



RIISING ABOVE THE RIM

Bill Russell and the Reinvention of Basketball

Michael Hamel

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Acotes Hill Press

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Cover Photo: Bill Russell watching construction of the new USF
Memorial Gym, August 1957; courtesy of San Francisco History
Center, San Francisco Public Library (Romaine-Skelton
photograph).

To Mom and Dad

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Introduction

A Way of Life

I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD IN THE FALL OF 1981, and I was not a sports fan. My father followed sports very casually; he remembered seeing Ted Williams play on television when he was younger, but now, when he finished working overtime as a toolmaker, my father was too busy with yard work and other tasks around the house, or finishing up his latest woodworking project to spend much time watching sports. My mother had virtually no interest in sports, balancing housework with her job as a substitute teacher at my elementary school in Rhode Island, all while trying to keep her only child out of trouble.

Then one night, for reasons I have forgotten, we watched a Boston Celtics game on television. WBZ Channel 4 in Boston had the rights back then; perhaps we were looking for *Happy Days* and found the game by accident. Even though I needed to sit fairly close to the screen to see the ball because I had not yet obtained my first pair of thick “coke bottle” glasses, every detail fascinated me, and I was immediately hooked by the speed and flow of basketball, and the drama of sports competition. Each broadcast began with an announcer proclaiming them as “the Defending World Champion Boston Celtics.” Gil Santos and Bob Cousy handled the play-by-play and commentary duties flawlessly, with Santos’s smooth delivery a perfect compliment to Cousy’s thick accent (Santos would frequently refer to Cousy on air as “mon ami” in reference to his French heritage). I had no idea who Cousy was, except that my Dad told me that he used to

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play for the Celtics, and the phrase “defending champion” was a bit of a mystery too.

Soon I started reading about the Celtics every day in the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, and I quickly memorized the entire roster. Larry Bird was my favorite player, but I could recite details about every player – even those who rode the bench like Eric Fernsten – to anyone who would listen. Even my Mom became a fan, though I’m sure this was motivated more by my interest than a sudden desire to watch a bunch of guys run up and down a basketball court. Since most games finished after my bedtime, she would fill me in on the details the next morning while she made my lunch for school, and on weekends, when I would get up earlier than my parents to watch television, I would occasionally find a note waiting for me if the game was particularly exciting. Eventually, I created a poster for my room by cutting out pictures from the *Journal* and pasting them on a large green poster board. Most of the poster was dedicated to Bird, including a picture of him wearing goggles after suffering an eye injury, but Kevin McHale, Tiny Archibald, Robert Parish, and even Eric Fernsten were all represented. Coach Bill Fitch was there too, in one of his trademark plaid sport jackets that were still barely fashionable.

While I had learned a lot about the 1981-82 Celtics, I knew nothing about the history of the team. Then one day, while waiting for my mother to drive me home from school, I was wandering around the library and found a large hardcover book entitled *The Picture History of the Boston Celtics*. The front of the shiny silver book jacket instantly caught my eye, as it featured a photo of Cedric Maxwell and Dr. J battling for a rebound while Bird and several other Celtics and Philadelphia 76ers looked on. The back cover photo was a close-up of the 1966, 1968, 1969, and 1974 championship banners hanging in the Garden rafters, with their green letters on a white background proclaiming the Celtics as “World Champions.” Inside, there were hundreds of black-and-white pictures that added to the book’s appeal. I enthusiastically checked it out and took it home.

In hindsight, the book was the perfect introduction to the Celtics for me. Author George Sullivan, a former sports columnist for the *Boston Herald Traveler* who covered the

Celtics and followed them as a fan for decades, organized the book into three sections. “The Seasons” included a handful of pages for each year, beginning with the Celtics inaugural season in 1946, with plenty of photos, quotes from key players, and box scores for some of their most important games. As I read every word I started putting the pieces together: The Celtics had won a *lot* of championships even before 1981, Cousy was one of the best basketball players of all-time, and Red Auerbach used to be the coach (back when he had more hair). I was disappointed that the 1980-81 season was missing from the book, but it did include the previous season, Larry Bird’s rookie year, and the story of how Red Auerbach drafted and signed him after a year of negotiations. Auerbach’s devotion to the Celtics was obvious throughout; Sullivan began his book by quoting the legendary coach and general manager: “The Celtics aren’t a team. They’re a way of life.”

The second section of the book, “The Memories,” featured interviews with nearly every Celtics legend – Auerbach, Cousy, Bill Russell, K.C. Jones (who I recognized as an assistant coach on the current team), and a “retirement letter” from Dave Cowens. I must admit that I did not read every word in this section, as I spent most of my time re-reading the season summaries and devouring the final section, entitled the “The Records.” There were complete statistics for every player in Celtics history, organized both by player, but also by season. Even at that relatively young age, I was fascinated with numbers, and this section was loaded with them: coaching records, season-by-season leaders, scores of every Celtics playoff game, all-star game box scores, and Boston Garden attendance records, along with more photographs, including one of a much younger Bob Cousy interviewing former teammate Tom Heinsohn as part of an ABC telecast.

It is impossible for me to overstate how much I loved reading that book. For the first time, I gained an appreciation for history. As a kid, you are so focused on “now” that you have no idea what history means. To me, 1969 was ancient history, the word “Vietnam” meant nothing, and the only “history” I personally remembered was a 1980 Weekly Reader article that profiled presidential candidates Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter,

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and John B. Anderson. When I read that the Celtics' Chuck Cooper was the first black player drafted in the NBA, and that Bill Russell was the first black NBA head coach, I had no idea how socially important that was, especially in light of Boston's troubled racial history.

From that day forward, I looked for every sports history book I could find during our weekly trips to the school library, and I also started asking my parents for books as birthday and Christmas gifts. While my mother would have preferred that I read more "classics" from the school's "suggested reading list," she enthusiastically encouraged my reading habit. A few years later, my parents bought me *The Story of America*, a National Geographic picture atlas whose 324 pages covered American history from the Ice Age through the late 1970's. I studied that book at home and on car trips, absorbing the pictures, charts, and text and acquiring a love for American history that I still have today. And it all began when I discovered the Boston Celtics.

Eventually, my parents and I visited the original Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts. The two story brick building had opened in December 1967 at a cost of \$650,000. Although the Hall of Fame has since moved twice, and is now much easier to find (we got lost several times trying to follow a series of signs that were nearly invisible), the old building had two unique features. Every inductee was depicted in colorful stained-glass "hand-painted floor-to-ceiling plaques," and the lower level of the museum included a movie theater with a panoramic screen that gave you the feeling of watching a game from the bench. We spent most of our visit watching the black-and-white movies that included footage of Cousy, Russell, and the rest of the old Celtics teams. I still have the Boston Celtics felt pennant that they bought for me at the gift shop.

Although I started following the Red Sox, Patriots, and even the Bruins too, the Celtics were my favorites, and I watched as many games as I could. Family holidays required some extra effort. Since all of my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins also lived in Rhode Island, we spent nearly every holiday with them. Typically we would visit my mother's parents at lunch time, and then drive to my father's parents' house later in the day. Watching sports was not on the menu at either locale. It was

particularly difficult at my maternal grandparents' house, because their only television was located in a corner of their dining room. Their small house, covered with green painted shingles and located just off Route 1 in Warwick, Rhode Island had only three rooms on the first floor, including the kitchen. In front was the living room, or parlor, as Mémère called it, which was anchored by a piano that Pépère played every day. If they wanted to watch TV, Pépère would sit in a rocking chair in the dining room while Mémère sat at the table. On holidays, there was far too much noise and congestion in the dining room to watch the Celtics, with up to sixteen people in their house, including seven of my young cousins.

Mother's Day 1982 was a typical holiday experience. After dinner, Dad suggested that we go out to our car and listen to the Celtics game on the radio. (He was not a big fan of a crowded house either.) It was game one of the Eastern Conference Finals against the 76ers, and we expected a close game. But as we settled into our black 1979 Ford Fairmont's red plastic seats – a particularly lethal combination during the summertime that forced us to cover them with blankets to avoid scalding our skin – it was clear from Johnny Most's voice that the Celtics were dominating the game. We heard the last quarter or so of the game, which the Celtics won 121-81 in the famous "Mother's Day Massacre." I was confident after that game that the Celtics would win the series and then their fourteenth world title, but I had a lot to learn about sports. Tiny Archibald dislocated his left shoulder in the opening minute of game three, and the Celtics lost to the 76ers in seven games as Andrew Toney torched a young, overmatched Danny Ainge. I would have to wait two more years before watching a championship-clinching win, albeit on "tape delay" since my parents had videotaped the fourth quarter after I had gone to bed.

More than fifteen years later, after I had graduated from high school and college, I was still following the Celtics religiously even though they were struggling through the darkest chapters of their history, including the deaths of Len Bias and Reggie Lewis and the decline of Red Auerbach. With the advent of sports talk-radio, I spent many hours listening to stations from Boston, Providence, and New York while commuting to and

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from work. On June 23, 1999, *Boston Globe* columnist Bob Ryan appeared on the “Mike and the Mad Dog” program on WFAN radio in New York before the fourth game of the NBA Finals, featuring the New York Knicks and the San Antonio Spurs. I had little interest in the game, but Ryan was always an interesting guest. The discussion turned into a debate on the greatest clutch players in sports history. Ryan mentioned that Bill Russell was undefeated in ten NBA game sevens, averaging eighteen points and thirty rebounds. Then, when Chris “Mad Dog” Russo suggested that Joe DiMaggio’s nine World Series championships and ten American League pennants in thirteen years were similar to Russell’s eleven NBA titles in thirteen years, Ryan responded: “Russell played in twenty-one “winner take all” games – one team will win, the other team will go home – in his NCAA, Olympic, and NBA career. His record was 21-0.”

I could hardly believe it. How could Russell have been so successful? By then, I knew how talented Russell was, and I understood how difficult it was to win *one* championship, never mind eleven, but a 21-0 record in “winner take all” games seemed incredible, even though it was a little misleading. The 1958 and 1967 Celtics had failed to win the title, but their final playoff losses were not in “winner take all” games.

Then in 2005, while reading a review of *The Rivalry*, John Taylor’s excellent book on Russell and Wilt Chamberlain, I decided to take a deeper look at those twenty-one games. When I discovered that ten of those games took place during the NCAA Tournament and the Olympics, I realized that I knew very little about that part of his career. Most books on the Celtics and Russell, including Taylor’s, relegated those years to a handful of pages at best. As I did more research, I realized that Russell’s career had coincided with a revolutionary period of basketball history, and my mind was racing with questions. How did the NBA, an eight team league in 1956 that had recently undergone contraction due to money problems, grow into a fourteen team circuit by 1968 with a newly signed contract for “officially licensed products” that was estimated to generate over \$100 million in annual sales? How did basketball transform itself from a regional and amateur-focused game in the fifties into a sport that featured two pro leagues with twenty-five teams from coast-

to-coast by the end of the sixties? And lastly, since the “Russell Era” (1954-1969) overlapped one of the most turbulent and transforming periods of American history, how did those forces affect basketball in America, and vice versa? That story begins with one family’s westward migration to escape the Jim Crow South.

Chapter 1

A Whole New World

BILL RUSSELL DID NOT HAVE AN EASY childhood. Charles and Katie Russell's youngest son was frequently sick as a child, including multiple cases of pneumonia that led family members to hold prayer vigils. Katie Russell adored her son, and gave him so much love and affection that he later described those moments of his childhood as "the best feeling there was." His father Charles was a less comforting influence, but was very supportive of his two sons, Bill and Charlie Jr. Bill Russell's 1979 autobiography, *Second Wind*, begins with a simple sentence – "My father is a strong man" – and Russell describes him as being "built like a heavyweight boxer" at 6'2" and 200 pounds. Russell consistently refers to him as "Mister Charlie" throughout the book, never using the more informal "Dad" or "Pop," but he also fondly recalled how his father would come home from a hard day of work at the Bancroft Bag Factory in their hometown of Monroe, Louisiana and energetically play hide-and-seek with Katie and their two boys. While Katie was the more openly affectionate parent, she was hardly a pushover. Once, when Charles came home after a relatively rough night of drinking, Katie knocked him in the head with a pipe, and Charles's father arrived to reprimand him. Bill wrote that "she was probably the only woman within a thousand miles who was a match for him," and believed that was the last night "Mister Charlie" ever went out drinking.

Russell's relationship with his paternal grandfather also dramatically shaped his life. The "Old Man," as relatives and neighbors alike called him, had been abandoned by his father in

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the 1880's and left to fend for himself as a young boy in the racially-charged South. He worked as a farmer until World War I and then hauled "logs, farm equipment, furniture or just about anything," initially with a horse-drawn buckboard, and later with a pickup truck. It was back-breaking work, but the "Old Man" was determined to spend his entire life working for himself and living in a home that he owned, and that self-sufficient streak of pride would be passed on to his grandson.

Like all black families living in Louisiana in the 1930's, racial prejudice was a daily fact of life for the Russell's. The adults in the family would try to refrain from discussing lynching or stories about the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist groups while the children were listening, but Bill remembered hearing stories of lynch mobs in nearby Ruston, Louisiana, and a famous family tale about the "Old Man" driving off the Klan from his farm with a shotgun. His grandfather believed that "[a] man has to draw a line inside himself that he won't allow any man to cross," and the rest of the Russell family agreed. While Katie Russell did not shield her children from the reality of what their skin color meant, telling them directly, "you are going to meet people who just don't like you on sight. And there's nothing you can do about it," she insisted that her sons refused to be controlled by other people's prejudice. Katie consistently drove home the message, "You're no better than anybody else, but no one's better than you."

Bill frequently saw such "dislike" first-hand. His mother was a fashionable dresser (another trait that Bill would inherit) and liked fashions that were fancier than those typically worn by black women, especially in Monroe. As a result, Katie was once harassed by a Monroe policeman for "dressing like a white woman." That confrontation ended peacefully, but Mister Charlie's temper almost led to tragedy one Saturday afternoon in the spring of 1942 when he chased after a white gas station attendant with a tire iron after being ignored in favor of later-arriving white customers. Bill and his brother watched the scene unfold from inside their father's truck. Afterward, Charles told his sons he regretted the incident because "I didn't have hold of myself," and feared he would have killed the attendant if he had caught him. Moreover, Charles added that he had allowed the

attendant to “take full possession of me, a grown man” – a sentiment that clearly resonated with Bill. Years later, after he had achieved stardom with the Celtics, he told a Boston Globe reporter that “prejudice is like fear. You have to overcome or conquer it.” Throughout his childhood in Louisiana, Russell viewed white kids as hostile adversaries who threw rocks at him and his (all black) schoolmates or on “lucky days” just engaged in vulgar name-calling. All of his family’s neighbors were black, with the exception of one white family whose patriarch was described by Bill as a shell-shocked World War I veteran who screamed so loudly during frequent nightmares that his shrieks regularly echoed through the neighborhood.

It was a different war that led the Russell’s out of Louisiana in 1943. The economic boom during World War II sparked a mass migration of blacks out of the South. During the 1940s, the percentage of black Americans who lived in the southern United States declined from seventy-seven to sixty-eight percent, as blacks moved in relatively equal numbers to metropolitan areas across the North, Midwest, and Western United States. The Russell’s were one of many families chasing economic opportunity and an escape from long-standing Jim Crow policies. In Monroe, Bill and his brother were attending the town’s black “school,” which was a poorly constructed one-room shack. Katie and Charles had always agreed on the importance of education (Bill’s middle name Felton was derived from Felton Clark, president of Southern University), and had intentionally limited the size of their family so they could provide better opportunities for their two sons. Katie always encouraged them to work hard, but Monroe’s school was clearly not going to prepare her sons for a better life.

Charles also chafed under discrimination at work. After being denied a raise because the manager refused to pay him more than some lower performing white workers at the bag factory, Charles abruptly quit, and on the advice of a friend, traveled to Detroit to work at a Ford Motor Company plant that had been converted for wartime production. When Charles learned that he did not like the cold Michigan weather, he decided to move again, this time to Oakland, California, which was booming due to the nearby shipyards in Alameda. Charles

quickly found work at the Moore Dry Dock Shipyard, and lived alone in a converted garage until he was able to find a larger place and send for Katie and his two boys. After the war ended, work at the shipyard dried up, and Charles followed in his father's footsteps, becoming an independent trucker who hauled fruit and laborers between the San Joaquin Valley and Oakland.

For the rest of the family, their railroad trip to California had been an eye-opener. After the train passed St. Louis, Bill saw that blacks and whites were no longer segregated, later writing that, "for the first time in our lives, we could sit anywhere." Bill and Charlie Jr. soon settled into a new school in Oakland that was far more modern – Bill would describe it as "a different world" – with separate grades and more a well-rounded curriculum. However, Oakland was not exactly a promised land for the new arrivals. At first, Charles was still working at the shipyard, a stressful environment where there was constant tension between long-time white male workers and the new flood of women and black laborers. The Russell's initially shared an eight-room house with eight other families, including one who lived in the garage. Bill remembered it as "a rotten, filthy hole," accompanied by the sights and sounds (and smells) of pigs, chickens and other animals being raised in the backyard. The Oakland police were hardly a breath of fresh air either, as the white officers frequently harassed Bill and other blacks, regularly calling them "niggers." Blacks were still a small minority in California as a whole, but during the war years the annual rate of growth of the black population in the state accelerated, growing at twenty-seven percent per year, while California's overall population was growing at about five percent. Soon the Russell's moved into a housing project which included both blacks and whites, albeit in separate sections. It was there that Bill began playing basketball.

The next challenge in Bill Russell's life was far more personal. Soon after the 1946 school year began, Katie was admitted to a local hospital with a mysterious flu-like illness. Although the children were told her condition was not that serious, within two weeks their mother was dead from kidney failure at the young age of thirty-two. Bill was just twelve, and later wrote that he "felt abandoned." Unlike his older brother,

who overcame his grief and blossomed into an athletic star after their mother's death, Bill was shattered, and his outgoing childhood personality was transformed into an introverted, awkward adolescence.

Bill found refuge in his studies and the book stacks of the Oakland Public Library, filling his free time by reading about historic figures such as the Haitian revolutionary Henri Christophe. As a "meek and shy" teenager, Bill did not fully grasp the evil of Christophe's tyrannical methods, but focused instead on the former slave's rise to power and his accomplishments. "[He] was my first hero after my mother. ... his life brought home to me for the first time that being black was not just a limiting feeling. Christophe could not be held back by anything, and his power reminded me of my mother." This was exactly the type of enlightening educational experience Katie Russell had wanted for her sons, and Charles was determined to honor his promise to her to send Bill and Charlie Jr. to college. After Katie's funeral in Monroe, Charles brought his sons back to Oakland over the strenuous objections of his late wife's family. Charles then gave up his trucking business, sacrificing his relative financial independence, and took a job as a low paid iron worker at the McCullough Foundry in Berkeley so he could spend more time at home.

Since Charlie Jr. was clearly a better athlete than Bill as a teenager, he was able to attend the mostly white Oakland Tech High School. Bill had to settle for McClymonds High School, named after J.W. McClymonds, a former long-time Oakland superintendent of schools. McClymonds had been a vocational school for most of its history, dating back to 1915 when it was founded with sixty students and shared the same building as Oakland Tech. Now inhabiting its own building on Myrtle Street, and featuring a regular high school curriculum, the student body was mostly black, with a small mixture of whites and recent Japanese and Mexican immigrants.

Bill tried to follow in his brother's footsteps as an athlete, but initially failed to make the cut for any of the McClymonds Warriors' varsity teams, unless you count his time as a mascot during football games (suing up in complete Indian garb including a headdress and a fake tomahawk), and was labeled by

one coach as the “bum of the family” compared to Charlie. The only coach that showed any interest in the lanky youngster was George Powles, who by chance had been Bill’s homeroom teacher in ninth grade at Hoover Junior High. Powles was now teaching at McClymonds and was appointed coach of the junior varsity basketball team despite his almost complete lack of knowledge about the game. A well-built white man with thick hair and an unusually idealistic attitude towards his students, Powles kept Bill on the team as an extra player and paid for his Boys Club membership so Bill could develop his game. Bill continued to grow, with hands that measured over ten inches from his wrists to his fingertips, but despite playing basketball at the club nearly every day, he felt that he had improved his game to just “adequate.” When Powles was promoted to varsity coach the next year, he had to encourage the 6’2”, 128 pound sophomore to try out, dismissing his low self-esteem by telling him, in words that echoed Katie Russell’s, “if you think the other guy is better than you are, he will be.”

Bill made the team but struggled. “He couldn’t even put the ball in the basket when he dunked,” according to his teammate, and future baseball Hall of Famer, Frank Robinson. Powles’ lack of basketball knowledge led him to allow the team to play a free-wheeling style that frustrated and infuriated opposing coaches who still viewed jump shots as heretical “hot dog” basketball; it was an accepted axiom in the early 1950s that basketball players should jump for rebounds but shoot set shots and layups from the floor. But Powles’ teams were also well-disciplined. Fearful that his black players would be blamed for starting a “riot,” Powles insisted that they stay out of fights and play clean, which resulted in McClymonds earning multiple Keyes Memorial Trophies for sportsmanship from the Oakland Athletic League. More importantly, McClymonds also won on the court, capturing the city championship in Bill’s senior year. “He [Powles] may not have known too much about basketball,” Bill later told *Sports Illustrated*, “but he taught me a lot of other things, how important your heart and your attitude is.”

Even more remarkably, the Warriors had won the title without Russell in the lineup at the end of the season. His hard work as a student in Monroe had paid off; he was moved a half-

year ahead in his class after arriving in Oakland, and then kept up his studies and was able to graduate in January 1952, which marked an important turning point in his life. Despite a brief meeting with superstar George Mikan three years earlier after an Lakers exhibition game in Oakland, and knowing that Paul Napolitano, a recent McClymonds graduate, had gone on to play in college and the NBA, Russell was not considering a career in basketball. He was still a mediocre player, unschooled in fundamentals. But Russell's early graduation meant that he was the only player from a suddenly strong McClymonds team who was eligible to play in an annual California high school tour organized by promoter Brick Swegle and co-sponsored by the Mohawk Athletic Club and the Oakland Jaycees.

Russell was able to focus completely on honing his basketball skills and instincts while playing against other high school all-star teams and even some college squads. "I was like a sponge on the whole trip," he later wrote, "soaking up whatever I could learn from the other players." Swegle did not impose much discipline on the court, so Russell focused on studying his teammates, learning not only fundamentals, but also training his mind to think about the game more intelligently. Russell later credited teammate Eural McKelvey as the first to introduce him to the concept of geometry in basketball, learning "which way the ball was likely to bounce from shots taken at certain spots on the court." Rather than complain about the long Greyhound bus rides between games, which ranged up to twelve hours as the tour stretched from California through Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia, Russell spent the time talking basketball and thinking about his moves around the basket, both offensively and defensively, which was unique in an era where defensive strategy usually took a back seat. The trips also allowed Russell to interact and form his first true friendships with whites his own age, since McKelvey and Russell were the only black players on the team.

