arm. A cord runs between the two bandages. 'I suffered a hyperextended elbow a couple of months ago,' Rambis said. 'I didn't want to do it again, so a friend of mine who runs a muscle gym rigged up this thing. It keeps me from straightening out my arm.'"
- 321 **This changes the whole mood:** "Celtics Tactic Has Riley Riled," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1984.
- 322 **Bird was just awesome:** "No Sweat For Celtics, 121-103; Bird Brings The Heat As LA Goes Cold," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/9/1984.
- 322 **I suggest you go:** "Garden Heat Cooked The Lakers' Fast Break," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/9/1984.
- 323 **We made three adjustments:** "News Analysis; Lakers' Tuning Stopped Celtics' Hum," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/11/1984. Other sources for this game: "Now, It's Really The Best of Seven; Celtics Freeze Up In Game 6, 119-108," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/11/1984.
- 324 **Game 7:** much of this section is drawn from watching Game 7 on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Boston Celtics, The Complete History*.

- 324 **Max said before the game:** "News Analysis; He Gave a Max-imum Effort; Cedric Rose To the Occasion For Celtics In Final Game," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/12/1984.
- 325 **I think they are the better team:** "It's Another Banner Year: Celtics Hoist Flag No. 15," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/13/1984.
- 326 **You don't foul; The first tip was the best:** "Boston Again Puts the Arm (It's McHale's) on Lakers," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 1/17/1985.
- 326 **I told K.C.:** "Celtics Elude Lakers," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/17/1985. Other sources for this game: "Clark Gets Test Under Heavy Fire," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/17/1985.
- 327 **It's just a re-occurring thing:** "Undermanned for Utah: Celtics Notebook," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/17/1985. Maxwell played sporadically during the game against the Lakers, including the final 1:30 of the fourth quarter, but had to sit out long stretches. See "Lakers Water Down The Celtics, 117-111," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 2/18/1985.
- 327 **Max was way out of shape:** Bird, *When The Game Was Ours*, p151. Other sources for this game: "Lakers Beat the Celtics on the Line," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/18/1985. The Lakers last ten points were on free throws.
- 327 **quadruple-double:** "Bird Breaks Loose; Celtics Rip Jazz As He Piles It On," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 2/19/1985. K.C. Jones asked Bird if he wanted to go back in to try to get the steal he needed to close out the quadruple-double, but Bird said no, since the game was safely in hand and he wanted to rest up because neither Parish nor Maxwell would be available for their next game in Denver. The Celtics would lose to the Nuggets 132-129 anyway.
- 328 **Game 1 Fouls:** Incredibly, neither Parish nor McHale picked up a personal foul until the third quarter, in spite of the defense they were playing. The referees were allowing the Celtics to play their physical style. "Prepped For Surgery," by Bob Ryan and Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/28/1985.
- 328 **They use a scrambling defense:** "Celtics Apply Lessons Learned from '84 Final," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/28/1985.
- 328 **Ray Williams:** Carr went on the injured list with a left ankle injury when Maxwell returned in March, but then Carlisle was diagnosed with strained knee ligaments in right knee and ended up on the injured list when Carr was ready to play again. Carr returned to active duty but played only sparingly the rest of the season.
- 328 **embarrassed; I think we sort of:** Both quotes from "Lakers: Score 1 For Boston," by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 5/28/1985. Coincidentally, the Celtics players were not the only "hot" thing on that day. A small fire on roof of Garden was reported seven minutes after the game ended but burned itself out before firefighters arrived. See "Garden Roof Fire Burns Itself Out," (AP) *Boston Globe*, 5/29/1985.
- 328 **second-highest margin:** The 34 point margin matched the Celtics margin of victory over the Pistons in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Semifinals (133-99). In 1965, the Celtics 129-96 victory in Game 5 clinched the series; in Game 1 the Celtics had also defeated the Lakers 142-110. The 142 points had been the Finals single-game record until Game 1 in 1985.
- 329 **Riley verbally ripped:** Bird, *When The Game Was Ours*, p161-162.
- 329 **not just shrugging:** "Teammates Say It All For Parish," by Dan Shaughnessy and Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 5/30/1985.
- 329 **After watching the films:** "Gunned Down By A 38 Special," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 5/31/1985.
- 329 **They came out and started:** "Lakers Get Split Decision; Celtics On The Ropes, 109-102," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 5/31/1985.
- 330 **Bird who was still affected:** "It Came From Sky but Wasn't a Bird: Abdul-Jabbar Dominates as Lakers Even Series, 1-1," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 5/31/1985.
- 330 **Parish and Kupchak:** "A Setting In The West; Take 3: Search For Tomorrow," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/1/1985.
- 330 **We realized we let everyone down:** "Old Glory," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 5/31/1985.
- 330 **never ceases to amaze me:** "Captain Hook Helps The Lakers Pull Even: After a Downer, the Sky Again Seems to Be the Limit for Abdul-Jabbar," by Sam McManis, *Los Angeles Times*, 5/31/1985.
- 331 **I'm not very happy:** "A Non-Shooting Star," by Randy Harvey, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/3/1985.

- 331 **Push, shove, grab; If according to K.C.'s definition; We are *not* going to stand around:** "This Time, Lakers Give Celtics a Physical Education: L.A. Pushes Back, Moves Ahead, 2-1," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/3/1985.
- 331 **What we should do:** "No Knockouts, Many Technicals; Celtics And Lakers Come Out Fighting," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/3/1985.
- 332 **I would've taken the shot:** "Dancin' Barry Has the Right Number: Bird Is The Word," by Scott Ostler, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/6/1985.
- 332 **What happened is a little bit of a dagger:** "D.J.'s Shot Proves the Celtics Can Go Home Again," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/6/1985.
- 332 **Tonight we played the entire game:** "Celtics Win It With Their Heads As Well As Hearts," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/6/1985. Other sources for this game: "DJ, Celtics Get Even, 107-105," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/6/1985.
- 332 **I just wanted them:** "NBA Helps Make It a Game, Not a Gang Fight," by Bill Dwyre, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/6/1985.
- 333 **Give him credit:** "Smooth Operator; Abdul-Jabbar's Skyhooks Finish The Job," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1985. Other sources for this game: "Back-To-Backs Against The Wall," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1985; Anatomy Of A Win: Lakers Had The Bodies," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1985.
- 334 **They were only playing a few guys:** "Lakers Leave Boston Hanging in Rafters," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/1985.
- 334 **Game 6:** Lineup analysis, and much of the rest of this section is drawn from watching Game 4 on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Los Angeles Lakers, The Complete History*. Comparison with Game 7 of the 1984 Finals was drawn from watching that game on the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Boston Celtics, The Complete History*. Other sources for this game: "The Title Goes Coast To Coast; Lakers Deep-Six Celtics, 111-100," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/10/1985.
- 337 **I thought I could carry the team:** "Celtics Offer No Excuses for Defeat, but Do Take Aim at Playoff Format," by Steve Springer, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/1985. The Celtics were one of 21 teams to vote in favor of the 2-3-2 format, so they had little right to complain. See "Expansive Talk, No Action," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 6/9/1985. The series outcome probably would not have been different anyway: after the Celtics starters played the entire fourth quarter in Game 4, a cross-country trip back to Boston for a Game 5 would have just added to their fatigue.
- 337 **I guess I feel like Johnny Podres:** "Pure Kareem: With the Big Fella Churning, It Was Easy for Lakers to Rise to the Top," by Sam McManis, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/1985.
- 337 **Maybe it was meant to be:** "Lakers Leave Boston Hanging in Rafters," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/1985.
- 338 **I love playing against those guys:** "Score One for Celtic Green and Redhead," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 1/23/1986. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Supreme; Bird, Walton Lead Parade As Lakers Crumble, 110-95," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/23/1986. **Jabbar wearing Number 50 jersey:** May, *The Big Three*, p140; "Big Night For Walton," by Dan Shaughnessy, *Boston Globe*, 1/23/1986.
- 339 **Failed to make a shot from the floor:** "Lakers Need a Good Shot of Magic, but His Sore Knee Gets in the Way," by Mark Heisler, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/17/1986. The last time was January 15, 1984 at home against the SuperSonics. The article incorrectly omits that occurrence, stating that the last time was March 18, 1983, when Magic departed after being kneed by Steve Johnson of the Kings in the opening minute. Prior to that, Magic had gone without a field goal in two games as a rookie, including a game at the Boston Garden in January 1980.
- 339 **We had to match up; Now, nobody has any reason:** "Lakers Shown a Back Seat by Boston Bench," by Thomas Bonk, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/17/1986.
- 340 **bruised right knee:** Magic had collided with the Bucks Jack Sikma.
- 340 **If you keep thinking:** "Sky Still The Limit For Jabbar," by Michael Vega, *Boston Globe*, 12/13/1986.
- 340 **Boston managed to coax:** For example, Darren Daye made his Celtics debut by being called for traveling and a foul on Rambis in one minute of play.