Despite his success on the tour, Russell returned home planning to work as an apprentice at the San Francisco Naval Shipyards, as Katie's dream of a college education for both of her boys was withering in the face of the financial realities facing the family. But before Russell had a chance to become an expert

in the sheet-metal trade, an insurance man named Hal DeJulio visited the Russell's and offered Bill a tryout with the University of San Francisco Dons. The offer sounded incredible based on Russell's lackluster high school career, but Russell had picked the right day to have his best game as a McClymonds Warrior, a fourteen point effort in his final high school game, featuring several clutch baskets and smothering defense. DeJulio, who was a member of the 1949 USF team that had won the NIT championship, happened to be in the gym scouting some of Russell's better known teammates and opponents. "I could feel the magnetism of the kid," DeJulio later remembered. "He was raw – couldn't shoot – but he was all over the court, tenacious, tough in the clutch." Now DeJulio persuaded him to try out for Coach Phil Woolpert even though Russell previously had no idea that USF even existed.

The tryout took place in the St. Ignatius High School gym. Russell got lost and showed up late; after an uneven performance, Woolpert was impressed with Russell's on-court confidence but agreed with the portion of DeJulio's scouting report that disparaged his fundamentals. With no immediate commitment, Russell briefly went back to work at the shipyard, but Woolpert eventually offered Russell a full scholarship, a rarity in an era when very few "white" colleges recruited black players. The offer was even more remarkable given that the Jesuits who ran USF typically offered just 100 athletic scholarships as compared with 350 academic scholarships. Russell eagerly accepted the offer, which required him to "wash dishes and wait on tables" in the school cafeteria, but to stay at USF he needed to keep up on the court and in the classroom. Athletes on scholarship had to maintain at least a "C" average, and some of Russell's former high school teachers started a pool on how long Russell would stay enrolled.

Although the NCAA allowed freshmen to play varsity basketball in 1952, Russell was clearly not ready for varsity play. Fortunately for him, the coach of the USF freshman team was Ross Guidice, a former guard for the Dons who had hit the clinching free throw in their 1949 NIT championship victory and then went on to briefly teach at Riordian High School. Guidice was a tireless worker who freely offered to spend extra time with

his players after practice even after he started moonlighting as part owner of a San Francisco furniture store. Russell later wrote that “Guidice taught me quickly but gently how ignorant I was” about the finer points of basketball. Guidice’s pupil learned quickly, and developed better instincts for pivot play, including how to screen and pass effectively. The sessions paid off – Russell averaged twenty points per game as his team compiled an impressive 19-4 record, a stark contrast to the varsity’s 10-11 mark.

Off the court, Russell struggled to fit in. He was instantly recognizable on campus due to the combination of his skin color and towering height, surpassing 6’9” during his freshman year. Russell also had to adjust to his new roommate K.C. Jones, a soft-spoken sophomore who was so shy that the two barely spoke for a month. Then they quickly developed what would become a lifelong friendship based on their common love for talking about the technical details of basketball, reading as many magazine articles on the sport as they could get their hands on.

With Russell poised to join the varsity team, Woolpert was looking forward to the 1953-54 campaign after enduring three losing seasons in as many years as USF head coach. San Francisco won their opener against California, with Russell scoring twenty points and blocking thirteen shots, a promising sign for a team that had started the previous season with seven consecutive losses. But the optimism was short lived. The next day, K.C. Jones’ appendix burst, ending his season and costing him a semester of his studies as he slowly recovered. Then the team’s lack of chemistry surfaced. The Jesuits preached racial tolerance, but they could not control every student. The captain of the team, who was white, disliked Russell, who later recalled that “he never said anything to me that wasn’t an insult.” Russell preferred to let his game do his talking. In the fifth game of the season on December 22 at Brigham Young University, Russell’s teammates criticized his defense after he allowed an early basket. Russell proceeded to shut out the opposing center for the rest of the half. Although USF lost 68-61, the game was a pivotal moment in Russell’s young career. “Right there at half time in Provo (Utah) I decided that I was going to be a great basketball player. Everything inside me poured itself into that decision...”

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Looking back on that year, K.C. would call most of his teammates selfish underachievers, while Russell was more direct: “We had wall-to-wall jerks on that team, and we couldn’t win.” A nine-game stretch in the middle of the season in which they alternated wins and losses cemented their mediocrity, dragging their record down to 10-7, before finishing the season with a four game winning streak. More importantly, Russell pulled himself out of academic trouble that season and barely maintained his eligibility. Woolpert later told a story, perhaps apocryphal, in which he called Russell’s father to help motivate his star athlete to hit the books, while he negotiated with college officials to show leniency. While Russell would never miss a game at USF for academic reasons, he also would not earn a degree.

WITH K.C. FULLY RECOVERED, and most of the “jerks” graduated, the 1954-55 USF Dons stormed out of the gate, crushing Chico State 84-55 as Russell set a school record with thirty-nine points. Russell was joined in the San Francisco frontcourt by senior forwards Jerry Mullen and Stan Buchanan. Mullen was looking forward to playing a full season after missing six games the year before with a dislocated elbow, while the 6’3” Buchanan earned a starting spot after Bob Wiebusch suffered a shoulder injury in an exhibition game. Buchanan and Wiebusch had both played for Woolpert when he coached at St. Ignatius High School, and the former was a good rebounder who fit perfectly into Woolpert’s system.

Woolpert and Russell would frequently clash over their different approaches to defense, as Russell’s aggressive shot-blocking style was completely opposed to the conservative approach that Woolpert favored. While Woolpert also complained about Russell’s laziness in practice, it was difficult for him to argue with the results. Now a junior, Russell would average over twenty points and twenty rebounds per game, and he expertly used his amazing leaping ability – Russell could touch a point fourteen feet above the floor when he jumped from a running start – to block shots and trigger fast breaks that led to easy USF baskets. Even when San Francisco lost to UCLA 47-40 on December 11 to fall to 2-1, UCLA coach John Wooden exclaimed that “Russell played better defense than any center he

had ever seen.” Wooden was prescient. No one knew it at the time, but Russell would never lose again in his college career. Seven days later at the Cow Palace, Russell scored twenty-eight points, grabbed twenty-one rebounds, and helped USF hold UCLA and their heralded sophomore center Willie Naulls without a field goal for the first ten minutes of the game. USF defeated the Bruins 56-44.

Later in December, USF continued to build a national reputation during their trip to the All-College tournament in Oklahoma City. Seeded eighth out of eight teams, forced to room in a nearby college dorm after being turned away by hotels that refused to serve blacks, and playing in front of a bigoted crowd that hurled insults and coins at them during practices and games, USF took out their anger on their opponents. The Dons swept to the tournament championship by defeating Wichita, Oklahoma City and George Washington by an average of just under twenty points per game. Russell was sensational, especially on defense, providing K.C. Jones and backcourt mate Hal Perry the freedom to extend USF’s pressure beyond half court. Perry was elevated to a starting role after the loss to UCLA, as Woolpert inserted him into the lineup in place of Bill Bush, his former All-City star at St. Ignatius. Woolpert appreciated how hard Bush had worked to rehab from a back injury that had cost him his sophomore season, but Perry was better suited to play USF’s pressing defense. The switch also meant that USF was now starting three black players, evidence of Woolpert’s willingness to ignore skin color and focus on his players’ talents.

The Oklahoma City tourney was the latest in a string of remarkable defensive performances in which Russell was controlling the game under the basket while committing just seventeen fouls during the first ten games of the season. Russell scored twenty-three and grabbed thirty rebounds against George Washington, and his play caught the eye of their head coach, Bill Reinhart, whose remarks to the press in the following weeks were unmistakably glowing: “That Bill Russell of theirs is the finest player I’ve ever seen around the basket. Russell has wonderful coordination and is a tremendous defensive player... I won’t say he’s better than LaSalle’s Tom Gola or Duquesne’s Dick Ricketts. He’s a different type [of] player. I will say that he

does more for his team and is definitely superior three feet around the basket.” Reinhart was even more emphatic when he described Russell’s talent to one of his former players: “Red, you’ve got two years. Start planning now. This kid can be outstanding.” Celtics head coach Red Auerbach was impressed with the strength of Reinhart’s praise and made a mental note to get in touch with Phil Woolpert to monitor “this kid’s” progress.

USF returned home and kept winning, highlighted by a 76-60 win over Stanford that drew a record crowd of 13,824 to the Cow Palace and prompted Indians coach Howie Dallmar to say that Russell “plays at seven-foot-ten.” By February USF was 18-1 and had knocked Kentucky from the top spot in the national polls after the Wildcats lost twice to Georgia Tech. Using a stifling defense that included a 2-2-1 full court zone press designed to force turnovers and rattle their opponents, USF ended the regular season on March 2 with a 73-61 win against Santa Clara, the defending California Basketball Association champions, to run their winning streak to twenty-one games and raising their record to 23-1. Russell earned first team All-American honors, and Phil Woolpert was named coach of the year.

On the strength of their record and CBA conference title, USF was selected for the NCAA tournament, their first postseason appearance since 1950, when the defending NIT champs had lost to eventual NIT champion CCNY 65-46 in the first round. Woolpert was not concerned that his team would be satisfied with their success so far. “This is a hungry team,” Woolpert told reporters. “Their appetites are such that they can do a lot of eating before they’re filled up.” USF opened the tournament against West Texas State, the champions of the Co-Border Conference who had won a coin flip with Texas Tech to qualify for a trip to San Francisco. The Buffaloes had compiled a 14-5 record under head coach Gus Miller, but the small school from Canyon, Texas (outside Amarillo) was no match for USF, despite a pair of hard fouls on Russell early in the game that sent him crashing to the floor. The rough play fired up the entire USF team. USF led 46-33 by halftime and won 89-66 despite twenty-four points by the Buffaloes’ James Scott. Russell led the Dons

with twenty-nine points while teammate Jerry Mullen added twenty in front of a partisan crowd at the Cow Palace.

USF then traveled to Corvallis, Oregon to play Utah, who had received a first-round bye as the champions of the Skyline Conference. The Utes were enjoying their best season in over a decade, as Coach Jack Gardner, who had twice taken Kansas State to the NCAA national semifinals before succeeding Vadal Peterson at Utah in 1953, had engineered a remarkable turnaround. Peterson convinced future New York Knicks draft choices Art Bunte and Gary Bergen to transfer to Utah, with the 6'8" Bergen following his coach from Kansas State and Bunte arriving from Colorado to play center despite his short 6'3" frame. Now eligible to play after sitting out a year, they teamed with Morris Buckwalter to lead Utah to a 24-3 record that included a conference-best 13-1 mark; those thirteen conference wins represented more victories than the team had earned in the entire 1953-54 season (12-14). After back-to-back losses against Kentucky and Southern California in late December, Utah proceeded to win sixteen of their last seventeen games, with the only blemish a two-point overtime loss in Provo against Brigham Young. Utah's prospects for defeating USF seemed to improve when Russell began suffering from a bad cold that required penicillin to treat it, but the Dons still smothered the Utes in the early going and led 41-20 at halftime. During the break, Russell appeared to be spitting up blood and the Oregon State doctor declared him out for the second half. His "diagnosis" can certainly be regarded as questionable, since Oregon State had already defeated Seattle and would play the winner of the USF-Utah game. While Utah closed to within eight points with Russell on the bench, USF alumni and staff frantically searched for a contrary medical opinion. Fortunately for the Dons, there was a friendly doctor in the house, USF alum Ed Duggan, who claimed that Russell was actually coughing up pieces of his pregame meal – a raw steak – and cleared him to play. With the Dons able to resume their pressing defense, Russell helped hold Bergen and Bunte to twelve points each, while Buckwalter and Bergen both fouled out trying to contain the San Francisco offense. USF won the game comfortably, 78-59, with Jerry Mullen leading all scorers with twenty-four points.

The next night, a weakened Russell and the rest of the Dons had to face the Oregon State Beavers on their own home floor in Corvallis, Gill Coliseum. The arena was built in 1949 and named after long-time head coach Slats Gill, who took over his alma mater's basketball team four years after graduating in 1924. Although Gill's achievements were already legendary, including five Pacific Coast Conference titles and two trips to the NCAA tournament, there was resistance to naming a building after a living person. A Portland newspaperman was incredulous – "What do they want us to do? Shoot Slats?" Described as a "stern, fair, fatherly man, with sad eyes and thick, gray-streaked hair" who would begin every day by talking basketball at a local restaurant, Gill also had a good sense of humor, saying on more than one occasion that since his given name was Amory Tingle Gill, he didn't mind being called "Slats."

Oregon State was led by 7'3" center Swede Halbrook, who towered over Russell but shared a similar wingspan. John Wooden was among those who thought Russell would be overmatched: "Russell's the greatest defensive man I've ever seen, but I don't see how he can cope with Swede Halbrook." Halbrook had been academically ineligible when USF defeated Oregon State 60-34 back on December 17, so this meeting was eagerly anticipated. The game started disastrously for the Dons, as Jerry Mullen sprained an ankle in the opening minute, briefly left the game for treatment, and would return to score just two points, both on free throws. With Halbrook and 7'0" teammate Phil Shadoin double-teaming Russell, USF held a narrow 30-27 lead at the half. It was their first significant test in weeks.

In the second half USF built a ten point lead as Russell dominated the boards and shouldered the offensive load for the Dons, making eleven of the team's eighteen field goals en route to twenty-nine points for the game. Oregon State refused to back down, playing what Slats Gill would later call "the best game any team of mine ever played." The Beavers trailed by only two points, 57-55, as the Dons prepared to inbound the ball with thirteen seconds left. But then K.C. Jones was called for a questionable offensive foul before USF could put the ball in play. Jones collided with Bill Toole while running back onto the court and was whistled for a technical foul, turning the ball over to

Oregon State and giving the Beavers a free throw, which they made to cut the lead to 57-56. With the game in the balance, Ron Robins, a good shooter, missed a jumper and Halbrook grabbed the rebound but lost the ball in a scuffle with Jones. The officials called it a jump ball, which put the 6'1" Jones in an unenviable position. "I didn't have a chance to win the jump," he later recalled, "so I allowed him to win it, and tried for the steal. It worked. I tipped it over to [Hal] Perry and we hold on for a one-point win." The Dons had quieted the 11,200 partisan fans with a thrilling victory.

With the national semifinals slated to start in Kansas City six days later, USF was hopeful that Jerry Mullen would be recovered enough from his ankle injury to play against Colorado, but team doctor James Daly put his chances at no more than "50-50." Bebe Lee, a college teammate of Hank Luisetti at Stanford, had built his Big Seven champions around a pair of seniors, center Burdette Haldorson and forward Bob Jeangerard. Haldorson, who had set school records for rebounds in a game (thirty-two), season, and career, and averaged twenty-one points and nearly fourteen rebounds a game that season, dominated the Buffs regional final game against Tulsa, scoring twenty-eight points in a 69-59 victory. Against San Francisco, Colorado more than held their own for the first fifteen minutes of the game, despite losing starting point guard Tommy Harrold to a freak ankle injury when he slipped on the court just before tip-off. Colorado held an early 16-15 lead after Jones picked up his third foul and headed to the bench. With Mullen out for most of the game (he played thirteen minutes but did not score), Wiebusch replaced him in the starting lineup, and reserve Warren Baxter helped take up the slack, scoring seven points as the lead changed hands six times during the opening half. Baxter's shot from half-court at the halftime buzzer gave the Dons a 25-19 lead. In the second half, Russell took over the game. A frustrated Haldorson was held to nine points and six rebounds, on just three-of-eleven shooting from the floor, and fouled out with Colorado trailing 30-21. USF promptly went on a 14-5 run, and coasted to a 62-50 win. Russell scored twenty-four points and collected nine rebounds, while guard Hal Perry added ten, the

only other Don to score in double figures. Only LaSalle now stood in the way of USF's first NCAA championship.

The LaSalle Explorers were the defending NCAA champions, featuring All-American Tom Gola and a strong lineup that had lost only four games during the regular season, including "quality losses" against Utah, Kentucky, and eventual NIT champion Duquesne. In their first three NCAA tournament games, LaSalle trounced West Virginia, Princeton, and Canisius by an average of thirty-two points. Facing Iowa in their national semifinal game, the Explorers were comfortably ahead for most of the game, leading by nine at halftime and by six with ten minutes left. With Gola scoring twenty-three points to lead all scorers, along with thirteen rebounds, LaSalle survived a late Iowa rally to win 76-73 and advance to the title game. Coach Ken Loeffler, who had compiled a 52-8 record over the last two seasons, graduated from Penn State in 1924 and took his first head coaching job with Geneva in 1928. After seven seasons there, he moved on to Yale, never finishing higher than third place in the Ivy League. Following World War II, Loeffler briefly moved on to the pros, coaching for St. Louis and Providence in the BAA. By 1949 he was back in the college ranks at LaSalle. Described as a "well-rounded man" who believed that dunking should be prohibited to prevent seven-footers from making a "travesty" of the game, Loeffler led LaSalle to the postseason in each of his six seasons as head coach, including an NIT championship in 1952 and the NCAA title they would now attempt to defend against San Francisco.

Team captain Tom Gola was unquestionably one of the best college players in the country, averaging a double-double (points and rebounds) in each of his four varsity seasons. Although the 6'7" center would be dwarfed by Russell, Woolpert had plenty of cause for concern. Gola had averaged twenty-three points and twenty-one rebounds as a junior, winning the NCAA tournament Most Outstanding Player award while leading LaSalle to the title, and returned to post nearly identical marks of 24.2 points and 19.9 rebounds per game this season. Woolpert's initial strategy for dealing with Gola was to put Russell on him since Jerry Mullen was still hobbling from his injury. But Woolpert was concerned that Gola's outside shooting ability

would pull Russell away from the basket, leaving him out of position for rebounds and neutralizing his shot blocking ability. So Woolpert chose K.C. Jones to guard him despite a six inch height disadvantage. Jones relished the challenge: "Entering the game, my plan was simple. I wanted to keep Gola outside and not allow him to have penetration." The plan worked perfectly in the first half; Gola scored nine points, but USF built a 35-24 lead by holding LaSalle scoreless over the last nine and half minutes. Woolpert later said: "His blocks, his leaps to wrest the ball from Gola--you'd say they were impossible, but K.C. did them with the greatest game of his life." While Mullen contributed despite his injury, scoring ten points before fouling out, Jones also provided some much needed offense, outscoring Gola 24-16. With over two hundred enthusiastic San Francisco fans in the stands, including Russell's father, Jones's mother, and Mullen's entire family, USF captured their first NCAA championship with a 77-63 victory. Russell was transcendent, carried off by his teammates at the end of the game after scoring twenty-three points and grabbing twenty-five rebounds despite being held to just five points in the second half. Russell was named the Most Outstanding Player for the tournament, the first African-American player to capture that award. When the team's TWA flight touched down back in San Francisco, they were greeted by six hundred cheering fans and feted with a downtown ticker tape parade. Supporters were also backing up their cheers with checks. The University had begun a campaign to raise money to build their first on-campus gym, and had now raised nearly half of the estimated \$700,000 cost. Russell was even invited to the White House that summer for a physical fitness meeting with President Eisenhower and popular pro sports stars such as Willie Mays and Bob Cousy, a remarkable honor for a young man who two years earlier was a fairly anonymous junior varsity player at an obscure university in California. Bill Russell and his teammates were now national stars.

Chapter 2

Unstoppable Force

AFTER WINNING THE NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP, the USF team went on an exhibition tour of South America. The trip was enlightening in many ways. One game in Bolivia was cancelled because the stadium was located high in the mountains and the visiting Dons could not catch their breath. Players were frequently sick from the local food and water they consumed, and many were not prepared for the level of poverty they encountered. Their faculty advisor, Father Ralph Tichenor, made sure they saw the local “sights.” K.C. Jones later wrote, “Parts of South America shocked me. Lord knows I had lived through some tough patches growing up, but I have never seen anything like [that].... It made me aware that both deprivation and gain are relative.” It was certainly a humbling experience for a team that was being praised at home as the best college team in America.

The Jesuits who founded USF as St. Ignatius College in 1855 prided themselves on emphasizing quality education rather than success in sports. Located near the northeast corner of Golden Gate Park, the beautiful campus sits atop “Lone Mountain,” one of the highest peaks in the city, which is more casually known as the “Hilltop.” The surrounding skyline is dominated by the ornate towering spires and dome of St. Ignatius Church, an elegant baroque structure on Fulton Street, the heart of the USF campus. The small university with just 2,500 students – ninety-eight percent white males – did not yet have its own gym, forcing the basketball team to frequently practice at nearby St. Ignatius High School, and play its “home” games at Kezar Pavilion, San Jose Auditorium, or the Cow Palace. While Kezar

was convenient, close enough to the campus for the players to carpool, it was cramped and aesthetically unpleasant, with rusty steel beams dotting the stands to support its roof. The larger Cow Palace, which had been hosting basketball games since a December 1947 doubleheader that drew 9,219 fans to watch USF, California, St. Mary's, and the Oakland Bittners AAU team, derived its unique name from its original purpose as a venue for livestock shows.

The school's priorities were clearly on display in 1951 when they dropped their high-profile football program. Five years earlier, they had lured former Notre Dame football star Maurice "Clipper" Smith, a successful coach at Santa Clara and Villanova before the war, to sign a five year contract to coach at USF. But Smith's first season was also his last, as the Dons finished 3-6 and were rocked by allegations that several players had received illegal payoffs. Smith and the school agreed to part ways, with Smith moving on to coach the NFL's Boston Yanks while school officials began to reconsider their commitment to football. Smith's replacement, Ed McKeever, improved the team's record to 7-3 but also left after one season to coach the pro Chicago Rockets in the AAFC. Joe Kuharich, one of McKeever's assistants, took over the squad and turned it into a powerhouse, featuring future NFL Hall of Famers Ollie Matson, Gino Marchetti, and Bob St. Clair. The Dons finished undefeated in 1951, ending their 9-0 season with a 20-2 win over Loyola of Los Angeles, but the sparse crowd of fewer than 16,000 fans was an example of why the school was losing money on the team. USF was one of seven undefeated schools in the country, and several bowls showed interest in the Dons – if they left blacks Ollie Matson and Burl Toler on the sidelines. When their teammates refused to yield to the unwritten rule in the South that prohibited blacks from playing sports with whites, USF was unable to secure a bowl invitation. Their decision was supported by the school, but officials then dropped the football program, citing money concerns. Football history was dramatically altered as a result, as USF's young public relations director decided that he needed to find a new job if he was going to pursue a serious future in sports. So when Dan Reeves, the owner of the NFL's Los Angeles Rams, made him an offer to become his public

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relations director, future NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle accepted and left San Francisco.