- 340 **The way we were shooting:** "Laker Win Ends 48-Game Celtic Garden Party," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 12/13/1986. Other sources for this game: "Lakers Stop Celtics," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 12/13/1986.
- 341 **Actually, I didn't feel:** "Celtics Fall to New 'M' Squad: Magic, Mychal," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/16/1987. Other sources for this game: "Lakers Put Magic Spill On Celtics," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 2/16/1987.
- 342 **I think it was apparent:** "Magic Spreads The Carpet; Lakers' Field General Directs Fast And Fluid Operation Against Celtics," by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 6/3/1987.
- 342 **We just didn't play well:** "Bird Shares Load, But Gets Little Help," by Jackie MacMullan, *Boston Globe*, 6/3/1987. Other sources for this game: "Lakers Break Celtics' Backs," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/3/1987. The Celtics had a number of injuries: Parish had a sprained left ankle (he had missed Game 6 against the Bucks and was in pain throughout the Pistons series, which helped stoke the fire that sparked his knockdown of Bill Laimbeer in Game 5), McHale a stress fracture in his right foot, Ainge strained ligaments in his left knee, and D.J. was plagued by a strained shoulder and wrist. See "Lakers Discount Injury Factor," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 6/3/1987.
- 343 **achievement deserved as asterisk:** Bob Ryan wrote that Magic's 20 assists for the game were "a typically upgraded Forum handout total. The Forum stat crew is to assist exaggeration what Argentina is to inflation." See "LA Pummels Celtics Again; It's Another Rout, 141-122," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/5/1987.
- 343 **can be a big weapon for us:** "Cooper On Offensive With 3-Point Barrage," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 6/5/1987.
- 343 **broke our backs:** "LA Pummels Celtics Again; It's Another Rout, 141-122," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/5/1987.
- 343 **40-4 edge:** "Even Going Home Brings Celtics Little Joy," by Mark Heisler, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/5/1987. Other sources for this game: "A Laker Laughter," by Leigh Montville, *Boston Globe*, 6/5/1987.
- 344 **81 percent:** "Laker Broom Comes Apart on Parquet Floor," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/8/1987; table taken from "The Second-Quarter Spurt," table in *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1987.
- 345 **I thought he did a great job:** "A Name For Himself; Kite Was Recognized As A Major Contributor To Victory," by Ian Thomsen, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1987.
- 345 **We lost this game:** "Slow-Motion Breakdown Lakers Were Off And Not Running," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 6/8/1987.
- 346 **Thompson did a great job:** "Give a Game Ball to Mychal Thompson," by Chris Baker, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/1987.
- 346 **I think we got too cautious:** "No Room For Error: Celtics Know Feeling; For Third Time In Playoffs, Boston Is On The Cliff," by Jackie MacMullan, *Boston Globe*, 6/11/1987.
- 346 **Table of plays during the last two minutes:** "The Final Two Minutes," table in *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/1987.
- 347 **I thought my best choice:** "Magic Didn't See It; Riley Didn't Want It," by Lesley Visser, *Boston Globe*, 6/10/1987. **Only basket of the quarter:** "Magic's Hook Reels In The Celtics, 107-106," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/1987 and Game 5 broadcast included in the DVD collection *NBA Dynasty Series: Los Angeles Lakers, The Complete History*.
- 347 **I was floating to the left:** "Bird's Final Shot Last 'Sure Thing' To Fail," by Jackie MacMullan, *Boston Globe*, 6/10/1987.
- 348 **The three-point shot:** "Ainge's Bombs Hit The Spot," by Jackie MacMullan, *Boston Globe*, 6/12/1987.
- 348 **No question I'm upset:** "Forcing Game 6, Celtics Go Coast to Coast on Lakers," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/12/1987. Other sources for this game: "Celtics Crash Lakers' Party; They Coast To Coast, 123-108," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/12/1987.
- 349 **How big is that play?:** "Third-Quarter Lapse Leaves Celtics At A Loss," by Jackie MacMullan, *Boston Globe*, 6/15/1987.
- 349 **Our offensive assignments:** "We Broke Down," by Mark Heisler, by *Los Angeles Times*, 6/15/1987. The 12 point quarter led to the Celtics scoring under 100 points for the first time in the playoffs and only the seventh time all season.

- 349 **Because of the fact:** "Lakers' Fifth Title Is a Feat of Magic," by Gordon Edes, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/15/1987.
- 350 **I think the Lakers:** "Big Man, Big Game," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/15/1987. Other sources for this game: "Auerbach: Fine Strom," by Bob Ryan and Ian Thomson, *Boston Globe*, 6/14/1987; "It's Magic's Kingdom, 106-93; Third-Quarter Blitz Has Celtics Reeling," by Bob Ryan, *Boston Globe*, 6/15/1987.

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