AS AN UNDERGRADUATE IN THE LATE 1940S, Rozelle had worked in the USF sports information office and also helped promote the basketball team, which had its own winning tradition. Phil Woolpert was a basketball descendant of the first great coach in USF history, Jimmy Needles, whose 1929 squad posted a 21-2 record. After Needles coached the 1936 U.S. Olympic basketball team to a gold medal, he moved on to Loyola of Los Angeles, compiling a 48-39 record in four seasons from 1937 to 1940, with a roster of players that included Woolpert and his roommate Pete Newell. Newell was hired by USF upon his discharge from the Navy after World War II, and two years later, in 1948, Woolpert was brought in to coach the USF freshman team.

While Woolpert balanced his USF duties with his other job as coach of the St. Ignatius High School basketball team, Newell's varsity unit, featuring All-American forward Don Lofgran and future coaches Ross Guidice and Hal DeJulio, won the 1949 NIT championship. A year later, Newell left for a larger salary at Michigan State, and the thirty-five year old Woolpert succeeded him. For the always tense Woolpert, who was rarely seen without a cigarette, a series of headaches soon followed. Although Woolpert used a style similar to Newell's, described by *The Sporting News* as "a slow break – what he calls a reverse action, another word for a set offense – using the fast break only when the situation demands," the talent on the floor simply was not good enough, and the team struggled to a 30-41 record over his first three seasons. Woolpert's natural nervous temperament, once described as enough to "make coffee nervous," was hardly soothed when alumni openly criticized him for losing and his willingness to recruit black players.

Faced with the Jesuits' budgetary restrictions, which forced Woolpert to also serve as the Dons' golf coach and tennis coach, but buoyed by their socially progressive views, the former guard and social worker at the Army's Schofield Barracks stockade in Hawaii aggressively recruited local talent, regardless of their skin color. Woolpert was born in Danville, Kentucky but

spent his teenage years in an integrated neighborhood in Depression-era Los Angeles, and his beliefs were far more liberal than his conservative outward appearance – a white man with a thin mustache and a well-groomed, receding hairline – initially suggested to recruits. He also had to overcome intolerance among USF’s alumni, who became openly critical of the numbers of blacks on the team as “scarcely representative of the school.” (Woolpert coolly responded that such discriminatory comments were also “scarcely representative” of USF.) Despite what the Jesuits taught their students about individual rights, only one black player, Carl Lawson, had ever played on the basketball team before Woolpert took the top coaching job, and the entire 1952 USF freshman class included just two blacks, Russell and Hal Perry. “He went through hell,” Perry later said, recalling how Woolpert chose to ignore taunts from fans and opposing coaches. Russell also had frequent run-ins with white students – decking one who tried to nickname him “Snowball” during his junior year – and school officials who he felt were predisposed to discriminate against him because he was more confrontational in the face of racial slights than K.C. Jones and other blacks on campus.

While his early teams were racked by internal dissention and racial tension, Woolpert worked hard to build a spirit of teamwork as he filled the roster with his own recruits. Jones later described how Woolpert emphasized “the necessity of supporting your teammates.... We never criticized one another’s play. Our goal was the team’s success. Everyone on the squad, black and white, believed the team came first.” Part of this togetherness came from their common background as members of working to middle-class families. With the exception of Perry, who was from the northern California town of Ukiah, and seldom used backup John Koljian, who hailed from Springfield, Massachusetts – but had transferred to USF from Menlo College along with Redding, California native Mike Preaseau – the rest of the team was from the Bay Area. Senior guard Warren Baxter, who had transferred from City College of San Francisco and was one of five blacks on the 1955-56 club, was the son of an insurance claims representative. Bill Mallen’s father was a real estate broker. Guard Bill Bush, who eventually graduated magna

cum laude with a B.S. in Spanish and later earned a law degree, lived with his widowed mother on Nineteenth Street while his brother Harold served in the Army. The camaraderie extended off the court; Jones and Preaseau, who was white, would go out at night together to black nightclubs.

On the court, the team spent more time in practice on the details of defense than most of their opponents. Woolpert's reasoning was simple – “We figure to have the ball only about half the time in a game, so in practice, we work on defense half the time.” Jones later recalled, “We would practice against a right-handed dribbler, then against a left-handed dribbler. We learned how to make an opponent concentrate on getting rid of the ball, rather than what was happening downcourt.” While Russell's leaping and shot-blocking ability were obvious assets for such a defensive-minded coach, he continued to have a complicated relationship with Woolpert. Ten years later, Russell would write, “I was not fond of Woolpert as a coach, but I liked him as a man ... sometimes. I believed then and I believe now that he played favorites. I think he injured the team in the manner in which he played his favorites....” Russell was particularly upset when Woolpert named Jerry Mullen captain in 1954 instead of allowing the players to vote, as Russell was convinced that Jones would have won the honor. Russell also resented Woolpert's lack of personal praise on and off the court and his coach's tendency to declare every victory a “team win.”

As the defending champions prepared to start the 1955-56 season, the press and opposing coaches and players regularly spoke of USF as having improved in the offseason. *The Sporting News* picked the Dons to repeat, with Kentucky, Utah, Dayton, and UCLA rounding out their top five, and named Russell to their preseason All-American team. The NCAA rules committee was so intimidated by Russell's talent that they had voted to widen the free throw lane from six to twelve feet to try to limit his effectiveness. Woolpert thought the change was “absurd” but Russell publicly claimed that he liked it. “I think it has helped me a lot by making me use shots I never had before,” Russell said, before adding, with a touch of humor, that the change had little effect on him because it enhanced his quickness advantage over

slower centers. “They didn’t get the tall ones with the rule change; they just killed the fat ones.”

While starting forwards Jerry Mullen and Stan Buchanan had graduated, newcomers Carl Boldt and Mike Farmer were more than capable replacements. Boldt, a former junior college All-American at Glendale College, had been recently discharged from the Army after playing basketball for two years at Fort Ord with former USF star Don Lofgran, while the 6’8” Farmer had set California high school scoring records as a center but needed to adjust to playing forward. Woolpert worried that “[w]ith inexperience at the forwards, I’m afraid we could run into trouble playing [defense] as tightly as last season.” The other new addition was Gene Brown, who had been the leading scorer on the 1953-54 USF freshman team but spent the following year in junior college to regain his academic eligibility. Brown had initially been viewed by Woolpert as a forward, but was shifted to the backcourt to better utilize his speed and defensive instincts. By January, Duquesne coach Dudey Moore was telling reporters that he believed Brown could start on nearly any other team in the country, a remarkable turn of events given that USF was the only college to actively recruit Brown, who was black.

Even with all of the roster changes, Russell was poised for an even more dominating season, and with returning guards K.C. Jones and new captain Hal Perry continuing to press the opposition, USF was still viewed as the best defensive team in the country. Perry was just 5’7”, but his shooting and dribbling skills were excellent, and he was a natural athlete, having starred in four sports while in high school. His outgoing personality also made him a natural leader, an ability Perry had demonstrated back in Ukiah when he was elected student body president of his high school.

Woolpert needed quality depth in the backcourt because he entered the season knowing that Jones had been ruled ineligible for the upcoming NCAA tournament. Jones’s appendicitis attack in late 1953 had cost him nearly an entire year, and while USF’s conference granted him a fifth year of eligibility, the NCAA stuck to the letter of the law and barred him from postseason play. His illness had been just the latest adversity that Jones had faced in his young life. Naturally soft-

spoken, Jones's shyness had its origins back on his first day of school as a seven-year old in MacGregor, Texas when he was embarrassed in front of the class by their teacher because he could not read. "Books were not a part of our life," Jones later wrote. "Sometimes we didn't have enough food, so getting a square meal had much higher priority than reading." K.C.'s mother Eula was "a very quiet person by nature," while his father, also named K.C., was much more outgoing, singing and playing guitar in their church's music group. Music was his son's only outlet, and K.C. began to regularly sing in a quartet at church. "Growing up it was the only time I wasn't afraid to open my mouth."

By the time K.C. was nine his parents had separated, and his mother took him and his four siblings to San Francisco for a new start. They settled into the Double Rock public housing project, located on the future site of Candlestick Park. Double Rock was a series of two-story barracks that had been built as cheap temporary housing for wartime workers. K.C. later described their economic situation as grim – "we were on welfare from the day we arrived" – but their new environment was so liberating compared with segregated Texas that it made their poverty bearable. "It seemed to be a world where everybody got a chance. There were Mexicans, Chinese, Blacks, Irish – imagine – in the same school! In the same room! When you got on the bus you sat wherever you wanted." After years of segregation, second-class citizenship and avoiding white people, K.C. realized that "whites could be nice people too...." However, the opportunities San Francisco offered in sports had the most lasting effect on K.C. He had played football and softball back in Texas, but it wasn't until he was in eighth grade in San Francisco that he began playing basketball every day either on outdoor courts or in a local recreation center. By the time K.C. started attending Commerce High School, he was a 5'9" scorer who set records on offense but was indifferent towards defense. After one particularly poor lapse, his coach pulled him out of practice, yelling, "Jones, you can't play defense worth a damn." It was just the motivation he needed to start developing that side of his game. A two-sport star, K.C. eventually made the All Northern

California all-star teams for football and basketball, averaging eighteen points per game.

Then economics threatened to end his basketball career. K.C.'s grades were poor, as most of his time off the court was consumed by odd jobs to help support his family. Were it not for the relationship that existed between Phil Woolpert and one of his teachers at Commerce, Mildred Smith, along with a planted newspaper story by Al Corona of the San Francisco Chronicle that (falsely) alleged that K.C. was drawing interest from every major school on the West Coast, he probably would have become a mailman. Woolpert began checking on him, and introduced himself at halftime of the city championship game between Commerce and St. Ignatius. K.C. was not in a good mood, as he had already fouled out of the game – the first time he had fouled out all season – while guarding his future college teammate Bill Bush. Commerce went on to lose the game, but a scholarship offer from Woolpert changed his life.

K.C.'s transition to USF was rocky. First, he got lost and missed the entrance exam – similar to how Russell had trouble en route to his tryout – and then he grew four inches, gaining the extra height he always wanted but losing his shooting accuracy as a consequence. “I tried everything to get my shot back. Nothing seemed to work.” While K.C. would occasionally show flashes on offense, he averaged fewer than six points per game as a freshman on the varsity team, and realized that he needed “to accept my new limits as a shooter and change my game,” focusing instead on playmaking and defense.

Jones's relationship with Woolpert helped ease the transition. Soon after enrolling, K.C. had decided to quit school and get a job to help his family. Woolpert then arranged for his mother to work as a maid at the Saint Francis Hotel, and K.C. remained at USF. Unlike Russell, Jones would unconditionally praise Woolpert in future years. “Phil Woolpert made all the difference. The Jesuits were firm and fair. They reached out to me, but it was Phil who put his arm around me.” Woolpert's interest in him off the court helped motivate Jones to work hard in the classroom, and when K.C. spurned an offer of a \$5,000 bonus from the Lakers, who had drafted him in 1955 (when his original class at USF had graduated), the coach was just as proud

of the fact that he was returning to school to finish his history degree as he was that K.C. would play another season for USF. In the 1955 USF Yearbook, Woolpert had effusive praise for his backcourt star. "He is the 'come-through' guy when we desperately need a basket to get under way. I can't explain to you how important a man he is on the team."

SOON AFTER BILL RUSSELL had burst onto the national scene during his junior season, the growing civil rights movement gained a dynamic leader in the fall of 1955. Although the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision had been announced a year earlier, school integration progress had been slow, and had not brought about a wider end to segregation that some had hoped would happen. President Dwight Eisenhower was still only willing to gently "prod" the South into compliance with *Brown*, but events were starting to advance beyond Eisenhower's control, as the movement was being driven forward by the increasing economic power of black Americans.

The next chapter in the civil rights struggle began the afternoon before USF's 1955-56 season opener at Kezar Pavilion. Rosa Parks, a forty-two-year-old tailor's assistant at the Montgomery Fair department store, was waiting to board a bus that she rode every evening to commute back to her home at 634 Cleveland Avenue. After a hard day of work, Parks was not in the mood to submit to the intimidation tactics of the Montgomery City Bus Lines drivers, particularly J.F. Blake. On an earlier trip, Blake had had Parks removed from his bus when she refused to exit the bus and re-enter using the back entrance after paying her ten cent fare, as was the expected custom. Like most cities in the South, Montgomery's buses were segregated, but drivers in Montgomery had the discretion to reduce the size of the black section if more whites than expected entered the bus. Blacks comprised the majority of the rider ship, as the white section was typically the first ten rows while the blacks had to sit in one of the twenty-six rows in the back. Now, on the afternoon of December 1, as the white section filled up, Blake ordered Parks and three other blacks who had sat in the first "black row" to move further back. Parks refused, in part because she was physically exhausted, but also because she was mentally tired of

being treated as a second-class citizen. Blake called the police, and Parks was removed from the bus with no further incident. A well-educated woman, Parks had served as a secretary for a local NAACP official, E.D. Nixon, and she refused to give authorities any reason to press additional charges. After Parks was officially convicted of violating segregation laws on December 5, she decided to allow the NAACP to use her case to pursue improved conditions for blacks on the city's buses.

While Parks was being convicted and charged a \$14 fine, community leaders approached the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., the charismatic leader of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, to lead the newly formed Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). King was just twenty-six years old, and had been in Montgomery only fifteen months, but the dynamic preacher had been actively pushing for reforms since the previous spring, when he unsuccessfully challenged the arrest of fifteen-year-old Claudette Colvin for a nearly identical offense. A bus boycott had been discussed back then, since similar tactics had been used in cities such as Baton Rouge, and the idea had been gaining momentum in Montgomery even before Parks's arrest. Now over 5,000 of the city's blacks, including Parks, met at the Holt Street Baptist Church, and King faced an audience that was primed to take action. His rousing speech that evening stressed both non-violence and persistence. "[W]e must stick together and work together if we are to win and we will win in standing up for our rights as Americans," King said. "[W]e are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice runs down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream." The cheering crowd formally agreed to boycott the city's buses "until the bus transportation situation is cleared up to the 'satisfaction of citizens' who ride and patronize them."

King prepared his listeners for a long fight, but he knew that economics was on their side – depriving the Montgomery City Bus Lines of 30,000 to 40,000 bus fares a day would severely hurt the company's bottom line. By January, as the MIA sponsored carpools to keep the boycott going, the bus company demanded and received approval for a fare increase, which had a two-fold effect – it buoyed the spirits of the boycotters, who saw

tangible results from their actions, and it irritated whites who still needed to ride the buses to and from work.

Montgomery police began to harass the carpoolers, arresting King on January 26 on a trumped up “speeding” charge. Police arrested over eighty people in early 1956 using a thirty-five year old law that prohibited boycotts, and the FBI began compiling a list of protesters for “informational use.” King’s family was also targeted. At 9:15pm on January 30, a bomb was thrown onto the front porch of their home at 309 S. Jackson Street. King’s wife Corretta knew something was wrong when she heard a sound “like a brick hitting on the porch,” and quickly ran to the back of the house where her baby daughter Yolanda was resting. The bomb exploded just as Corretta reached her room, tearing a hole in the porch and shattering all four front windows. No one was injured, and later that night, flanked by city officials, King spoke in front of his damaged home, urging the boycott’s supporters to remain “peaceful.”

WSFA-TV, which had started broadcasting less than a year before Parks’ arrest, was the first Montgomery television station to provide local news coverage, and now eagerly covered the drama of the boycott. News director Frank McGee had grown up in a poor family that moved between Louisiana and Oklahoma, and his humble background made him much more sensitive to the plight of blacks than the local newspapers whose editorial boards were entrenched in white Southern society. As the boycott continued, month after month, the continuing coverage in Montgomery and across the country continued to increase Martin Luther King’s profile. The following summer, the NAACP invited King to speak at their forty-seventh annual convention in San Francisco, where he was greeted enthusiastically by the crowd. King persevered throughout 1956 despite considerable personal risk; in addition to the bombing of his house, he continued to receive a “staggering” amount of hate mail, and spent many sleepless nights realizing how unprepared he was to face the force of Southern resistance to civil rights. Finally, on November 13, 1956, nearly a year after the boycott began, the Supreme Court ruled against the Montgomery bus segregation law. As they prepared for the desegregation order to take effect on December 21, King and other MIA leaders drew

up a list of “Suggestions for Integrating Buses” that was distributed throughout the city. The seventeen suggestions focused on how to accept their victory with dignity. “Remember that this is not a victory for Negroes alone, but for all Montgomery and the South. ... Be quiet but friendly; proud, but not arrogant; joyous, but not boisterous... Do not deliberately sit by a white person, unless there is no other seat.” There were also some words of caution: “For the first few days try to get on the bus with a friend in whose nonviolence you have confidence.” To reinforce the point, leaders organized “teaching sessions” and used role playing exercises to walk through various scenarios to try to prevent violence that could tarnish their achievement. The result was a mostly smooth transition from segregation to integration, and strengthened King’s reputation across the country.

AS THE DRAMA IN MONTGOMERY UNFOLDED, the USF Dons began their season in dominating fashion. They defeated Chico State 70-39, with Russell controlling twenty-six rebounds and adding fifteen points, then the next day Russell scored twenty-five more against USC in a 58-42 win. Russell played just twenty-three minutes after shooting eleven-for-sixteen from the floor and grabbing twenty rebounds, as Woolpert, who refused to run up the score, pulled Russell out of the game early in the second half with USF up by twenty-five. After crushing San Francisco State by the same margin, the Dons were on the road for the rest of December, sweeping to the championship of the DePaul Invitational tournament in Chicago with wins over Marquette and DePaul, the latter victory featuring twenty-three points by K.C. Jones and fifteen blocks by Russell.

Then the Dons saw the rampant segregation in the South first hand when they traveled to New Orleans to play Loyola University on December 23. USF and Loyola shared a common Jesuit heritage, and the latter had desegregated in 1952 with little fanfare or controversy. But New Orleans was still a Southern city. The white and black players were forced to room in different facilities, with the whites staying in a hotel while the blacks lived in a dorm at all-black Xavier University. Tensions were running high in the wake of the events in Montgomery, and

Russell attempted to diffuse them the night before the game by giving a gracious speech at a banquet that was held to honor Warren Baxter, who had been a high school star in New Orleans before moving with his family to California. Still, there were distasteful racial catcalls from white spectators. The integrated crowd of 5,500 watched as Woolpert deliberately used an all-black lineup – Russell, Jones, Perry, Brown and Baxter – to display his feelings about racial tolerance. Russell scored twenty points, and the 61-43 victory raised San Francisco's record to 7-0.

San Francisco then traveled to New York for the Eastern College Athletic Conference Holiday Festival. The fourth annual ECAC tournament was the highlight of the regular season at Madison Square Garden; the field was highly competitive, featuring both the defending NCAA and NIT champions (USF and Duquesne, respectively), UCLA, Eastern schools LaSalle, Holy Cross, Syracuse, and local favorites Fordham and St. John's. USF arrived in New York having won thirty-three games in a row, and fans turned out in record numbers to see Russell and his teammates, setting a festival attendance record of 61,788 fans for six doubleheaders played over three days, with the USF games drawing the most interest. For most New Yorkers, this was their first chance to watch Russell play live, because there was little television coverage of college basketball in the mid-1950s. The CBA had a local television deal but the NCAA tournament would not be extensively broadcast on network television until NBC's coverage in 1969.

The tournament opened the day after Christmas with a two o'clock doubleheader featuring Holy Cross and Syracuse in the first game followed by USF against LaSalle. The opener featured two nationally-known players, center Tom Heinsohn of Holy Cross and future football Hall of Famer Jim Brown of Syracuse. Heinsohn scored thirty-six points, grabbed nineteen rebounds, and added five assists to lead the Crusaders to an 87-74 win. Then Bill Russell and USF took the floor in what was technically a rematch of the 1955 NCAA tournament final, but with Tom Gola now playing for the NBA's Philadelphia Warriors, and former Lakers star Jim Pollard assuming the head coaching duties, the Explorers were hardly the same team.

LaSalle had struggled to a 3-3 start, alternating wins and losses, and would finish the season with a 15-10 record, their worst mark in ten years. But the Explorers proved to be a difficult opponent for the Dons, and actually led 45-43 four minutes into the second half as some fans booed Russell and his teammates in response to their slow style of play on offense, Russell's poor shooting and their lack of fancy passing. But the boos turned to cheers as USF pulled away for a 79-62 win. Roy Terrell later wrote in *Sports Illustrated*: "[T]he looks of doubt and derision changed into looks of incredulity and awe. For the things which Russell can do he does superlatively well, perhaps better than anyone in college basketball has ever done them before." Terrell then went on to succinctly summarize what convinced the fans to appreciate Russell:

His arms are tremendously long, even for a man of such height, and attached thereto are hands which curl around a basketball rather as a small boy grasps a large apple. Moreover, he has the reactions of a featherweight fighter – quickness and timing – and great competitive spirit beneath an almost phlegmatic exterior.

For his part, Russell was far from satisfied, despite leading all scorers with twenty-six points and blocking twelve shots: "If we can't do better we'll be going home early. I let the team down, me in particular." In another doubleheader that evening, impressive performances by UCLA's Willie Naulls (twenty-eight points) and Duquesne's Si Green (thirty-six) knocked the two local schools out of the winners bracket as UCLA defeated St. John's 89-73 and Duquesne narrowly edged Fordham in overtime 73-70.

The stage was now set for the most highly anticipated matchup of the tournament. The *New York Times* wrote, "The duel between the Dons' Bill Russell, a 6-foot 10-inch center, and the Crusaders' 6-foot 7-inch center, Tom Heinsohn, promises to be one of the most thrilling of the current campaign." Russell and Heinsohn had met once before, in an East-West exhibition game, but this was their first game that really counted. Heinsohn was a better-known player among East Coast writers, as Holy Cross

was a basketball power, having won the NCAA title in 1947 and producing stars such as Bob Cousy. Coach Roy Leening regularly brought his team into big arenas for games, including the Boston Garden, and the Crusaders had crushed NYU 85-50 at Madison Square Garden less than two weeks earlier, as Heinsohn impressed fans, scouts and writers alike with a thirty point, seventeen rebound performance.

The Wednesday night game drew the largest crowd of the tournament – 18,496 – including Cousy and Celtics head coach Red Auerbach, who had a chance to scout both Russell and Heinsohn against each other. Holy Cross started strong, as Leening decided to run on USF whenever possible. The Crusaders scored the first eight points of the game and soon led 23-14. Russell and Heinsohn frequently tangled under the boards, exchanging sharp elbows during the early stages of the game. By halftime, the Crusaders still led 32-29, but Heinsohn was tiring – the *New York Times* wrote that he “became ill during a time out” – and after picking up his third foul, backup Tom Houston switched to covering Russell. More importantly, USF’s Bill Mallen heated up in the second half, scoring all ten of his points after the break, sparking USF runs of 6-0, 9-0, and 8-0 as the Dons ran away from the Crusaders by outscoring them 24-8 over the last twelve minutes of the game. Russell’s twenty-four points, twenty-two rebounds and twelve blocks in the 67-51 win cemented his reputation as a dominant player. Heinsohn, who was limited to just twelve points and thirteen rebounds, told reporters after the game, “That Russell had great reflexes. We found him pretty easy to box out, but you can’t stop him within three feet of the basket.” Although Heinsohn stated that Bob Pettit, who he had faced two years earlier, was a better all-around player, Heinsohn later said he “became a fan of Russell the player right then.” In the nightcap, UCLA went on a 14-2 run in the second half to defeat Duquesne 72-57 and reach the Finals.

Willie Naulls was still the starting center for the Bruins, and was having a strong tournament with twenty-four points and sixteen rebounds against the Dukes. His supporting cast had been inconsistent, which had contributed to their 2-4 start entering the tournament. Guard Morris Taft scored nineteen versus Duquesne after being held to six by St. John’s, while forward Al Herring hit

for twenty points against the Redmen before scoring just eight in their semifinal win over the Dukes. The championship game was set for Friday night, December 30, and UCLA and USF had to wait until all three consolation games had been played.

The title game was over soon after halftime. After UCLA cut an early 9-2 deficit to 11-9, USF pressed their way to a 37-25 lead at the break. Jones and Perry scored eleven points apiece and smothered Taft and the rest of the Bruins backcourt as the Dons pulled away in the second half. Russell led the way in the 70-53 rout, scoring seventeen points and collecting eighteen rebounds while holding Willie Naulls in check. UCLA coach John Wooden was gracious in defeat. "Their defense makes them a great team, and their defense is attributable to Russell," who also captured the tournament's Most Valuable Player award. "They can take enormous chances because of having him to back them up, and therefore can get away with all that pressing and double-teaming out at midcourt." Legendary player and coach Joe Lapchick was also effusive with his praise, labeling USF a better defensive team than the Kentucky teams in the late 1940's and early 1950's, telling reporters, "This is the best college basketball team I ever have seen. San Francisco can do everything on offense and, what's more, it can and does play defense. They just don't let you shoot."

After the ECAC festival, USF's win streak was at thirty-six as the new year dawned. National attention now focused on their pursuit of the official NCAA record of thirty-nine wins in a row, which was held by Seton Hall and Long Island University. USF tied the record by defeating Pepperdine, Santa Clara, and Fresno State in three games at Kezar Pavilion, culminating in a 69-50 blowout as Fresno State made just twelve of sixty-five shots. Even though Woolpert pulled his starters early in the second half, Russell still scored twenty-two points to lead all scorers. However, their depth then absorbed a blow as sophomore Bill Mallen, who had played a key role in their win over Holy Cross, left the team. Mallen and Woolpert had clashed over playing time, and while newspapers reported that Mallen had left voluntarily to focus on his pre-law studies, the decision was mutual at best.

50 RISING ABOVE THE RIM

Anticipation built during the fifteen day break before USF's next game against Pete Newell's California Bears. The matchup of Woolpert against his former teammate and mentor resulted in a defensive battle which nearly provided the overflow crowd of 7,500 fans in Cal's Berkeley campus gym an historic upset. During the previous season, USF had jumped out to a 20-0 lead against Cal en route to an 84-62 blowout victory. Newell was determined to slow down the game, and told center Duane Asplund to draw Russell away from the basket by shooting exclusively from outside. The strategy worked at first, as California led 13-3 with seven minutes left in the first half, but USF's full-court press then produced a 17-3 run to give the Dons the lead at halftime. Then Asplund fouled out less than four minutes into the second half, and with California trailing 26-21, Newell ordered backup center Joe Hagler to hold the ball near midcourt for eight minutes. The partisan crowd's excitement – only 400 tickets were reserved for USF students, which prompted USF backers to pay public television station KQED to televise the game – quickly turned to boredom. "I thought we might be able to rest up," Newell said later, "save our energy for the big push and then try to win it in the final six minutes." His plan did not work. When Cal finally started shooting, the Bears were cold, and were unable to close the gap. USF won 33-24 for their record-setting fortieth win in a row. The two teams combined to make just eleven field goals, six by USF and five by California. Now observers wondered if USF could challenge the all-time college winning streak of fifty-five games set by the Peru (Nebraska) State Teachers College back in the 1920's.

The Dons were now the consensus choice as the number one team in the country. Over their next nine games, USF continued their streak, winning by an average score of 75-50. During their final regular season game on March 6, 15,732 fans, the largest Bay Area basketball crowd ever at the Cow Palace, gave Jones a standing ovation as he headed to the bench with nine minutes left in an 82-49 win over St. Mary's. Despite finishing the season strong, some reporters felt that USF might struggle to defend their title without Jones. Russell disagreed. "We'll merely be changing spokes, but the wheel will keep right on rolling." The entire team had confidence in Jones's

replacement Gene Brown, who was a weaker defender but a better shooter and was tall enough to play guard or forward, giving Woolpert extra flexibility.

USF headed to the NCAA tournament with a shorter road to the championship than they had a year earlier. The California Basketball Association champion now received a first round bye instead of having to play the Border Conference champion in a preliminary game. Russell and his teammates traveled back to Corvallis, Oregon for their second meeting of the season with UCLA. John Wooden's squad had rebounded dramatically from their mediocre start, winning their last seventeen games of the season after their loss to USF in the ECAC holiday festival. Their 16-0 conference record earned them the Pacific Coast Conference title and a berth in the NCAA tournament. Team captain Willie Naulls earned first-term All-American honors with 23.6 points and 14.6 rebounds per game, and guard Morris Taft joined him on the PCC all-conference first team.

Wooden had turned UCLA into a consistent winner as soon as he took the job in 1948. Inheriting a program that had finished above .500 just four times over the past twenty years, the 1948-49 Bruins won their conference title with a 22-7 record, and compiled a record of 139-56 during his first seven years at the school. Wooden had grown up in Indiana; as a youngster he saw his family lose their farm in Centerville, Indiana, forcing them to move to Martinsville where his father became a masseur in a sanitarium. Wooden's basketball talent then began to emerge, and he became nationally known as a three-time All-American guard at Purdue in the early 1930's. His coaching career began with an \$1,800 a year job at Dayton High School in Kentucky – and his first, and only, losing season as a coach. After two years, he moved on to Central High School in South Bend, Indiana and compiled an overall record of 218-42 before serving in the Navy as a physical trainer during World War II.

Wooden resumed his coaching career at Indiana State after the war, leading fourteen freshmen, including some of his former high school players who had also returned from the service, to an 18-7 record. While also serving as athletic director and baseball coach, Wooden's basketball team improved to 29-7 in 1948, and he received coaching offers from UCLA and

Minnesota. After accepting the UCLA job, Wooden's legend began to grow, his conservative, humble demeanor balanced with a commitment to excellence, illustrated by his "pyramid of success" that he gave to all prospective recruits. Its fifteen blocks highlighted his core principles, which included: Friendship, Loyalty, Cooperation, Self-Control, Initiative, Poise, and Confidence, culminating with the top block, "Competitive Greatness."

AS THE DONS AND BRUINS TOOK THE COURT, the nation was moving in a more liberal direction that was at odds with the traditional conservative values that Wooden embodied. Jack Kerouac had challenged the conservatism of the post-war era in his classic *On the Road*; Elvis Presley had become a national sensation that spring, combining good looks, singing talent, and suggestive gyrations on stage to provide an outlet for teenagers ready to spend their parents' money; and Greenwich Village was already gaining its reputation as the East Coast home of the "counterculture." The "beat culture" had also found a home in San Francisco, centered on a series of clubs, coffee houses, art galleries, and bookstores in the North Beach area of the city. The area was teeming with gathering spots that sprung up in unlikely places, such as Gallery Six, a converted garage that served as the backdrop when poet Allen Ginsberg introduced his beat anthem "Howl" in October 1955. The City Lights Bookshop, The Tea Room, and the Old Spaghetti Factory Café catered to an eclectic clientele that was interested in poetry, art, jazz, and a good time. Russell soaked in the atmosphere. "I'd hardly been a beatnik, but I'd been drawn to their culture," Russell later recalled, and he frequented several clubs, including the legendary Hungry i on Jackson Street. The entertainment was geared toward the college crowd, a mixture of rebel comedians such as Mort Sahl and folk music from Pete Seeger and other top acts. North Beach was a stark contrast to the conservative environment that the Jesuits tried to create at USF, which added to its exotic appeal to Russell.

Against UCLA in Corvallis, the Dons put the clamps on early, holding the Bruins without a field goal for nearly eight minutes, to turn a 4-2 deficit into a 15-8 lead despite missing

their first eight shots. By halftime USF led 39-21 and cruised to a 72-61 win. Naulls and Taft both scored sixteen points, but Gene Brown surprised the Bruins with twenty-three to lead all scorers. Russell added twenty-one, along with characteristically suffocating defense on Naulls, including an extraordinary move early in the game, in which Naulls initially beat Russell on a drive to the basket, only to see Russell reappear out of nowhere to block his two-hand dunk.

USF played again the next day, as they faced Utah for the second straight year in the tournament. The fast-breaking Utes had defeated Seattle 81-72 in their opener, with All-American senior center Art Bunte leading the way with twenty-four points and Gary Bergen adding sixteen. Utah coach Jack Gardner had all of his 1955 starters returning, including team captain Morris Buckwalter. Their 21-5 record featured just one loss of more than five points, a 90-77 loss to Minnesota in the second of back-to-back games (both losses) on the road in Kentucky back in December. With Russell playing cautiously due to uncharacteristic foul trouble – he had three fouls by halftime and picked up a fourth with ten minutes remaining the game – USF led by just three at the break and were clinging to a 56-55 edge early in the second half. San Francisco recovered nicely, going on a 15-2 run to pull away. Bunte scored twenty-three and guard Curt Jenson added twenty-one for the Utes, but their efforts were futile in the face of the USF machine. Russell scored twenty-four despite his foul trouble, and the Dons won 92-77. San Francisco had reached the national semifinals for the second consecutive year.

Meanwhile, their next opponent, Southern Methodist University, had a more interesting trip to Evanston, Illinois. SMU completed the best regular season in their history with a 23-2 in their last season in the cozy 4,000 seat Perkins Gym on campus. Doc Hayes, who had been coaching SMU since 1947, posted a series of mediocre records until 6'8" center Jim Krebs arrived in Dallas. Krebs was a late bloomer who rarely played at Webster Groves High School in St. Louis due to ineffectiveness and injuries until his senior year, when he set seven school records, including scoring sixty-one points in one game. Hayes offered him a scholarship even though he knew Krebs needed seasoning,

and proceeded to match him up in practices against more experienced teammates. The hours of hard work paid off, as Krebs averaged twenty-one points and nearly eight rebounds a game as a sophomore, leading SMU to their first conference title since 1937, and a berth in the NCAA tournament. Krebs continued improving his game in the off season, adding a jump shot to compliment his deadly accurate hook. His scoring average dipped below twenty per game as four teammates scored in double figures, but Krebs improved his rebounding. During the 1956 NCAA tournament, his father told reporters that Hayes deserved a lot of the credit. "I don't think Jim would ever have been the player he is under any other coach. He needed patience and understanding and someone with faith in him." Hayes deflected the praise back onto Krebs, singling him out as a smart, hard-working player. Krebs was now part of a veteran team, with three other returning starters, speedy 6'0" junior guard Bobby Mills, and a pair of seniors, 6'3" forward Joel Krog and guard Ron Morris. Rounding out the lineup was Larry Showalter, who had been a key contributor off the bench the previous season. SMU had jumped into the top twenty rankings in January, captured the Southwest Conference title again, and had won seventeen games in a row entering the NCAA tournament.

However, their season nearly ended against Texas Tech in a preliminary round game. Krebs and Krog combined for forty-one points and scored the Mustangs last fifteen, including a basket by Krebs with fifty-five seconds left that put SMU up by three, 68-65. SMU hung on for a 68-67 victory. Hayes and his players had a much easier time three days later against Houston, winning 89-74 as Krebs scored twenty-seven points and grabbed a game-high fourteen rebounds. In their regional final against Oklahoma City, Krebs was held to just seven points on two-for-ten shooting, but Krog scored twenty-two, including ten in a row at one point in the first half, and the Mustangs outscored the Okies 34-13 at the free throw line on the way to an 84-63 victory.

Woolpert was worried heading into the SMU game, as Russell had a sprained finger on his right hand and Brown was hampered by blisters on his feet. Early on, his worries seemed unfounded, as the 10,500 fans at McGaw field house "wildly cheered" USF as they built a 38-17 first half lead. However, Doc

Hayes' team regrouped, cutting the lead to 44-32 by halftime and closed to within six early in the second half. The run was sparked by Krebs, who was more effective than he expected. "I was really surprised," Krebs said later. "I expected to get the ball crammed down my throat and I went up and shot and looked around and Russell was way out of position. I kept faking that way [to his right] all night and I found he couldn't cover nearly as well to his left and he could to his right." Krebs finished with twenty-four points, but USF outscored SMU 15-8 down the stretch, winning easily, 86-68. The unexpected offensive star of the game for USF was Mike Farmer, whose eighteen first half points far exceeded his season average of fewer than eight per game; he finished with twenty-six to lead all scorers and added ten rebounds. Krebs, with help from a consistent double-team, had "limited" Russell to seventeen points and twenty-three rebounds, but San Francisco was moving on to the championship game. Doc Hayes joined a long list of defeated coaches searching for superlatives during his postgame comments: "San Francisco can beat any basketball team I know of. San Francisco can beat the Russians."

Their opponents in the championship game were the Iowa Hawkeyes. With four starters returning from the 1955 team that made it all the way to the national semifinals before losing to LaSalle, head coach Bucky O'Connor appeared to have the makings of one of the best teams in the country, ranked seventh by *The Sporting News* in their preseason poll. Center Bill Logan, forward Carl Cain, and guards Bill Seaberg and Sharm Scheuerman were all seniors entering their third year as starters. Logan and Cain were the leading scorers, both threatening Chuck Darling's school record of 1,094 points. Still, they started the season slowly. By early January, Iowa was 3-5 and riding a four-game losing streak, including a 65-64 loss to Michigan State at home in their Big Ten opener. Four of the five losses were by five points or less, so there was some reason for hope, but their subsequent turnaround was still remarkable. Iowa swept through their remaining schedule, winning fourteen in a row to clinch a second consecutive conference title and a return trip to the NCAA tournament. Logan and Cain were both named All-Americans; Logan led the team with nearly eighteen points and

ten rebounds a game, shooting a career best forty-four percent from the field, and broke Darling's record.

Iowa began the tournament with a major advantage because their first two games would be played on their home court in Iowa City. Their opener against Morehead State was a physical affair, with six players fouling out. Cain struggled from the field, making just eight of twenty-five shots, but scored twenty-eight points and pulled down fourteen rebounds. With Logan and Bill Schoof each chipping in a double-double, Iowa led by nineteen at halftime and coasted to a 97-83 win. A stiffer test awaited them the next day, as the Kentucky Wildcats led for much of the first fifteen minutes of the game, and by as many as six points. Then Cain took over, scoring sixteen points in a four and a half minute stretch as Iowa pulled ahead for a 49-38 halftime lead. Logan was shooting poorly, and Kentucky got solid performances from their big men, as Jerry Bird and Bob Burrow combined to score fifty-four points and grab thirty-six boards. But Cain was the difference, finishing with thirty-four points, while Scheurman, who would become the Hawkeyes head coach in two years, scored twenty-two in one of his best performances of the season.

Iowa drew a national semifinal matchup with Temple, whose backcourt of Guy Rodgers and Hal Lear appeared to be more than a match for Cain and the Hawkeyes even though the rest of the Owls were a cut below their two stars. Lear and Rodgers combined to score 60 of Temple's 76 points, including twenty-four from Lear in the first half, but Bill Logan got back on track. After shooting twelve-for-thirty-nine in the first two games of the tournament, Logan scored thirty-six points and made thirteen of twenty-one shots against the undersized Owls. Cain and Schoof combined for thirty-eight points and thirty-three rebounds, and Iowa won 83-76.

Now Iowa was the last team who could try to stop Russell and dethrone USF. The Hawkeyes troubles with the Wildcat big men were a troubling sign, and the Dons were very loose on the day of the game – Russell had slept in until 11am. Iowa stormed to a 15-4 lead as Carl Cain continued his hot shooting, scoring ten quick points against an overmatched Carl Boldt. Woolpert then switched Gene Brown to playing Cain, and the move paid

instant dividends, sparking a 20-8 USF run that put the Dons in front. Cain would score just seven points the rest of the way, while Russell was dominant, with twenty-six points, twenty-seven rebounds and twelve blocks, including rejections of three straight Hawkeye shots in one stretch. USF built a seventeen point second half lead, but Iowa gave themselves a chance, closing to within 76-69 with 2:06 left. Then, a layup by Warren Baxter, followed by a pair of free throws and a layup by Russell put the game safely out of reach. San Francisco earned their second straight NCAA title with an 83-71 win. This game was clearly a “team victory,” the type of performance Woolpert enjoyed seeing. Mike Farmer, was shut out, missing all ten of his shots, but contributed twelve rebounds, while Boldt and Brown each added sixteen points. As Russell predicted, USF had rolled to another title, and were treated to another celebration in downtown San Francisco.

Although Russell had played his last game at USF, his influence extended beyond his playing days. Woolpert kept the team competitive for two more years, building around Farmer and Brown. The Dons had their record winning streak snapped at sixty in December 1956, but finished that season with a 22-7 record, reaching the national semifinals again before being blown out by Kansas and Wilt Chamberlain. A year later, Farmer earned All-American honors as USF posted a 24-1 regular season mark, but a first round loss to Elgin Baylor and the Seattle Chieftains ended their dream of another title run, and ended the most successful era of basketball in school history. The most tangible symbol of the Russell era in San Francisco was the War Memorial Gymnasium, which opened on December 4, 1958, one of the few highlights on a dismal 6-20 season that was Woolpert’s last on the Hilltop. Although the 5,300 seat facility on Golden Gate Avenue was officially dedicated to the 120 USF alumni who had died while serving in the United States military during World War II and the Korean conflict, there was no doubt that the gym was honoring the achievements of the USF basketball team and their star center, Bill Russell.

Chapter 3

Sneakers and Snapshots

BILL RUSSELL AND HIS USF TEAMMATES were the undisputed champions of NCAA basketball, but they were not the only “amateur” basketball champions. The NIT was still prestigious, though it had started to lose its cachet now that the NCAA had mandated that conference champions attend their tournament, and only their tournament. More importantly, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) had controlled the selection of the U.S. Olympic Team for two decades, and as a result, still held the pre-eminent position in amateur basketball.

The AAU was founded in 1888 to regulate amateur athletics, based on the belief that “a sport played for its own sake rather than for profit was the purest form of athletic activity.” By 1895, Dr. James Naismith, who had invented basketball four years earlier, had left his position at the YMCA training college in Springfield, Massachusetts, to pursue a medical degree in Colorado. Naismith’s invention had been inspired by a request by Dr. Luther Gulick, the energetic dean of the athletic department, for a new game to break up the monotony of the college’s limited athletic program during the long New England winters. Gulick and Naismith had helped spread the game throughout the region, maintaining rulebooks and making occasional adjustments, and now Gulick formally assumed “ownership” of basketball by agreeing to serve as the chairman of the AAU basketball committee. From 1897 to 1912 the AAU sponsored seven “national” tournaments that were actually small regional competitions, and attempted to consolidate their authority, passing bylaws such as a 1907 rule that AAU teams could only

play against each other and not against teams who failed to follow the association's strict amateur policies, which forbade players from receiving any money for playing a sport.

However, as basketball's popularity grew, the AAU's idealistic amateur code was frequently ignored. The AAU tournament became an annual event in 1913, and by 1921 was truly a national affair, including teams from the Atlanta and Los Angeles Athletic Clubs. 16,300 fans spent over \$13,000 to watch thirty-two teams, the largest field to date, compete in Kansas City. The local Kansas City Athletic Club team, who had played a deciding role in convincing the AAU to hold the tournament in their hometown, won the championship. The success of the 1921 tournament led the AAU to continue to hold the event in Kansas City, which coincided with a dramatic growth of the sport's popularity during the post-war boom. Fifty-three teams competed in the 1927 tournament, playing six rounds of games in consecutive days (excluding Sundays), and two years later the AAU estimated that 5,000 teams were playing in official AAU events across the country. Increased interest did not always translate into box office success, but corporations began to understand the promotional benefits of sponsoring a team. By 1929, the Hillyard Chemical and Cook Paint teams had combined to win four consecutive AAU titles while paying lip service to amateurism – their players frequently stated that they preferred to play amateur basketball because they made more money than if they had turned pro – a fact that was grudgingly accepted by the AAU leadership. J. Lyman Bingham, the chairman of the AAU Basketball Committee, groused that during the tournament several AAU basketball teams were “attired in uniforms advertising everything from pink pills to real estate.”

Occasionally, these complaints prompted newspaper investigations and calls for reform, but the idealism of the AAU's leadership had its limits, since their tournament simply would not have survived without the support of private businesses. Not only did small and medium size companies sponsor teams, national corporations such as Phillips, Caterpillar, and Goodyear supported squads year-round, hiring their “part-time” players as “full-time” employees when the reverse was closer to the truth. Even the athletic clubs that sent teams to the

tournament compensated their players with reduced membership fees.

The AAU also benefited from the absence of any major college tournaments that could draw attention away from their event. The Metropolitan Basketball Writer's Association in New York did not organize the NIT until 1938, and although their financial success inspired the NCAA to hold its first tournament the following year, the NCAA's inaugural event at Northwestern University lost money while the AAU was annually earning a respectable profit. The college tournaments were also much smaller; until 1949 neither the NIT nor NCAA featured more than eight teams. Instead, many college players played for teams in the AAU tournament after their regular season play concluded. In 1927, the Kansas City Athletic Club Blue Diamonds squad featured Kansas coach Phog Allen and two of his star players. When the Depression hurt attendance in Kansas City, causing deep financial losses, organizers moved the tournament to Denver in 1935, where the event was embraced as a way to boost civic pride in the face of twenty-five percent unemployment. Despite holding games at the City Auditorium, an ornate theatre whose 5,500 seats included a large two-tiered balcony that offered (very) distant views of the court, the tournament made over \$10,000 in profits during its first two years in Denver despite disappointing showings by local teams. The *Denver Post* would later describe the event "as a combination of state fair, southern social, and fish fry," with the players and spectators enjoying the newly smoke-free stands, a welcome change from Kansas City, where "the smoke was so thick it could be cut with a knife."

While Denver was hosting its first AAU tournament, the organization was preparing to send a team to the Berlin Olympics in 1936. Germany had agreed in October 1934 to add basketball to the Olympic program, and the AAU assumed a dominant role in the selection of players for that team. The AAU had deep ties to the Olympic Movement, partly because the AAU was also the governing authority for track-and-field in the United States, which was the main focus of the modern Olympics. In 1912, a young decathlete from the University of Illinois, Avery Brundage, competed on the American team in Stockholm, and by

1936 Brundage was president of both the AAU and the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC). But Kansas coach Phog Allen had led the effort to get basketball recognized by the Olympics, and the NCAA believed it deserved a larger role in U.S. Olympic basketball.

Allen knew that the sport was already an international game. Basketball had been part of the unofficial program in 1904, when the United States hosted its first Olympic Games at the St. Louis World's Fair, but all five teams were from American cities – Buffalo, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and St. Louis itself. Visitors from the United States, including YMCA missionaries that had been educated in Springfield, spread the sport around the world over the next decade, particularly in American military interests such as Puerto Rico and the Philippines. By World War I, basketball leagues had been established in China and throughout South America. Phog Allen also tried to further his case for Olympic recognition by using his mentor James Naismith's research to assert that eighteen million people around the world were playing basketball. Still, Allen was unable to get basketball on the program as a demonstration sport for the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, as the USOC chose football instead, citing an expectation of better ticket sales.

The responsibility for selecting the 1936 team fell to the newly formed Olympic Basketball Committee (OBC), which attempted to forge a compromise between the AAU and NCAA factions. The OBC was stacked with representatives controlled by Brundage – six from the AAU itself, two members of the USOC, and another representative chosen by the committee. Four representatives from the NCAA rounded out the OBC. Brundage's devotion to the ideals of the AAU was selective at best, and was further tempered by his fund-raising responsibilities. Brundage viewed college basketball's growing popularity, especially the financial success of games staged at Madison Square Garden, as a possible cash windfall, and he hoped to use a series of tournaments, culminating in an eight-team playoff at the Garden, to raise up to \$350,000 – enough money to send the *entire* American Olympic contingent to Berlin. Therefore, despite his personal dislike of college

athletics, college teams would fill five of the eight slots in the Olympic tournament. The five teams would be selected through a series of regional playoffs, while the AAU would send the two finalists from its tournament in Denver to New York. The YMCA champion (from Wilmerding, Pennsylvania), would be the eighth participant, as a reward for the association's basketball missionary work around the world.

In the AAU tournament, the McPherson Globe Refiners defeated a team sponsored by Universal Pictures, who were coached by former USF coach Jimmy Needles, for their first AAU title. The college tournament produced surprising results, partly because LIU, NYU, and CCNY refused to participate because of Germany's open and violent discrimination against Jews. Phog Allen's powerhouse Kansas team, which had assembled a 21-2 regular season record, lost to the Utah State Aggies, and the other four college representatives that emerged were Arkansas, DePaul, Temple and the University of Washington. At the Olympic tournament in New York, the results were far more predictable – Washington was the only college team to survive the first day, and the two AAU teams met in the Finals, with Universal Pictures avenging their AAU tourney loss with a 44-43 win over McPherson. As a result, Needles earned the position as head coach of the Olympic team, which would consist of seven of his players and six from Gene Johnson's McPherson squad. Washington center Ralph Bishop was the only college player selected, angering NCAA officials, and when Brundage's expected windfall never materialized (the OBC made just \$6,470 from the tournament at the Garden) tensions between the AAU and the NCAA deepened. When AAU leaders complained about the poor financial showing, Phog Allen fired back, calling them "Quadrennial Oceanic Hitchhikers" who relied on others to finance their extravagant trips to the Olympics. In Berlin, the United States completed an undefeated run to their first gold medal by defeating Canada 19-8 during a heavy rainstorm that turned the outdoor clay court into a mud pit that became nearly unplayable.

World War II caused the cancellation of the 1940 and 1944 Olympics, but by the time the 1948 team was being selected, the AAU was still in a dominant position. Ironically,

both the Universal Pictures and McPherson teams folded after 1936, and the Phillips 66ers had ascended to the pinnacle of AAU basketball. The 66ers were originally conceived by Phillips founder Frank Phillips in 1920, three years after he incorporated the oil company in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Phillips increased its investment in the team as they expanded their reach into the gas station business in the late 1920's, hoping to use basketball to help lure customers to their stations that were adorned with the company's orange and black "Phillips 66" shield logo. While the 66ers posted a 98-8 record over two seasons between 1929 and 1931, the bleak economic reality of the Depression forced Phillips to fold the team. The team was reconstituted in 1936, built around two returning Olympians from the former McPherson club – Joe Fortenberry, who was the leading scorer for the U.S. in the gold medal game, and teammate Jack Ragland. Over the next twelve years, Phillips reached the Finals of the AAU tournament ten times, winning their first title in 1940 and six in a row from 1943 to 1948. Phillips dominated league play as well, normally playing forty to sixty games a season, first as a member of the Missouri Valley League and later, the American Basketball League, recruiting college stars such as Hank Luisetti with the promise of a well-paying job and opportunities for advancement within the company after their playing careers were over.

The driving force of the 66ers in this era was Kenneth "Boots" Adams, who played on the team in the 1920s as a Phillips shipping clerk but rose to become the company president in 1937. Adams saw the team as a marketing tool for Phillips petroleum products – claiming in 1939 that ninety million basketball fans were all "potential customers" – a recruiting device for future executive talent, and a source of pride for all his employees. His views were consistent with their founder Frank Phillips, who believed that "the teamwork of the Phillips squad symbolizes the close coordination of the entire Phillips organization." Their claims were not entirely without merit; Bill Martin, who played on four of the 66ers AAU championship teams, would serve as CEO of the company in the late 1970s, and practices were regularly held after the players' normal 8 to 5 work hours. But the players were also allowed to miss over sixty

days of work a year to travel to road games, and star players were actively recruited by Adams himself, which gave them greater visibility among corporate executives and boosted their career prospects. The 66ers developed a small but fiercely loyal following of fans who regularly sold out their home court, a small 1,800 seat high school gym. Games became social events that regularly attracted both men and women who would begin the evening at “pregame cocktail parties.” Once the action started on the floor, women would frequently use their jackets (including expensive mink coats) as seat cushions. By 1949, their fan base was large enough that the AAU tournament was held in Bartlesville that year.

The 66ers, like most corporations who sponsored teams, which included household names like Continental Airlines and the 20th Century Fox studios, avoided signing black players, weakly camouflaging discriminatory hiring practices by claiming that they were not “qualified” for their respective executive training programs. Discrimination extended beyond these corporations, however, as AAU competition in general was largely off limits for blacks until the mid-1930s, and the 1938 AAU tournament was the first to feature an all-black team, the Chicago Collegians. In 1947, just months after Jackie Robinson integrated major league baseball, UCLA All-American Don Barksdale integrated the American Basketball League as a member of the Oakland Bittners AAU team. When the Bittners won the AAU tournament third place game, the OBC faced a dilemma. The selection process for the 1948 Olympic Team would be similar to 1936, with an eight game tournament held at Madison Square Garden, but officials granted the AAU three slots in the tournament, reducing the NCAA portion of the field to four, along with a YMCA team from Brooklyn. The Olympic team itself would be comprised of five players from each of the two teams that reached the Finals, plus four at-large selections, based a new agreement that allowed countries to use fourteen players during international competition. Some OBC members were opposed to selecting a black player, but they would be backed into a corner if Barksdale played well and the Bittners advanced to the championship game.

The AAU champion Phillips 66ers and Denver Nuggets joined the Bittners in New York. Since they were all placed in the same bracket with the Brooklyn YMCA team, only one could reach the Finals, and to no one's surprise, the 66ers defeated the Nuggets again in the Semifinals. Their opponents in the title game were the NCAA champion Kentucky Wildcats. Little was at stake in the game except that the winning coach would be named the head coach of the Olympic team, to be assisted by the coach of the losing team. Phillips won 53-49, and as a result, Bud Browning would be assisted by Adolph Rupp in London. More significantly, despite the Bittners loss in the first round, Barksdale became the first black player chosen to the United States Olympic basketball team. With the exception of a close 59-57 game against Argentina, they cruised to the gold medal, winning their other seven games by an average score of 66-28, including a 65-21 win over France in the final game. Barksdale was the third leading scorer for the Americans, but his achievements did not open the floodgates for increased integration on the Olympic basketball team. Four years later, the United States sent another all-white team to Helsinki, stocked with fourteen Midwesterners who were all members of the Peoria Caterpillars, Kansas Jayhawks, or Phillips 66ers.

BY 1956, THE AAU WAS FIGHTING FOR ATTENTION on several fronts. The NCAA and NIT tournaments, and college basketball in general, were more extensively covered by the media, and the increasing stability of the NBA was beginning to threaten the AAU's claim of providing better financial security for its players through a stable long-term career rather than a risky, short-term pro contract that was far from guaranteed. AAU teams countered by promoting the fact that its players were in a better position to make the Olympic team, influencing college stars such as Oklahoma A&M's Bob Kurland, who had turned down the BAA and chose Phillips in 1949 for that reason. Even the strength of that argument now began to weaken. Unlike previous years, the OBC would be directly selecting the rosters in 1956, instead of relying on the coaches of the finalists in the Olympic Trials. The calendar also played a role. Since the Olympics were to be held in Melbourne, Australia – the first host

country located in the Southern Hemisphere – the Games would be held in November, which was in the middle of the academic year. As a result, the format of the trials was dramatically changed. Since only college seniors who had already graduated could compete, as opposed to complete teams of college players, this had a significant impact on three people in particular: Phil Woolpert, Bill Russell, and K.C. Jones. In past years, Woolpert would have brought his entire team to the trials and there is little doubt that the Dons would have reached the Finals and placed five to seven players on the Olympic team with Woolpert as head coach. Instead, Woolpert turned down a chance to coach the College All-Stars team, preferring to focus on training his USF players for their upcoming season.

The trials featured four teams. The College All-Stars, featuring Russell and Jones, an Armed Services All-Star team selected from clubs that represented various military installations in AAU competition, and the two AAU tournament finalists. Instead of bracket competition, a round-robin format would be used, with a points formula used to choose the champion, and by extension, the head coach and five spots on the Olympic team. The AAU representatives emerged from an interesting quartet of teams that reached the semifinals of their tournament in Denver. Phillips was the defending champion, having won their first title in four years in 1955, and had added two of the star players who had played for the University of Colorado against Russell and USF – 6'3" forward Bob Jeangerard and 6'8" Burdette Haldorson. Jeangerard and Haldorson were AAU veterans, having faced Phillips in the championship game the year before as members of the Lockett-Nix Clippers. The former Buffaloes enhanced a formidable frontline that already featured 6'9" center Chuck Darling, a veteran of the 1952 Olympic team who had earned Big Ten player of the year honors at Iowa and was selected by the NBA's Rochester Royals with the ninth overall pick in the draft. Darling had no intention of turning pro, as he had pursued a degree in geology at Iowa so he could work for Phillips and try to make the Olympic team. Similarly, Haldorson had spurned the Hawks in 1955; a lanky player with a long wingspan, his hook shot was difficult to stop, and his "angelic face" helped enhance "Burdie's" reputation as a melodramatic

player who played to the crowd. Darling was the only member of the 1956 66ers with more than two years of experience on the team, but Phillips' roster contained several other players with AAU experience, including Bill Hougland, a star forward on Kansas's 1952 championship team who was also on the Olympic team in Helsinki, and guard Jim Walsh from Stanford, whose outside shooting skills complimented the 66ers strength inside. Despite this stable of talent, Phillips barely survived a stiff challenge from the Ada Oilers, who featured the five starters from the University of Alabama team and was sponsored by Boots Adams' son, Bud. Phillips hung on to win 71-69.

The 66ers opponents in the Finals were the Buchan Bakers from Seattle, Washington. Founded in 1948 by George Buchan, the owner of the Buchan Baking Company, the Bakers had been marginally successful during their first half-dozen seasons. For the 1955-56 campaign they hired a new coach, Frank Fiddler from Seattle's Garfield High School, and added future NBA player Phil Jordon to their roster. The Bakers won the Northwest League title and qualified for the AAU tournament by defeating their cross town rivals, Westside Ford (whose roster included a young Elgin Baylor) in a one game playoff. In Denver, the Bakers defeated the Allen-Bradley team from Milwaukee to reach the Finals. Phillips led by as many as ten in the first half, but the second half featured ten ties and eight lead changes. The Bakers went on to upset Phillips 59-57 on a shot by George Swyers at the buzzer.

As the two teams prepared for the Olympic trials, they were encouraged to strengthen themselves by adding four players from other clubs, to try to increase their chances for victory and, by extension, enhance the prestige of the AAU. The Bakers unsuccessfully tried to add Baylor – officials at the University of Seattle rejected their request – but did add Dick Boushka from the Wichita Vickers. Boushka, a former All-American from St. Louis University with “matinee-idol” looks and a smooth shot to match, was 6'5” and a good defensive player. Described by rival coaches a “big, rugged, tireless, and a well-rounded ball player,” Boushka had also walked away from a possible pro career by not signing with the Lakers after he was drafted in 1955. His geophysical engineering studies at St. Louis, and his summer job

as an engineering aide, led the press to speculate about a possible future with Phillips, but Boushka was also an ROTC student who needed to complete a three-year commitment with the Air Force.

The roster for the College All-Stars, who would be led by Iowa coach Bucky O'Connor, was announced by OBC chairman A. C. (Dutch) Lonborg in stages throughout March. Russell and K.C. Jones were obvious choices given USF's run of success, and were among the first players chosen, along with Hal Lear, Carl Cain, Willie Naulls, and seven foot Dayton center Bill Uhl. The selections were marred by controversy as Brundage's stance against "professionalism" cost the team several potential players. Tom Heinsohn, who had accepted a \$3,000 offer to play for a team in a series against the Globetrotters, was rejected from the Olympic team trials because he was being paid to play basketball, while Brundage looked the other way as Phillips and other AAU sponsors openly gave their players full-time jobs in exchange for their on-court talents. For Heinsohn, the choice was easy. "I wanted to represent my country if I was guaranteed a fair opportunity to make the team, but in those years they took few college players. ... [I was] not about to give up three thousand dollars from the Globies to face a stacked deck in the Olympic tryouts." Joe Holup of George Washington agreed; Holup was officially named to the College All-Stars team on March 8 but by the end of the month he had withdrawn and joined Heinsohn on the Globetrotter tour. Basketball players were not alone in this dilemma. Johnny Mathis, who had befriended Russell as a rival high jumper for San Francisco State, turned down a chance to try out for the Olympic track team, preferring to sign a contract with Columbia Records. Brundage even tried to get Russell kicked out of the trials because he refused to commit to remaining an amateur *after* the Melbourne Games ended. For his part, Globetrotters owner Abe Saperstein was incredulous about the AAU's hypocrisy, saying, "over the years, they been consistent about one thing – their inconsistency. The organization needs a complete overhauling."

Following a tune-up for the college players in the annual East-West Game at Madison Square Garden, won by the West 103-72 behind twenty points by Paul Judson of Illinois and nineteen from Russell, the Olympic Trials began at Kansas City's

Municipal Auditorium on April 2. The first game featured Phillips taking on the Armed Services All-Star team, whose players had been selected based on a separate tournament that had been held in Louisville a couple of weeks earlier. The Armed Services team featured 6'4" guard Ron Tomsic, who had broken Hank Luisetti's scoring records at Stanford, forward Gib Ford from the University of Texas, and guard Billy Evans. Evans had played three seasons at Kentucky, where he was a teammate of future NBA stars Frank Ramsey and Cliff Hagan. In the game against Phillips, Tomsic scored twenty-eight points, and the Armed Services team captured a thrilling 78-77 overtime victory. Then Russell and the College All-Stars took the floor, defeating the Bakers 86-79. Russell led all scorers with twenty-four, while Jones added eighteen.

The next day began with a rematch of the AAU championship game. Although both teams had added four players since that tournament, only three of them played as Phillips won 72-64 after trailing by five at halftime. Dick Boushka's ten points for the Bakers made him their second-leading scorer behind Swyers fourteen, while Walsh and Darling scored fourteen apiece for the 66ers to build their cases for making the Olympic team. Haldorson, who had scored twenty-two in Phillips' opening loss to the Armed Services team, was held to just twelve points. Then Russell led the College All-Stars into first place, scoring twenty-nine points – the high mark for the entire tournament – in an 82-74 win over the Armed Services All-Stars.

The trials concluded on April 4. Heading into the final day, the College All-Stars were the only undefeated team, but needed to defeat the 66ers or their fate would be left up to the formula devised by the OBC. If Phillips won by five or more points, or if Phillips won by a closer margin and the Bakers defeated the Armed Services team, the 66ers would be declared the champion. Phillips, with their fate in their own hands, roared to a 47-35 halftime lead behind Chuck Darling's nineteen points. Russell and the All-Stars rallied in the second half, with Russell holding Darling to only one basket after intermission while scoring nineteen himself, but Phillips hung on to win, 79-75. The four point margin meant that the 66ers still needed a Bakers

victory to claim first place. With the 66ers leading the cheers of 7,500 spectators, the Bakers won 82-79, clinching the title for Phillips.

The victory meant that Phillips head coach Gerald Tucker would coach the Olympic team. Tucker had begun his 66ers career as a player. In 1947 he earned All-American honors by leading the University of Oklahoma into the NCAA title game against Holy Cross, scoring a game-high twenty-two points in a 48-47 loss to the Crusaders. Tucker was also the leading scorer for Phillips three years later when they recaptured the AAU title, and by 1953 was being groomed by Bud Browning to succeed him as coach. Later described by K.C. Jones as “a wonderful, laid-back Southwesterner” who believed that good team chemistry was essential for winning games, Tucker’s first two seasons as coach produced the 66ers first AAU title in five years and a return trip to the semifinals this season. When O’Connor later backed out of the Olympic assistant coach position in June, Tucker turned to Bruce Drake, his former coach at Oklahoma, to replace him. Drake had been an All-American basketball player himself back in the 1920s, and later served on a committee that investigated the college gambling scandals that rocked the sport in the early 1950s.

The OBC’s player selections caused considerable controversy. With the Olympic rosters cut from fourteen to twelve players to save on travel expenses, and Phillips awarded five spots (Darling, Haldorson, Hougland, Jeangerard and Walsh), there were some obvious omissions. Russell, K.C. Jones and Carl Cain were the only college players selected, and Dick Boushka, who had not played for the Bakers during their AAU championship run, was the only member of that team to be chosen. Willie Naulls of UCLA was overlooked, despite scoring forty-two points and grabbing twenty-eight rebounds during the trials. But Naulls was caught in a numbers game. The committee obviously had to pick Russell after his dominant performance (seventy-two points and thirty-nine boards), and the team already had Phillips big men Darling and Haldorson to join him up front. Hal Lear was a more glaring omission, as his twenty-four points against the 66ers had led all scorers and nearly allowed the College All-Stars to win the trials outright. In that one game,

Lear produced more points than Carl Cain or Billy Evans scored in the entire tournament, but O'Connor had coached Cain at Iowa, and it was hard for the committee to overlook the latter's seven rebounds per game. There was also a more sinister explanation for leaving Naulls and Lear off the team – they were both black. The inclusion of three blacks on the 1956 squad (Russell, Jones and Cain) was already controversial enough for the conservative OBC.

The college players, especially Russell, also felt that the referees were biased toward the AAU players, which helped them pad their stats. For example, Ron Tomsic's sixty-eight points had made him an obvious choice over players such as Ray Warren from TCU. Naulls, Lear, and Warren joined a six-man squad of "alternates," which also featured Joe Dean from Phillips, and Charlie Koon and Terry Rand from the Bakers. Phillips owner Boots Adams continued his tradition of sending all of his 66ers, and their wives, to the site of the Olympics even if they had failed to make the U.S. team. The final roster had a decidedly western and southwestern flavor: along with Russell and K.C., Tomsic and Walsh were also from the Bay Area; Evans, Ford, and Haldorson were from Texas; Boushka hailed from Albuquerque, and Darling and Hougland lived in Bartlesville and worked for Phillips year-round.

The official workouts for the Olympic team did not begin until mid-October. After a week of practices, Tucker and the team began a cross-country tour of ten exhibition games. The Olympians swept the entire slate, including an 85-61 win over the remaining Phillips 66ers on November 4 in Minnesota in which Russell scored twenty points and the U.S. team led nearly wire-to-wire. Russell played little as the tour wound down; he scored just eight points in a game against a Southwest Conference All-Star team featuring Jim Krebs, and played less than five minutes in the final game, an 88-59 win over the Kirby's Shoes AAU team in Long Beach, California on November 10. The next day, the team left for Melbourne, part of an American contingent of 335 athletes accompanied by 85 coaches, doctors, and various officials.

THE 1956 SUMMER OLYMPICS WERE HELD against a backdrop of Cold War crises around the world. Following Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal, which led to an oil emergency in Europe, Israeli forces invaded the area on October 29 and the British and French quickly joined the fight on Israel's side. Six days later, Soviet forces overran Budapest to crush the Hungarian Revolution. These events had both practical and political impacts on the Games. The torch relay was delayed for a day due to flight delays in Athens, cruise ships sailing for Melbourne from the Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean were forced to navigate around the Cape of Good Hope to avoid the Suez Canal, the Hungarian delegation arrived a week late, and Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Holland, and Spain all pulled out of the Games in reaction to these recent world events.

For the Soviet Union, the timing of the Olympics was advantageous, since pro-Western representatives at the United Nations were openly suspicious of their motives in Hungary. Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir responded angrily upon hearing stories of "mass deportations," saying that her people "have such an intimate knowledge of boxcars and deportations to unknown destinations that we cannot be silent." The Olympics represented a perfect opportunity to score propaganda points against the West. Four years earlier, the Soviets had entered Olympic competition for the first time, and earned seventy-one medals, just five fewer than the United States. Now they intended to collect more medals than the Americans and prove that socialism could also defeat capitalism around the track and on the court. To help achieve their goal, and create the impression that the real competition of the Olympics was the USSR versus the USA, Soviet players were encouraged to be friendly towards the Americans, leaving John P. Carmichael of the *Chicago Daily News* with "the impression that they were going to be pals of the Americans if it killed them," openly taking photographs of the U.S. basketball team before their first game. For their part, the American athletes had been warned by the USOC "not to make any statements which might be embarrassing to the United States," especially regarding segregation or other symbols of hypocrisy that did not fit the image of "American freedom" that State Department officials wanted to use to counter Communist

propaganda. Throughout the Olympics, Russell and his teammates were also deluged with requests for their “Chuck Taylor” sneakers, which were gaining a reputation as the best basketball shoes in the world, and officials had arranged for the Americans to give them as gifts to their Soviet counterparts. Sneakers and snapshots were now the latest weapons in the Cold War.

The day before the opening ceremonies, as Britain and France began to yield to pressure from the United States and started withdrawing a third of their forces from Egypt, to be replaced with United Nations troops, the United States basketball team crushed Australia 119-47 in their final exhibition tune-up. It had been a busy year for the Australians, who were using the Games to promote their nation’s image around the world. The host city of Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, included over 230 square miles of neatly organized streets composed mostly of well maintained houses with private gardens, and its 1.5 million inhabitants were boisterous sports fans who particularly enjoyed tennis, swimming, golf, cricket and rugby.

After narrowly winning the rights to the Olympics in 1956, officials spent several years making such slow progress that there was some discussion of pulling out and allowing another city to host the games. But the pace of preparations then quickly accelerated under the direction of the chief executive officer of the Australian Olympic Committee, Lt. General William Bridgeford. A portion of the grandstand at the Melbourne Cricket Grounds was replaced with a taller structure featuring three levels of seats to increase its capacity to 104,000 for the opening ceremonies and track-and-field events. Melbourne also made major investments in housing and transportation infrastructure. While the committee arranged for 15,000 visitors to stay with private citizens to augment the insufficient number of local hotel rooms, a different solution was required to house the estimated 6,000 athletes and team officials that were expected to descend on the city.

Bill Russell and his American teammates lived in part of the elaborate 112 acre “Olympic Village” that was created in the nearby suburb of Heidelberg, eight and a half miles from the Melbourne Cricket Grounds. Construction began in June 1954 on

365 concrete and brick veneer “houses” that were designed to be sold or rented to local residents after the Olympics. The mixture of single-family homes and “two- and three-storied flats” was completed in August 1956 at a cost of nearly \$4.5 million. Housing assignments were organized by country and gender. Each nation’s contingent was assigned adjoining quarters, with the United States and Soviet Union consuming the majority of two large irregularly shaped blocks in the center of the village. However, female athletes, who were outnumbered by the men by more than eight-to-one, were housed in a separate section near the village’s main entrance on its southern edge.

The Olympic Village included many amenities for the athletes, including a pair of recreation rooms, a forty-one-room hospital and medical center, twenty dining rooms with professional chefs on hand to prepare meals tailored to each country’s preferences, and a bank with 240 safe deposit boxes. No detail was too small for the committee to consider. Every resident in the village was allocated exactly three sets of sheets – including Russell, who was one of several athletes to be provided an extra long mattress due to his height – which were changed and laundered on a strict rotating schedule by the housekeeping staff, part of a group of over 500 official employees who worked at Heidelberg.

In order to handle the influx of athletes and spectators from around the world, the Department of Aviation spent over \$500,000 to improve five of the country’s airports, including adding an international terminal to Melbourne’s Essendon Airport to reduce the load on Sydney’s airport. Essendon would handle an average of one plane every four minutes, increasing traffic congestion on the roads to Heidelberg. From an athletic standpoint, the centerpiece of Melbourne’s building program was a new “Olympic Park” that was created on over twenty-two acres of land nestled against a bend in the Yarra River that bisected the city. The park included new facilities for cycling, field hockey, soccer, and swimming. Style was just as important as substance, as symbolized by the dramatic design of the new “skyhook” swimming pool. The 5,500 seat arena was encased with glass walls that provided scenic views of Melbourne, and featured sloped sides held up by its roof to avoid using columns that

would have interrupted the fans' sightlines. Painted in the brilliant Olympic colors of red, yellow and blue, the elegant building was also slated to host a concert by the Sydney and Melbourne symphony orchestras as part of an arts festival that ran in parallel with the Games.

However, the preparations for the basketball competition were not entirely smooth. The Australians had to scramble that summer when the owners of the Melbourne Glaciarium ice skating rink demanded \$45,000 as compensation for the use of their arena as the basketball venue. By early August, the Victorian Basketball Committee co-sponsored the building of a new 3,500 seat arena, which was completed in October. Each end of the court featured a large analog clock in the center of an oversized, hand-operated scoreboard trimmed with vertical wood siding that sat directly on top of the supports for the backboards. The building's roof, which was designed to allow outside air to flow across the court, was an afterthought – the original plans called for no roof at all.

NOVEMBER 22, 1956 WAS A WARM SUNNY DAY, with temperatures reaching 80 degrees by noon. The sunshine was a welcome sight for city officials after a stretch of unseasonably cool and wet weather. A capacity crowd at the Melbourne Cricket Grounds watched as the Duke of Edinburgh arrived at the opening ceremonies early that afternoon in a convertible that took him on a celebratory lap around the dark red track inside the stadium. Meanwhile, the athletes were bused from Heidelberg to the nearby Richmond Cricket Ground, where they assembled for the march of nations. Each team entered the arena in alphabetical order by country, except for Australia, who as host assumed the customary position at the end of the line. The march itself was a politically charged event, as each country's flag bearer was preceded by an Olympic official carrying a four-foot by fifteen inch sign that carried that nation's "assigned" name – as decided by the Olympic Committee – in dark red letters. The names were the source of great controversy. The combined contingent from Great Britain and Northern Ireland walked behind a sign on which "GT. BRITAIN" was spelled out using letters three times the size than those which read "N. IRELAND," and although

Mao Zeong's Communist "People's Republic of China" sent athletes to Melbourne, they declined to participate when the Olympic Committee insisted that they compete alongside athletes from Chiang Kaishek's anti-Communist regime on a single team labeled "Formosa-China."

After marching around the track, each team stood together in the infield, remaining in alphabetical order, and formed neat columns perpendicular to the long straight-away sections of the track. The USA and USSR delegations, which were the two largest teams, stood side-by-side in multiple columns, flanked by Uruguay and Venezuela. When the procession ended, the Duke of Edinburgh declared the Games open, signaling the beginning of a carefully choreographed display of fanfare. Simultaneously, there was a blare of trumpets, a twenty-one gun salute, and 5,000 pigeons were released from cages located next to the stands on one side of the stadium as the Olympic flag was raised. Finally, Ron Clarke, who had set an unofficial junior world record in the mile run, raced into the stadium carrying the glowing eight-pound Olympic Torch in his right hand, as sparks descended onto the track and a plume of smoke drifting behind him. Clark ran a single lap around the track, climbed a series of steps to reach the Olympic cauldron platform, and, while the athletes' craned their necks up and to the right to watch the climatic spectacle, walked up the final four steps at the base of the cauldron itself. At exactly 4:32pm, Clarke stood on a temporary stool and used the torch to light the cauldron that symbolized the "Olympic Spirit."

That night, the basketball competition began, as 2,592 fans watched the United States defeat Japan 98-40, who were sending their first team to the Olympics since World War II. The Japanese led 17-15 at the thirteen-minute mark of the first half, as Russell had begun the game on the bench. Japan used their speed to their advantage in the early going, but after Russell entered the game, and began blocking shots and controlling the boards, Tucker directed his guards to pick up the Japanese at the top of the key, disrupting their attack. The United States proceeded to go on an 18-3 run to blow the game open by halftime, and Russell finished with a game-high twenty points. The next day the Americans crushed Thailand 101-29, using their

superior talent and “an 8-inch-a-man height advantage” to control the game; Thailand finished with more fouls (thirteen) than successful field goals (eleven). Russell played just nine minutes, but scored the basket which put the United States over the 100 point mark for just the second time in Olympic competition, a feat made much easier by the introduction of a thirty-second shot clock for the Melbourne Games. Ron Tomsic led all scorers with fifteen points, one of six Americans in double-figures.

A few days later, the United States finished their preliminary round play with a 121-53 win over the Philippines, scoring 81 points in the second half, led by Bob Jeangerard’s twenty-one. Russell was dominating the competition with his combination of speed, agility and height, and the world took notice; soon after the Olympics, countries around the world, particularly the Soviet Union, instructed their scouts to search for players with similar skills. But for now, the rest of the world could only hope for a miracle. “The general feeling among the basketball experts here is that the talented United States team is too good for the kind of competition it will meet in Melbourne,” the *New York Times* reported after the game against the Philippines. “Its only danger is overconfidence.”

The fifteen teams in the Olympic tournament had been divided into four groups for the preliminary round portion of the competition. The United States had swept through their Group A competitors, while France, Uruguay, and Brazil were undefeated in Groups B, C, and D, respectively. Joining them in the quarterfinals were the four second-place teams, including the Soviet Union (who had been upset by France), Bulgaria, Chile, and the Philippines squad that had been dismantled by the Americans. The quarterfinals were another round-robin affair, as the eight teams were organized into two new four-team groups. The United States would face Bulgaria, Brazil, and the Soviet Union in Group B, needing a first or second-place finish to move on to the semifinals. Bulgaria had finished fourth at the 1955 European Championships, but was no match for the United States, losing 85-44 in a game most notable for Coach Gerald Tucker’s successful challenge of a ruling by Singapore referee Charley Sien that Russell’s “stuff shot,” in which he would leap

above the rim and redirect a teammate's shot into the basket, was illegal. Next up was Brazil, who had placed second in the 1954 World Championships to the United States despite losing to the Americans by twenty-one points. They fared even worse this time around, losing 113-51; combined with an earlier loss to the Soviets, Brazil was eliminated from medal competition. The United States and the Soviet Union had clinched the top two spots in Group B with a pair of 2-0 records, and would move on to the medal round.

But first, the Cold War rivals had to play each other in a “meaningless” game on November 28. The outcome would not affect the standings, but both sides, including Soviet coach Stepan Spandarian, knew that every game counted in the propaganda arena. Spandarian had coached the 1952 Soviet team to a silver medal, and had four veterans from that squad with him in Melbourne: Juri Ozerov, Kazimieras Petkevicius, Stasinislovas Stonkus, and Maigonis Valdmanis. Ozerov and Petkevicius had also played on the 1953 team that won the European Championship, and their teammate Algirdas Lauritenas joined them for the Olympics. Spandarian was assisted by Alexander Gomelsky, the coach of the Latvian ASK Riga team. Gomelsky would later earn the title as the father of Soviet Union basketball by winning fifteen national titles, eight European titles, two World championships, and four Olympic medals as head coach. In 1954, as a young army lieutenant, he was appointed the coach of ASK Riga, and subsequently discovered 7'3” center Janis Krumins who became an international curiosity because of his height, which was frequently over-estimated by reporters. The Soviets were obsessed with tall players – both Stonkus and Arkady Bochkarev were also challenging the seven-foot mark – believing that height and strength were more important than speed, athletic ability, or shooting, reflecting their reverence for George Mikan and the other plodding big men that had been dominating American basketball. One of Krumins' teammates on ASK Riga, guard Valdis Muiznieks remembered him as “a true gentleman” who passed well for a big man, frequently teaming up with Muiznieks to run pick-and-rolls. Both joined Gomelsky in Melbourne.

Against the Americans, Spandarian made an immediate impression by starting the top five players from his bench and using them for the entire first half, motivated partly by Krumins' foot injury that left him on the sidelines. The United States led only 39-32 at the break, a result of poor shooting and uninspired play. However, the Americans then regrouped and pulled away in the second half, winning 85-55 behind Russell's twenty points and "brilliant" defense. Jeangerard added fourteen and Jones scored ten. The Soviets were led by Arkady Bochkarev's twenty-one points and twenty by Muiznieks.

The medal round began with a rematch between the Soviet Union and France. Krumins returned to action and scored twenty-seven points as the Soviets won 56-49 to avenge their earlier loss. The Americans had a much easier time in their game, defeating Uruguay 101-38 to set up another meeting with the Soviets for the gold medal. With Russell dominating the boards and smothering anyone who tried to penetrate toward the basket, the United States forced the Soviets to shoot almost exclusively from outside, and built a 56-27 halftime lead. Krumins was a non-factor, scoring just four points for the entire game, and in the words of the Associated Press, was "outmaneuvered for rebounds and consistently [left] at the far end of the court when the Americans employed their fast break." Only Mikhail Semenov, who scored fifteen points, finished in double-figures. The United States led by as many as forty-one points in the second half, before the Soviet Union began to stall in an effort to hold the Americans below the 100 point mark. The Soviets accomplished that goal, but it was a hollow achievement. Afterwards, back in the locker room, Russell proclaimed that the 89-55 win was "my proudest moment" and tearfully embraced Coach Tucker, who proclaimed that "this team is as good as any ever assembled." Tucker also addressed press reports that the competition had been less than stellar, asserting that the Russians could compete at the college level in the United States if they learned the American game: "The Russians handle the ball well though, and are well coached." At the medal ceremony, Jones thought of "the thousands and thousands of basketball players in America and the thousands who were stars and feeling that I was the luckiest guy in the world."

Russell shared the same euphoric feelings, later saying that the Olympics were “one of the biggest thrills of my life.” Now as he returned home with his teammates to start his professional basketball career, even more thrills were in his future.

Chapter 4

Greatest Defensive Big Man in the Game

ON MARCH 21, 1956, AS BILL RUSSELL and the USF Dons prepared to face SMU in the NCAA national semifinals, the Boston Celtics ended their season with a 102-97 loss at home against the Syracuse Nationals. Syracuse had now knocked Boston out of the playoffs three years in a row, but this loss was particularly frustrating. The Celtics had finished the regular season in second place with a 39-33 record, four games ahead of the Nationals, who needed to defeat the New York Knickerbockers in a one game playoff in order to qualify for the postseason. Boston had also taken eight out of twelve games against Syracuse during the regular season, including a 3-1 edge at home. The additions of veteran center Arnie Risen and rookie forward Jim Loscutoff had added depth to a front line that had struggled the year before against the Nationals' Dolph Schayes, Johnny Kerr, and Red Rocha, the centerpieces of Syracuse's 1955 NBA championship team. Boston won the opener of the best-of-three series, but the Celtics could not shake the "Nats." Adding to the Celtics frustration was their belief that they were on the brink of a breakthrough. "We could shoot like hell, we could pass extremely well, we could run very well, and we played pretty fair defense for a running team and without a big guy backing us up," Bob Cousy later said. "We had everything except the big rebounder."

Celtics owner Walter Brown shared Cousy's faith in the team, investing his time and money to keep the team afloat and

added to his family's athletic legend in the process. His father George V. Brown, who raised his family on a farm on Hayden Rowe Street in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, had founded the Boston Marathon after serving as a member of the United States delegation at the first modern Olympics in Greece in 1896. Enchanted by the marathon event, Brown worked to establish a course in 1906 that ran from Ashland, and later from his hometown of Hopkinton, to Boston, and served as the race's official starter for two decades.

George Brown's day job was general manager of the Boston Arena, which hosted Boston Bruins hockey games until a new venue opened on Causeway Street in November 1928. Built atop the Boston and Maine railroad's North Station, the Boston Garden was developed by New York sports promoter Tex Rickard, as part of a nationwide plan to build six copies of New York's famed Madison Square Garden. Rickard, who in his role with the Madison Square Garden Corporation had recently expanded that arena's list of tenants by taking over the Brooklyn Celtics basketball team and moving them across the river, now wanted to use Boston as the first step in his ambitious plan. With an ally in Homer Loring, the chairman of the Boston & Maine railroad, the Boston Garden was completed in less than a year as the centerpiece of a large development project. Soon the Garden's western entrance was connected to a new luxury hotel, The Manger, and an office building was erected on the other side of the arena. The new Garden dominated the skyline between the mouth of the Charles River and Boston's Inner Harbor, and the building's seven-panel yellow-brick façade flanked by twin spires was a stark contrast to the elegant Ionic columns and archways that framed the old train station building it had consumed.

Despite the Garden Corporation's best efforts, which included producing promotional literature trumpeting the new Garden as "New England's Greatest Indoor Arena & Exposition Hall," the building's program of boxing and hockey, complimented by other fare such as track meets, horse shows, and wrestling, failed to turn a profit. Tex Rickard had died just months after the Garden was completed, and the New York investors who assumed control had no interest in continuing his

grand plans. In 1934 the Garden was purchased by the Boston Arena Corporation, giving the renamed Boston Garden-Arena Corporation control over both landmarks, and George tapped his son Walter to serve as assistant manager.

A graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, Walter Brown had filled various roles as a low-level employee at the Boston Arena, from handyman to program editor, and had made a name for himself in the sports world by serving as the general manager of the US National Team in the International Ice Hockey Foundation World Championships, winning the 1933 title in Prague. Brown's first love was hockey, and years later, as his Celtics were winning championships while the Bruins, which he ran as team president, were floundering, Brown would muse to reporters, "I only wish Bob Cousy could skate." Faced with the unenviable task of convincing Depression-era Bostonians to spend money on entertainment, Walter was not afraid to "think outside the box." At the Boston Garden Winter Exhibition in December 1935, instead of being satisfied with featuring Florence Clark's sled dog team and the local sister-brother ice skating duo of Grace and James Madden, Walter commissioned a 250 foot-tall indoor ski jump – whose peak soared towards the rafters – and bought ice grinders to create hundreds of tons of crushed ice for its surface. When his father George died in 1939, Walter succeeded him as general manager, and was elevated to President of the Garden-Arena Corporation in 1941.

When Brown returned from serving in World War II, the Garden was in use only 165 nights year, and there was a limit to the number of minor league hockey games and Ice Capades shows he could procure. "We had a building which cost about a million dollars a year to run, and was being used less than half the nights of the year," Brown later recalled. "Taxes and assessments were spiraling, and ten different unions were annually negotiating for increased contracts." Brown was not alone in his plight. The post-war boom was increasing costs at arenas around the country, but there was a silver lining. As wages began to rise and leisure time for working-class Americans increased, the potential customer base for entertainment also expanded. The question facing Brown and his

fellow arena owners was how to translate that potential into profits.

When Brown and the rest of the Arena Managers Association of America met in New York in 1946, professional basketball hardly appeared to be a salvation to the assembled group of self-described hockey men from Boston, New York, Philadelphia and other major Eastern cities. But Brown saw how well Holy Cross basketball drew at the Garden, and colleagues such as Al Sutphin of the Cleveland Arena and Ned Irish of Madison Square Garden (himself a successful college basketball promoter) were impressed by the growth of the NIT and the ability of the fledgling professional National Basketball League to survive while playing in much smaller cities across the Midwest. So on June 6, 1946, exactly two years after D-Day, they agreed to sponsor their own teams and created the "Basketball Association of America," drawing upon the name of their arena managers' organization for inspiration. By the following fall, eleven teams had emerged to begin the BAA's inaugural season. A salary cap of \$55,000 per team was established, but the first season was a financial struggle for most of the league, including the Celtics. They drew about 100,000 fans for thirty home dates, playing games at both the Garden and the Boston Arena. Ticket prices ranged from \$1.25 to \$2.75 (and a quarter for a beer), but nearly half of those who attended received complimentary tickets, a common practice across the league that season. The Celtics lost nearly \$125,000 during that forgettable 22-38 campaign, but Walter Brown was a believer in the team's potential even as many of his fellow owners cut their losses. When the season ended, the five teams with the weakest net ticket receipts were Cleveland, Boston, Pittsburgh, Detroit and Toronto. Only the Celtics returned to play a second season, as the other four teams all dropped out of the league.

Three years later, after posting an 89-147 record featuring a single, brief playoff appearance, and bleeding \$460,000 in red ink caused in part by average ticket sales of well under five thousand per game, the Boston Garden-Arena Corporation had had enough and decided to fold the team. Brown was still committed to the Celtics, and on game days he would spend a normal workday in his Garden office, go home for dinner, and

then leave an hour later to return to the arena. Rather than watch the Celtics disappear, Brown mortgaged his house and sold stock in the Ice Capades to raise money to buy the team along with Lou Pieri who had folded his Providence Steamrollers after losing \$200,000 during three lackluster seasons. In hindsight, Pieri's most important contribution was that his proposed stake in the Celtics was conditional on Brown hiring Red Auerbach as coach.

Brown already knew of Auerbach's reputation as a strong coach by talking with the small group of Boston newspapermen who covered the team. Auerbach had compiled a 143-82 record over four seasons in the BAA/NBA, including a 15-5 record against the Celtics, and had reached the 1949 Finals before losing to George Mikan and the Lakers. But Auerbach's fiery personality had led to clashes with owners in his previous two stops, particularly with the Tri-Cities Blackhawks. Red later described his experience with the Blackhawks as "a long tough winter," explaining that "Ben Kerner and I were not exactly a match made in heaven" because Auerbach and Kerner both believed they should have the final say in player personnel matters.

Arnold "Red" Auerbach learned the value of toughness while growing up in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, which he later described as a working class neighborhood featuring a mixture of "Irish, Polish, Jews, lots of Italians, [and] some blacks." His father Hyman had emigrated from Minsk around the turn of the century, sent to America with his brother Sam by their parents in an effort to shield them from anti-Semitism, but two decades later, their children would still hear occasional taunts from other kids around the neighborhood. Hyman slowly but deliberately worked his way up the economic ladder, eventually owning a restaurant, a deli and later opening a dry cleaning shop, Sunset Cleaners, where Red would spend some of his college years pressing shirts. Leisure time was a foreign concept to Hyman Auerbach, and while he did not initially understand his son's fascination with basketball, he enthusiastically supported Red's determination to leverage his basketball talent to get an education. "I was his son," Red later recalled, "and if this dream of mine was all that important to me,

then no one was rooting any harder for it to come true than he was.”

While coaching the Celtics, Auerbach would frequently mention highlights from his basketball career, to the point that his players were certain they were all tall tales, but there was a foundation of truth behind the stories. Auerbach earned second-team All-Brooklyn honors as captain of the Eastern District High School team, and drew interest from three of the city’s top college basketball programs – CCNY, LIU and NYU. When his grades and stiff competition at college tryouts proved to be stumbling blocks, Auerbach accepted a partial scholarship from Coach Gordon Rittings at Seth Low Junior College. Seth Low played a fast break style that Rittings had learned while playing for George Washington coach Bill Reinhart, and Auerbach played well enough that Reinhart eventually offered him a full scholarship at GW. In later years Auerbach would consistently credit Reinhart as being the true father of the fast break. While Frank Keaney at the University of Rhode Island was playing a similar “run-and-shoot” style, nationally recognized as one of the best offenses in the country, Auerbach admired the scientific approach that Reinhart brought to the running game. “Bill Reinhart was twenty-five years ahead of his time ... Frank Keaney at Rhode Island got credit for the fast break, but he didn’t know what he was doing to the extent that Bill Reinhart did. Bill Reinhart didn’t have a helter-skelter rundown break. He had an organized break the way it’s done today – outlet pass, go for the three-on-two, and so on.”

After graduating from George Washington in 1940 with a bachelors’ degree in physical education, Auerbach spent the next decade almost constantly on the move, coaching basketball at two different high schools in the D.C. area, earning his master’s degree, and serving three years as a physical educational instructor in the Navy during World War II. His Naval career cemented Auerbach’s love of coaching – and introduced him to the appeal of a good cigar. Auerbach honed his leadership skills by coaching an informal camp basketball team that featured former college stars such as Bob Feerick, John Norlander, and Red Holzman, and moonlighted as coach of the Washington Redskins charity basketball team. When Auerbach was

discharged from the Navy, he used this resume to convince Mike Uline to hire him to coach his Washington Capitols in the newly founded BAA. Uline was impressed with the job Red had done with the Redskins, who played their “home” games at Uline’s arena, and Red sealed the deal by convincing him that he could draw upon his Navy connections to recruit players who would fit under the league’s salary cap.

The Capitols were successful on the court but struggled financially. When Uline refused to give Auerbach a three-year contract extension, the fiery young coach quit in June 1949. After a brief stint as a college assistant coach with the Duke Blue Devils, and a turbulent season with Ben Kerner and the Blackhawks, Auerbach was back on the job market when Walter Brown approached him in the spring of 1950. The Celtics 1949-50 season had been the worst in their mediocre history; a 22-46 record, last in the Eastern Division, and third-worst in the league. The newly formed NBA, created from a testy merger between the BAA and NBL, was in even worse shape. Five teams had dropped out since the season ended, including the Waterloo Hawks and Denver Nuggets, the only teams who had finished with a poorer record than the Celtics. Therefore, Boston had the top pick in the college draft, and first choice of the players from the folded teams, which combined to give them a golden opportunity to start rebuilding the team. Auerbach missed badly with the college pick by taking Bowling Green center Charlie Share – who subsequently refused to report to Boston – instead of local favorite Bob Cousy, but the Celtics pick in the dispersal draft was a no-brainer. Ed Macauley was the second-best center in the league behind George Mikan, and Ned Irish of the Knicks thought so highly of Macauley that when his team, the St. Louis Bombers, folded, Irish tried to buy the entire team to get his rights. NBA commissioner Maurice Podoloff refused to approve the deal, insisting that Macauley had to go into the dispersal draft pool, and the Celtics selected him. Then the Celtics caught a lucky break when Cousy, who had been selected third overall by Kerner and then shipped to the Chicago Stags, became available again when the Stags folded. When Brown proceeded to pick Cousy’s name out of Syracuse owner Danny Biasone’s fedora, he saved Auerbach from what could have been a fatal mistake.

Macauley and Cousy formed the core of the pre-Russell Celtics, who were good enough to post solid regular season records but were regularly defeated in the first or second round of the playoffs, victims of their lack of defense and rebounding. Pistons coach Charley Eckman spoke for many around the league when he brazenly told *Sports Illustrated* that “[t]he Celtics are a team which throws defense out the window.” Statistically, the Celtics led the league in total rebounds in 1954 and 1956, but that was a by-product of their fast break style – more shots naturally lead to more rebound opportunities. 1951-52 was the only season in which the Celtics were able to outscore their opponents by an average of more than two and a half points per game. Cousy’s brilliance could only take them so far, and Auerbach was occasionally critical of his young guard’s fancy passes. “He was like atomic energy that couldn’t be controlled. He threw the ball all over the place, hitting his own guys on the back of the head.” But Cousy knew that Auerbach’s words had another purpose. “He knew that I couldn’t stand failure. He knew that while I rarely showed feelings on the surface I burned inside. And he knew I played best when angry.” The Celtics’ limitations were best symbolized by the 1953 playoffs. In the first round, Cousy scored fifty points in a marathon four overtime game to eliminate the Nationals, but the Knicks’ Sweetwater Clifton and Harry Gallatin controlled the boards for New York in the Division Finals and the Celtics lost in four games.

Despite the lack of a championship, the relationship between Auerbach and Walter Brown was strong enough for Auerbach to sign a series of one-year contracts instead of a longer-term deal. But there were rough patches – Brown cut his salary before the 1954-55 season, which ended up being Auerbach’s worst year with the club, as Boston finished 36-36, including a dismal 5-22 road record. While the new 24-second clock fit the Celtics’ style on offense, it also exposed their defensive woes. After leading the NBA in scoring the previous season and outscoring opponents by over two points per game, the 1955 Celtics led the league in offense again, scoring at a 101.4 clip, but gave up 101.5 points a night. The first round loss to Syracuse in 1956 was simply more of the same.

So after hearing Bill Reinhart's glowing scouting report on Bill Russell, Auerbach was eager to follow-up. He called California coach Pete Newell, who "assured me Russell was even better than all of the things I had read about him." Then Auerbach asked former Celtics Fred Scolari and Don Barksdale to take a look at Russell, who echoed each other's positive reports. When asked about Russell's toughness, Barksdale replied, "No problem there ... I've watched this kid take some pretty good shots. He can take it, and he can dish it out too. You won't have to worry about anybody pushing him around. He just won't allow it." While Auerbach was excited, he was also careful to mask his interest, because the Celtics were on their way towards earning the sixth pick in the draft, and Red knew that Russell would never last that long. Despite an NBA rule that prohibited trading first-round draft choices, Auerbach was already trying to control the cost of a possible trade. When Auerbach and Cousy were interviewed by Louis Effrat of the *New York Times* during the 1955 ECAC Holiday festival that featured the headline matchup of Russell vs. Tom Heinsohn, Effrat wrote that Red was there "expressly" to watch Heinsohn – a dubious claim at best. In early 1956, Auerbach accidentally made his true feelings known at one of the sportswriters' luncheons that were regularly sponsored by Walter Brown. When Harvard coach Floyd Wilson addressed the gathering and declared that "Russell would never make it in the pros," Auerbach turned to *Boston Record* sports editor Sammy Cohen, and, in an angry whisper so loud the entire room could hear, growled, "He's full of shit!"

Auerbach obviously disagreed with Wilson, but around the NBA opinions on Russell were mixed. There were reports that the Lakers were so desperate to get him that they tried to tank the 1956 season and finish last, a plan that would have included trading forward Vern Mikklesen to the Celtics for three young players who were in the military. However, others compared Russell to Walter Dukes, a seven-foot center drafted by the Knicks with a territorial draft choice in 1953 who was a disappointment when he made his debut two years later. Eddie Gottlieb of the Philadelphia Warriors expressed some questions about Russell's offense, but was prophetic when he told a

reporter, "You'd have to take him if you could get him. Otherwise, he'd be sure to cause you trouble."

Auerbach was confident that Brown could get the NBA to waive the rule that prohibited trading first round picks, especially since that rule was intended to prevent a financially struggling team from *selling* the player for cash, not to stop mutually beneficial exchanges of players. So Auerbach began maneuvering to get Russell. First, he persuaded Brown to use his close relationship with Rochester owner Les Harrison to find out who he planned to select with the top pick. Harrison liked Russell, and he sent Dolly King, the first black player who had played for the Royals, to visit him. But Russell was insulted by the insinuation that he could be easily swayed by someone of his own color, and King's subsequent report cooled Harrison's interest. More importantly, Harrison already had a star rebounder. Maurice Stokes had won the 1956 Rookie of the Year award after leading the NBA in rebounding and averaging over sixteen points and sixteen rebounds a game for the last-place Royals. So Harrison decided to take Duquesne's Sihugo Green with the top pick. Green was a talented All-American who had led the Dukes to the 1955 NIT championship alongside Dick Ricketts, who Harrison had already acquired from the Hawks in a mid-season trade. Harrison was also scared off by reports that the Harlem Globetrotters would offer Russell up to \$50,000 to sign, but Abe Saperstein had made a critical mistake by ignoring Russell during their initial meeting, talking almost exclusively to Phil Woolpert while one of his players kept Russell and Ross Guidice occupied with jokes and small talk. Russell was already wary of the Globetrotters "clowning" style, and the meeting with Saperstein only reinforced his intention to steer clear of him and his his barnstormers.

With the Royals out of the way, Auerbach focused his attention on his old boss Ben Kerner. The Hawks first decade in pro basketball was a vagabond existence, originally joining the NBL in 1946 as the Buffalo Bisons before relocating to the "Tri-Cities" of Moline and Rock Island, Illinois and Davenport, Iowa after thirteen games. In 1951, having survived the merger with the NBA, Kerner moved the club to Milwaukee and shortened their nickname from Blackhawks to Hawks. The move was

initially successful, but the combination of the arrival of baseball's Milwaukee Braves, a season-ticket base of fewer than a hundred fans, and the Miller Brewing Company's decision to withdraw their sponsorship of Hawks broadcasts doomed the club. Kerner later estimated that he lost \$36,000 during his last season in Milwaukee in 1955. After listening to offers to sell the team to groups from Washington, Baltimore, Indianapolis, and his former hometown of Buffalo, Kerner decided to move to St. Louis. With new radio and television deals to help promote the team, and a season ticket base of 1,000 fans in their first year at Kiel Auditorium, Hawks attendance soared to fourth place among NBA teams.

Despite the good start, Kerner was well aware that while the Cardinals ruled St. Louis, other pro sports had struggled there. The basketball Bombers had disbanded in 1950, the American League's Browns had moved to Baltimore four years later, and pro football had yet to arrive in the Gateway city. Kerner knew he needed to construct a contending club that was also stocked with players that would be popular with local fans. His decision to not draft Bill Russell in 1956 has frequently been painted as purely a racial decision, but Kerner was not an overt racist. In 1946, when Les Harrison encouraged Kerner to join the NBL, Harrison made it clear that he was going to sign two black players, Pop Gates and Dolly King. Kerner embraced the idea. "Why don't you sell me Pop Gates and we'll go through it together?" Although the experiment only lasted one season – no blacks competed in the NBL after that point except for the all-black Dayton Rens in 1948 – the Hawks consistently had a black player on their roster every year beginning in 1950, when the Celtics selected Chuck Cooper and integrated the NBA. In 1955, Kerner had selected Dick Ricketts as his top draft pick, and in 1956 he would select Willie Naulls of UCLA in the second round – both were blacks.

However, there is no doubt that Kerner did yield to the pressures of catering to a Southern fan base, who would later scream racial epithets like "Baboon" and "Black Nigger" at Russell and his teammates. Kerner had just released Chuck Cooper in January, less than two years after purchasing him from the Celtics, and also dealt Ricketts to the Royals after just

twenty-nine games as part of a four player deal to acquire former Louisville star forward (and Burgin, Kentucky native) Jack Coleman and guard Jack McMahon – two white veterans. Coleman teamed with burgeoning superstar Bob Pettit and Chuck Share to form a solid frontcourt, but the Hawks still finished 33-39, which put them in position for the second pick in the draft.

With Pettit and Share both averaging over ten rebounds a game, Kerner had enough strength under the boards to entertain the thought of trading Russell's rights, and the Celtics had just the player Kerner coveted – Ed Macauley. Macauley, a St. Louis native who developed into a star in high school, led the St. Louis Bilikens to the NIT championship as a junior in 1948, scoring twenty-four points and claiming tournament MVP honors with a 66-52 victory over Dolph Schayes and NYU. When Kerner convinced Auerbach to include former Kentucky star Cliff Hagan, who also figured to help sell tickets at the box office, surrendering the second pick was an easy decision. In contrast, Auerbach and Brown agonized over the prospect of trading Macauley, and Brown personally called Macauley to get his approval, saying "I can't imagine the Celtics without you." But Macauley welcomed the trade. His one-year old son Patrick had been diagnosed with cerebral palsy just before the 1956 playoffs, and Macauley seriously considered retiring in order to stay by his son's side near their offseason home in St. Louis. The deal was finalized the night before the draft.

While Russell's offensive limitations were seen as a drawback, Auerbach was not concerned. After Russell arrived in Boston, he told his rookie center, "All we want you to do is something no one's ever been able to do for this team: Get us the ball. Forget everything else. Just get the ball." The Celtics already had plenty of offense, and felt that their other first round pick could compensate for the loss of Macauley's scoring. As expected, Auerbach had exercised the Celtics territorial draft rights and selected All-American Tom Heinsohn from Holy Cross, despite having just the sixth pick overall. The territorial draft was a controversial rule that allowed each team first choice of any player who played their college ball within a fifty-mile radius, in exchange for surrendering their first round pick. The goal was to help boost attendance by allowing NBA teams to

stock their teams with popular local college stars, though it did not always work as intended – Ed Macauley had been one of the first territorial selections by the short-lived St. Louis Bombers franchise back in 1949. In the months before the 1956 draft, Ben Kerner and the Pistons' Fred Zollner openly lobbied to shelve the concept, arguing that the rule was biased in favor of the Eastern clubs, suggesting that Philadelphia in particular unfairly benefited from their proximity to LaSalle, Temple, Penn, St. Joseph's and Villanova, allowing them to acquire stars such as Paul Arizin and Tom Gola. The credibility of the rule was already being stretched by Eddie Gottlieb, who, inspired by the play of Overbrook High School's Wilt Chamberlain, rammed through a proposal to expand territorial rights to cover high school players. Kerner's proposal was supported by Walter Brown but the measure was voted down, and the territorial draft rule remained in place until 1966.

Heinsohn's shooting ability and toughness made him an ideal fit for the Celtics. A New Jersey native who shot line drive jumpers learned during hours of practicing at a CYO gym with a low-slung roof, Heinsohn grew up in an Irish/Italian working-class neighborhood in Jersey City, and grew a tough skin while defending himself from his classmates' anti-German taunts during World War II. After moving to Union City and enrolling at St. Michael's High School, Heinsohn became the team's leading scorer and earned High School All-American honors. Heinsohn did not fit the stereotype of a typical "jock," as he had wide-ranging interests in art and music, though his role as a drummer for the marching band at football games was inspired more by his attraction to a pretty redhead named Diane Regenhard (his future wife), than a passion for drumming.

As his high school days were coming to an end, Heinsohn sifted through "hundreds" of college scholarship offers and chose Holy Cross "because [they were] totally honest with me," flatly telling him that he could not play basketball and major in pre-med at the same time. Heinsohn quickly adjusted to life in Worcester, Massachusetts, leading the freshman team to an undefeated 15-0 record, and making the dean's list. He immediately made an impact on the Crusaders' varsity team as a sophomore, helping to lead Holy Cross to an NIT title as their

second-leading scorer. Heinsohn continued to work on his game, even playing in some semipro games for Woodshed AC in Union City under assumed names, and by his senior season Heinsohn was averaging twenty-seven points and twenty-one rebounds per game and earning a reputation as a fearless rebounder. Heinsohn was just as successful in the classroom, earning the prestigious Lawler Medal for academic achievement, and left Holy Cross well prepared for his offseason job as a life insurance underwriter for Worcester State Mutual Life. A classmate recalled, “he was one fellow you were sure would never be satisfied unless he finished on top in everything he attempted.”

Auerbach’s plans for Heinsohn were nearly derailed by the AAU’s Peoria Caterpillars, who made him a serious offer soon after the college season ended. Auerbach had been characteristically acerbic when describing Heinsohn to the press, downplaying his talents, and the comments led Heinsohn to visit Peoria in search of another option. But when Auerbach and Brown enlisted fellow Holy Cross alum Bob Cousy to call Heinsohn and plead their case, Cousy told him to ignore what he read in the papers and sign with Boston. Cousy even offered to drive Heinsohn into the city for a meeting with Auerbach and Brown, and the trip was a successful one. Heinsohn signed a two-year deal for \$9,000 a season, and the drive from Worcester marked the beginning of a life-long friendship with Cousy.

With Russell still in Melbourne for the Olympics, Heinsohn and the rest of the Celtics opened the season in New York on October 27 with a 115-112 win over the Knicks. By mid-November, Boston had a 3-3 record, but then ran off ten straight victories, winning by an average margin of nearly thirteen points per game, and built a six game lead in the Eastern Division. Sharman and Cousy were leading the team in scoring, and Heinsohn’s play drew rave reviews. The Lakers’ Vern Mikkelsen described him as “a good corner man who can move and shoot from the outside and drive well,” while the Pistons’ defensive specialist Mel Hutchins agreed that “[t]he kid’s first step on his drive is really great.” Still, when Bill Sharman pulled a thigh muscle and missed six games in December, the Celtics lack of depth was exposed and the team cooled off, losing four of those six games.

Fortunately, Bill Russell was on his way back from Australia. After stopping in Oakland to marry Rose Swisher on December 9 at the Taylor Methodist Church, the couple flew to Boston a week later. At Logan Airport, they were greeted by Walter Brown, the ailing Bill Sharman – and the press. After being presented with a large “key” to the city, featuring a basketball logo for a knob and the words “WELCOME to BOSTON” along its length, Russell was photographed signing an autograph for a young fan. Russell’s eventual refusal to sign autographs would become legendary, to the point where teammates such as Heinsohn would sign for him. Before Russell could play his first game for the Celtics, Brown had to get his name on a contract. Brown refused to pay Russell more than Bob Cousy, who earned \$25,000 as the highest-paid player in the league, so he offered the rookie \$22,500 with a \$6,000 cut in pay because Russell had already missed exactly one-third of the regular season. The agreement was announced on December 19, the day after Russell had sat on the bench as the Celtics lost to the Knicks, 110-99, in the second game of a doubleheader at Madison Square Garden.

Russell’s initial public comments were cautious. “I know it will be hard. But life is just one adjustment after another. All I can do is my best.” Auerbach was already praising him to the press, sensing Russell’s nervousness. “We’ve been after a big young man for some time, and Russell can run with us, rebound and play defense.” Russell later recalled that Auerbach delivered the same message to him in private, telling him that defense and rebounding “was to be my fundamental role on the team, and as long as I performed these functions well he would never pressure me to score more points.” The conversation relaxed Russell, and he began to realize that his relationship with Auerbach would be more collaborative and less confrontational than he expected.

Russell’s first game as a Celtic was a nationally televised game on the following Saturday afternoon, and the opponent was a marketing dream – it was Ed Macauley’s first game back in Boston as a member of the St. Louis Hawks. Despite the addition of Macauley, and the continuing brilliance of reigning Most Valuable Player Bob Pettit, the Hawks were mired in last place in the Western Division with a 10-14 record, having lost nine out of

ten games before defeating the Ft. Wayne Pistons four days earlier. Auerbach eased Russell into the lineup by bringing him off the bench. After missing Auerbach's strenuous training camp regime, Russell was not ready for the roughness and pace of the pro game. Exhausted after the first quarter, he played just twenty-one minutes while wondering why everyone else seemed to be able to run forever. The game itself was a thriller. With Bill Sharman back in the lineup, the Celtics rallied from a sixteen point deficit in the fourth quarter and won it 95-93 on a Sharman jumper. Russell's offense was predictably poor – he shot just three of eleven from the floor and missed all four free throws he attempted – but his teammates were already in awe of the core of his game. Cousy later recalled, "I remember coming out of that St. Louis game thinking, 'Boy, we got a shot at doing something.'" Russell grabbed sixteen rebounds and blocked several shots, including three straight by Pettit in the fourth quarter as the Celtics made their run.

A week later, Frank Ramsey returned from the Army and resumed his role as Auerbach's "sixth man." After Ramsey arrived two years earlier, teammate Bob Brannum described him as well-liked but "cocky as hell." Ramsey's Kentucky drawl and occasional stutter masked an out-going personality (he was a natural practical joker), and his combination of quickness and sharp intellect allowed him to play both smaller guards and opponents much taller than his 6'3" frame. He was also a fearless shooter who thrived in Auerbach's system which encouraged everyone to shoot if they had a good open shot. Ramsey's teammates knew he would shoot early and often, and regularly made small pregame wagers on how many seconds it would take before Ramsey took his first shot. The injection of Russell and Ramsey into the lineup greatly improved the Celtics depth. With Russell soon starting at center, Heinsohn and Jim Loscutoff at the forwards, and Cousy and Sharman in the backcourt, the Celtics now had the best starting five in the league, and opponents could not relax when Ramsey came off the bench. Jack Nichols and Arnie Risen, who had been sharing the center spot before Russell's arrival, now came off the bench and played forward as well. Veteran point guard Andy Phillip and forward Dick Hemric rounded out the Celtics normal rotation. However,

injuries would keep that rotation in flux – Risen alone missed nearly thirty games with a broken wrist – and the team needed some time to jell. After winning in Russell's debut, the Celtics played .500 ball over their next twelve games. Boston then put together a 12-2 stretch in January and early February to raise their season record to 35-16, and pull eight and a half games ahead of Philadelphia.

Russell's transition to the NBA was smoothed by the team-first attitude of Auerbach and his teammates. While Boston had drafted Chuck Cooper in 1950 and traded for Don Barksdale in 1953, when Russell arrived three years later he was the only black player on the Celtics. Auerbach had told Russell "we have a pretty good organization here. No cliques; everyone gets along real well," but as Russell later recalled, he was not sure what to expect. "I was the interloper, the factor that they needed to make the mathematical problem spell world championship. But I had a small chip on my shoulder and I was coming in halfway through their season, which didn't add anything to team camaraderie."

Fortunately, his teammates were gracious on the court. Risen, the only member of the team to have won a pro championship, eagerly helped Russell adjust to the NBA. "It really warmed me," Russell later wrote, "because we both knew that I was getting ready to take his job away. But he knew this was inevitable; he was nearing the end of his career, and he wanted the team to win more than he wanted to hang on. To Arnie it was simply the most sensible way to behave." Auerbach agreed, and encouraged the two to work together. Risen's attitude was shaped in part by having to face Russell in practice. "I was eating every other shot that I threw up there," Risen said, "and that hadn't happened to me very much in my career."

The racial issues were a bit trickier to overcome. Many of his teammates, including Heinsohn, had never played with a black player. Russell recalled that he "was excluded from almost everything except practice and the games" that season, but his aloof attitude that was designed to ward off hecklers also contributed to the distance between the young rookie and his teammates. For example, Russell was never asked to take part in any of the traditional rookie hazing exercises, since teammates felt he would have refused if he had been asked. Some of his

teammates did reach out in small ways. Ramsey, a southerner, was particularly friendly, and Auerbach even broke his rule against visiting his players at their homes for dinner, to make sure that Russell knew “that his color didn’t mean a damn thing in our relationship.”

On the court, Russell was a quick learner. After losing to the Warriors on Christmas Day in New York, the two teams traveled to Boston for a rematch the following night, and Russell held veteran all-star Neil Johnston to four field goals, grabbed sixteen rebounds in the first quarter and twenty-two in the first half to set NBA records during a 120-97 Celtics victory. Bob Cousy has never forgotten that game. Afterwards, he told reporters, “Bill did such a complete job, Neil still hasn’t got his hook shot back,” and decades later Cousy would retell the story in several books. “Right from the start, Russ didn’t even have to jump to block Johnston’s shot,” Cousy wrote. “He would be there quicker than poor Neil.” Players around the league were discovering that Russell’s natural advantage of being left-handed, which gave him a shorter path to block a shot released from an opponent’s right hand, was complimented by a combination of speed, quickness, leaping ability, and intelligence that was unmatched in the NBA. This latter quality was impressing Auerbach most of all: “... his biggest asset is his mental attitude. He has tremendous pride. He can be faked once but not twice.” After the Knicks’ Harry Gallatin scored twenty-six points against him during a 113-102 New York victory on January 8, Russell blocked four of Gallatin’s five shots and held him to nine points when the two teams met again twelve days later. By now Auerbach was even more enthusiastic with his praise: “Already he’s shown that he’s the greatest defensive big man in the game... Bill has built a mental hazard in rival players. Unintentionally they’ve altered their style because of him,” consistently taking notice of where Russell was on the floor instead of focusing on their offense. The Celtics were adjusting too. With Russell collecting rebounds at a record pace, the rest of the team could get a head start on their fast break. Cousy and Russell worked out a scheme where Cousy would move to a predetermined spot on the floor when an opponent missed a shot, making it easier for Russell to send a quick outlet pass his way.

By March 3, the Celtics had wrapped up their first division title, then coasted through the end of the season, and enjoyed their well-earned first-round bye. Their opponents in the Eastern Finals were the Syracuse Nationals, who had swept Philadelphia 2-0 in the opening round. The Nats had begun the season 4-8, but then owner Danny Biasone fired Al Cervi as head coach. Cervi, who began his career as a player before World War II, had been with Syracuse since 1948, initially as player-coach before turning to coaching full-time. With future Hall of Famer Dolph Schayes as his centerpiece, the Nats reached the 1950 and 1954 Finals, then defeated the Pistons in 1955 for their first title. Schayes had benefited from Cervi's "street fighter" mentality and blossomed as a player, but he did not like him personally. "To be honest, everyone on the team despised Cervi. He wasn't a coach who would stroke some guys and give the others a pat on the back. He screamed at everybody. ... We won a lot of games simply because of the toughness he instilled in us. Yet, we hated him for his pettiness." Now, after eight-plus years as coach, Cervi was out and backup guard Paul Seymour was appointed player-coach.

The Nationals featured Schayes and center Johnny Kerr, both solid rebounders, and rounded out their rotation with forwards Earl Lloyd and rookie Joe Holup, along with guards Ed Conlin, Bob Harrison, Al Bianchi, and Seymour himself. Former Celtic Togo Palazzi, who had been sold to Syracuse back in December to clear a roster spot for Russell, had also carved out a role off the bench. Syracuse had won the season series 7-5, but that included a pair of two-point wins in March when Boston was playing out the string. The Nats had eliminated the Celtics in the playoffs for three straight years but quickly found out that times had changed. Boston roared to a 108-90 win in game one as Heinsohn and Ramsey combined to hold Schayes to just three baskets, and the Celtics went on to sweep the series in three games.

Awaiting the Celtics in the Finals were the St. Louis Hawks. The Western Division was clearly the weaker half of the league that season. Unlike the East, where all four teams had finished at .500 or better, the Hawks, Lakers, and Pistons finished tied for first in the West with less than awe-inspiring 34-

38 records, three games ahead of the last-place Royals. The Hawks had entered their second season in St. Louis with guarded optimism, as they added Macauley and Hagan to a team that already included Pettit, forward Jack Coleman, guard Jack McMahon, and center Chuck Share, who would now come off the bench. Head coach Red Holzman had followed the team from Milwaukee to St. Louis after retiring as a player but had yet to compile a winning record. The Hawks started the season 8-5, but then dropped six in a row, prompting Kerner to trade Willie Naulls, who had already showed some promise by scoring 23 points in a loss against the pre-Russell Celtics, to the Knicks for point guard Slater Martin. Martin had quarterbacked the Minneapolis Lakers to four championships and filled a glaring hole in the backcourt, while Naulls was deemed expendable because of the Hawks depth up front. But the team continued to struggle, and Holzman was fired in January as the Hawks sat in third place at 14-19. After Bob Pettit and Chuck Share turned him down, Kerner appointed the recently acquired Martin as player-coach. Martin disliked coaching, and started relying on his road roommate Alex Hannum to help him by handling substitutions. It took just eight games before Martin told Kerner he could not run the team both on and off the court, and persuaded Kerner to overlook his personal dislike of Hannum and hire him as coach.

Hannum was playing sparingly, and did not play at all over the final three weeks of the season, as he focused on coaching. While the team went just 15-16 after he took over, Hannum improved the team significantly by shifting Cliff Hagan from guard to forward. Hagan had chipped a bone in his knee during a preseason exhibition game and started the regular season slowly, as Holzman insisted on playing him out of position in the backcourt. Hannum and Martin decided to reduce Chuck Share's minutes and play Hagan much more up front, and when Pettit broke his arm it increased Hagan's playing time even more. Hagan averaged in double-figures over the last ten games of the season and would score seventeen points a game in the playoffs. When the playoffs began, the Hawks defeated the Pistons and Lakers in one-game playoffs to earn the first-round bye in the West, resting while the Lakers swept the Pistons in the

opening round. Then the Hawks swept the West Finals, clinching the series with a 143-135 double-overtime win. For the first time in their histories, St. Louis and Boston had reached the NBA Finals.

RUSSELL'S NBA DEBUT AGAINST THE HAWKS had been the fourth meeting of the season between the two clubs, and the Celtics had already won the first three en route to a 7-2 edge in the season series. However, the two teams had split the last four meetings, with the Hawks winning a pair of two-point games at home in January and March, so they were confident entering the Finals. The series began with an upset at the Garden, as Pettit scored thirty-seven points, and Cousy missed a potential game-tying shot with three seconds left in overtime as the Hawks won 125-123. Slater Martin, one of the few players on the floor who had played in the Finals before, added twenty-three points, and Bill Sharman led the Celtics with thirty-six. Boston bounced back in game two with an easy 119-99 win witnessed by a packed Garden crowd who saw Cousy and Ramsey score twenty-two each. Boston built a nineteen point lead by halftime, then held Pettit to just two points in the second half (eleven for the game) and coasted to the victory.

The next two games were held in St. Louis at the Kiel Auditorium, where the raucous basketball crowds were a different class of clientele than the patrons who attended events at the adjacent Metropolitan Opera House. The fans treated all visiting players with equal contempt. "[T]hey had people sitting on the stage behind the basket," Heinsohn later recalled. "I think all the unstable fans were put there on purpose. You had to go past them to get to the dressing room, and they were always bumping Auerbach and saying naughty things." Auerbach would enlist Heinsohn and Loscutoff to walk along side him for "protection" and during the series one fan hit Auerbach in the head with an egg whose contents subsequently showered Heinsohn as well.

Game three was overshadowed by Auerbach's pregame argument with his former boss Ben Kerner, which was sparked by the former's paranoia during pre-game warm-ups. Already steaming over the "old and ragged basketballs" he felt the Celtics

had been given, Auerbach erupted when Cousy and Sharman told him their basket was too high. As referees measured it, Kerner hurled various choice words at Auerbach, who responded with a punch to his former boss's mouth. Later, Auerbach refused to back down when confronted by the press. "What he called me isn't printable. I wasn't going to take that." NBA commissioner Maurice Podoloff fined Auerbach \$300 but refused to suspend him. Years later, Auerbach struck a more conciliatory tone, saying that he regretted the punch "because Ben was one of the class guys in our league going way back."

The Celtics dropped a 100-98 decision that night, as Pettit bounced back with twenty-six points, twenty-eight rebounds, and a game-winning jumper, but Boston regained their home-court advantage by taking the fourth game, 123-118. Cousy led the Celtics with thirty-one points, and as the two teams left for Boston, Bob Pettit's status for the next game was uncertain. Pettit had broken his wrist when he was "accidentally" undercut by Jim Loscutoff after a layup. He was forced to wear a cast, but the injury had little effect back in Boston, as Pettit scored thirty-three points and grabbed fifteen rebounds, though he had just one rebound in the second half. Boston won 124-109 as Sharman scored thirty-two to lead six Celtics in double-figures. In contrast, game six was a thriller, featuring twenty ties and twenty-three lead changes as neither team could build more than a six point lead. Cliff Hagan, who scored sixteen points and grabbed twenty rebounds, put back a missed jumper by Pettit with three seconds left to give the Hawks a 96-94 series-tying victory. On the game's final play, Heinsohn had left Hagan to help out on Pettit as the Hawks' all-star, who scored thirty-two points despite the cast on his wrist, drove past Loscutoff, but he and his teammates knew that had been a mistake. "The last thing we said during the time-out was to be sure and block out everyone," Ramsey said after the game, "but Hagan wasn't blocked." Remarkably, it was a broken play, as Pettit was not supposed to take the shot. Hannum had drawn up a play where Pettit would pass to Coleman, but Pettit felt time was running out and tried a twenty foot jumper. Heinsohn had led the Celtics with twenty-eight points and eleven rebounds while suffering from an upset stomach, but that was little consolation as the series headed

back to Boston. The way the game ended stoked more controversy. After Hagan's basket, Cousy tried to call time out as the Celtics claimed there were two or three seconds left, but the officials ruled that the game was over. Auerbach took out his frustrations by confronting Kiel timekeeper Jim Duffy at the St. Louis airport as the teams prepared to depart, alleging that Duffy had intentionally let time expire, yelling at him, "You've got no guts!"

Game seven was played on Saturday, April 13 before another sellout crowd at the Garden. The game was also nationally televised, but was blacked out in Boston; local fans either needed to buy a ticket or listen on WHDH radio. Those in attendance included members of the Boston Bruins and Montreal Canadiens, who were enjoying two days off in between games three and four of the Stanley Cup Finals, which were also being held at the Causeway Street arena. Several Red Sox players were also there, including future MVP Jackie Jensen, utility infielder Milt Bolling, and their rarely used third-string catcher, Haywood Sullivan.

Bill Russell had already played in several "winner take all" games in college and the Olympics, but this was his toughest challenge yet, and the pressure took its toll on the rookie. "I only had one hour's sleep Thursday night after we dropped that two-pointer in St. Louis [game six]. Last night I kept waking up so often I only had a couple of hours more." When his stomach remained unsettled even after his ritual pre-game vomiting, Russell actually considered missing the start of the game before pulling himself together for the opening tip. Leading up to the game, Sharman, Cousy and Heinsohn had been carrying the scoring load for the Celtics, all averaging over twenty points per game, while Russell was concentrating on defense and rebounding, scoring just over twelve per game, slightly under his season's average.

The game began shortly after 2:30pm, and it was clear that the Celtics famed backcourt was going to struggle. Martin, the smallest player on the court, scored twenty-three points, tallied seven assists and controlled eight rebounds while shutting down Cousy, limiting him to just two points in the first half. Meanwhile, Jack McMahan held Sharman to five points, forcing

Boston to rely on the rookie duo of Heinsohn and Russell, along with solid performances off the bench by Ramsey and Risen, who collected sixteen points and ten rebounds in just twenty minutes on the floor before fouling out. Despite the struggles of the Celtics guards, the Hawks needed a pair of Bob Pettit baskets in the final minute of the first quarter to take a 28-26 lead, and held the same slim advantage at halftime.

The third quarter featured seven ties, but when Cousy found Jack Nichols for a layup at the end of the period, and then fed Andy Phillip on the first play of the fourth, the Celtics had an 85-77 lead and appeared to be in control. Then the Hawks roared back with a 9-0 run to pull back ahead, and eventually built a six point lead of their own as Cousy and Sharman continued to miss shots. With Martin hounding him for nearly every minute of the game, Cousy shot just two-for-twenty from the floor, and Sharman was barely better – he shot three-for-twenty. The game remained a back-and-forth contest into the final minute. Russell tied the game at 101 with a driving layup, and, after taking a moment to recover as his momentum carried him into the seats under the basket, sprinted the length of the floor to block a break-away layup attempt by Jack Coleman, a play that Cousy and Heinsohn would recall years later as “the most amazing physical display I have ever seen.” Unofficially, it was Russell’s fifth block of the game, to go along with thirty-two rebounds and nineteen points. The Celtics took a 103-101 lead with thirteen seconds left on a free throw by Cousy, but he missed a second attempt, which allowed Pettit to tie the score with a pair of free throws after being fouled by Russell. When Sharman’s jumper at the buzzer rimmed out, the game went to overtime, the first time the deciding game of the NBA Finals would go beyond regulation.

The game began to resemble a battle of attrition. Risen and McMahon had both fouled out in the fourth quarter, and Hagan picked up his sixth foul in overtime. Ramsey scored seven of his sixteen points in the period, including back-to-back baskets to tie the game at 109. Heinsohn then gave the Celtics a two point lead, but Coleman made up for his missed layup by sinking a jumper to send the game to a second overtime. The Hawks quickly took a 117-113 lead on a Macauley jumper and a Med

Park put back. Heinsohn then keyed an 8-3 Boston run with three jumpers, giving him thirty-seven points for the game, but picked up his sixth foul moments later. As he slumped to the bench in tears and wrapped his warmup jacket around his head, Martin hit one of two free throws to tie the game at 121.

But St. Louis would never take the lead. Macauley fouled out with 3:25 left, and after making a free throw, Ramsey hit a twenty-foot jumper to extend the Celtics lead to 124-121. With Macauley joining McMahon and Coleman on the bench, Alex Hannum had little choice but to insert himself into the game. The rest of the scoring would take place from the free throw line. Martin brought the Hawks within two, then stole the ball from Ramsey at halfcourt on the ensuing possession, but Hannum missed the first shot he had attempted in weeks. The ball went out of bounds off Boston, and when Andy Phillip fouled Med Park, the little-used reserve had a chance to tie the game. Park hit the first but missed the second, and although the Hawks grabbed the rebound, the Celtics got the ball back when Hannum was called for traveling with just under twenty seconds left. The Celtics nearly ran out the clock, but Hannum fouled Jim Loscutoff with one second left. Loscutoff, his hands shaking, made only one of two and Hannum called timeout. Rather than chance a long-distance shot, Hannum decided their best chance was to lob the ball the length of the court, off the backboard, and take their chances with a quick put back off a rebound. It was a play the Hawks would occasionally practice, with Hannum as the thrower. Hannum later claimed "I could hit the backboard maybe 50 percent of the time," and this afternoon his throw was on the mark. Pettit, who had briefly left the game in overtime because his ailing wrist needed treatment, grabbed the long rebound near the free throw line, but his shot slid off the rim and into the hands of teammate Chuck Share as the clock ran out.

Celtics fans flooded the floor, carrying off Heinsohn and Auerbach, and grabbing at any player within reach. Auerbach didn't even have time to light his cigar. Russell was euphoric, leaping into the air and landing in the arms of the Garden's public relations man Howie McHugh. Upon reaching the locker room, as the players showered each other with beer, Russell was more relieved than excited. "Never so scared in my life ... Man, I

was shaking all over my body. See me leap out there when it was all over? Felt like jumping all night long, I was so happy.” That night, the celebration continued as the Celtics held their annual “break-up dinner” at the Garden Club. The players, Auerbach, and other team officials roasted each other, as Russell later wrote, “and enjoyed our championship for an evening as we could only do alone.” For several of the players, the basketball season wasn’t quite over, as they were booked on a seventeen game exhibition tour to earn extra money. Playing in the NBA was not yet a guarantee of financial independence, so supplementing their income was essential; for example, Sharman had lined up a summer job for himself as a golf pro at the Shaker Glen Golf Club in Woburn.

The most exciting possibility of all was that the Celtics had a promising future ahead of them. Sharman was the only starter who was in his thirties, and a pair of rookies had carried them in the biggest game of the year. It was clear that Russell was changing the game of basketball, and Red was going to take full advantage. “Russell is going to be the best center in the business if he isn’t already,” Auerbach said earlier in the season. “I never saw anyone do what he did – come in at midseason, with no experience, no training, and no knowledge of the league, and take right over.”

Chapter 5

Celtics and Lakers

WINNING AN NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP, an Olympic gold medal, and an NBA championship in less than 14 months was an unprecedented achievement, and Bill Russell returned for his second season with the Celtics determined to build on his strong showing as a rookie. On November 16, he set an NBA record with forty-nine rebounds during a 111-89 thrashing of the Warriors at the Garden. Russell added twenty-eight points while shutting out a continually overmatched Neil Johnston, whose only field goal came while Russell was on the bench. The victory raised the Celtics record to 11-0, part of a season-opening run of fourteen straight victories for the defending champs. Every significant player had returned for the 1957-58 season, and Auerbach had put them through the same demanding training camp regimen he had used throughout his career. "Conditioning demands a price. Part of my job is to make sure we pay it," Auerbach would later say. Heinsohn's memories of those camps were not entirely happy ones: "His pet idea for getting us in shape was three-on-three full-court games, losers stay on. That was after the wind sprints, the scrimmages, and running the stairs. He got us so agitated, we had fights among ourselves on the court."

Auerbach also used his connections to unearth another gem in the draft. Bones McKinney, who had played for Auerbach in both Washington and Boston, was an assistant coach at Wake Forest University and had noticed a speedy shooting guard named Sam Jones from North Carolina College. Jones chose to attend the traditionally all-black liberal arts school because it was

located in his hometown of Durham, and had been drafted the year before by the Lakers, partly on the advice of guard Bob “Slick” Leonard. “I played against Sam when we were both in the army and I could see that he’d be great.” However, Jones was determined to earn his degree, so he returned for his senior season. During the 1957 draft, Red had his eye on Brendan McCann from St. Bonaventure, but when the Knicks selected him, Auerbach grabbed Jones based on McKinney’s recommendation. When Jones arrived at training camp at Northeastern University, he was convinced he would not make the team, and was negotiating for a teaching job at Second Ward High School in North Carolina at the same time. Sam wasn’t yet a deadly shooter, but impressed Auerbach his work ethic and his willingness to listen to coaching. “Sam, after a couple of days, starte[d] to hand out some nice passes, and blocking so other guys could shoot.” Cousy was intrigued with Sam’s quickness, telling Red that “if Sam could get even a half-a-step on the opposition, [he] could get him ten points a game on his speed.” Jones beat out Dick Hemric for the final roster spot, and quickly fit in with his teammates on and off the court, as he displayed his prowess as an excellent card player, much to the chagrin of the veterans.

Jones played just 594 minutes during his rookie season, as Bill Sharman was still playing thirty-five minutes a night as the starter at shooting guard. Sharman, who would be named to his sixth straight All-Star game in 1958, was the Celtics leading scorer, establishing a career high by averaging over twenty-two points a game. A five sport star at Porterville High School in California, near the edge of the San Joaquin Valley, Sharman was a “natural athlete” who dreamed of becoming a major league baseball player. That dream was put on hold after he graduated in 1944 and enlisted in the Navy for two years after marrying his high school sweetheart, Ileana Bough. When he returned to California, Sharman enrolled at USC and resumed his baseball and basketball careers. As a 6’2”, 180 pound forward in a methodical offense, Sharman broke Hank Luisetti’s Pacific Coast Conference scoring record, but still preferred playing baseball – even if just for show. While at USC, Sharman took advantage of his good looks and was a paid extra in dozens of movies,

including baseball-related fare such as the “Babe Ruth Story” and “Take Me Out to the Ball Game.” Sharman got a chance to play pro baseball for real in 1950, when he was drafted by the Brooklyn Dodgers. He split his first season between the Elmira Pioneers and Pueblo Dodgers, hitting .288 with twelve home runs in 121 games as an outfielder. The next year Sharman was promoted to AA Fort Worth and earned a late-season promotion to Brooklyn where he sat on the bench during the Dodgers memorable late-summer collapse and subsequent loss to the Giants in a playoff capped by Bobby Thomson’s memorable home run.

Meanwhile, Sharman had also been drafted in the second round of the 1950 NBA draft by the Washington Capitols. Playing for Bones McKinney, then the Caps player-coach, Sharman averaged twelve points a game before the team disbanded in January 1951. Sharman was picked up by the Fort Wayne Pistons, but he refused to report because he wanted to hone his baseball skills in winter ball in the Caribbean. Red Auerbach watched this situation unfold with deepening interest. Chuck Share, who Auerbach had selected instead of Bob Cousy, spent his rookie year with the Waterloo club in the short-lived National Professional Basketball League. Auerbach worked out a trade to send Share’s rights to Fort Wayne for Bob Harris, \$10,000 in cash, and a player to be named later, and now Auerbach asked Fred Zollner to throw in the “retired” Sharman. When Auerbach convinced Walter Brown to accept Sharman’s demand for a \$12,000 contract, he had acquired a future Hall of Famer to play alongside Cousy in the backcourt. Sharman joined the Celtics in time for the 1951-52 season, and while he would continue to play minor league baseball at the AA and AAA levels through the mid-fifties, Sharman ultimately chose basketball because it offered his young family more stability. “[I]t seemed good to be able to settle in one place after moving around for five consecutive years to different cities across the country.” Auerbach was thrilled with his latest acquisition. Sharman’s shooting touch, described as a “soft shot” that would “hit the rim with the impact of a snowflake” was especially impressive from the free throw line. Entering the 1957-58

season, Sharman had led the league in free-throw shooting percentage for five straight seasons.

By comparison, Sharman's on-court persona was far less refined. "He was a hell of a good competitor, tough as a boot," Slater Martin recalled. "Hell, you'd hit him, he'd hit right back, but that was part of the deal." Ed Macauley, who played with and then against Sharman, agreed. "He was a tough player, who didn't lose many fights. He got into a fight one time with Nobel Jorgensen of the Nats, who was six-eight, 230, and it was one punch and Willie landed it." Macauley added that Sharman did not fight often, but picked his spots well: "Willie didn't talk, [but] when he'd had enough, you knew it," and once decked future teammate Andy Phillip with a vicious punch. Sharman's teammates saw both sides of his personality. While he would "bristle like a porcupine" when criticized by Auerbach, and had a "killer instinct" that Cousy felt rivaled his own, Sharman was a "sweetheart" off the court who loved spending time with his three kids. Most importantly, Sharman possessed "fantastic concentration and ferocious pride" that drove him to constantly work on his game. Like most athletes, basketball players are creatures of habit, but Sharman's routine crossed over the line from superstition to near obsession. "[H]e had these index cards with little notes on them," Gene Conley recalled. "One dealt with his jump shot, reminding himself to square off, follow through and all that stuff. He had notes on opponents, and he'd take those cards to the arena and then look them over before the game." Sharman was simply writing down notes that Russell and other players kept as mental files, but the cards symbolized his belief in organization and the power of repetition, which his wife accepted even when it meant shoveling their driveway after snow storms so Bill's routine would not be disturbed.

Forward Jim Loscutoff shared Sharman's mean streak as the Celtics designated enforcer, a mantle he inherited from Bob Brannum in 1955. At 6'5" and 230 pounds, he outweighed nearly everyone on the squad, including Russell, despite his relatively average height for a basketball player. And he was far from timid. "He doesn't pick his spots and doesn't bluff," Cousy remembered. "If things get out of hand, he'll be there with the first punch..." Loscutoff's run-in with Bob Pettit during the 1957

Finals enhanced his reputation, and opposing crowds consistently booed and jeered him as the Celtics “villain.” But there was more to Loscutoff’s game than roughing up opponents who challenged his teammates.

Loscutoff had been known as a scorer in college at the University of Oregon, averaging nearly twenty points per game as a senior in 1955, and earning first team All-Conference honors in the Pacific Coast Conference. He had further developed his game by playing AAU ball with the Oakland Atlas-Pacific Engineers after the college season was over. Auerbach heard about Loscutoff from another member of his unofficial network of scouts, University of Washington freshman coach Bob Donham, a former Celtic. When Donham told Red that Loscutoff was even “meaner than Brannum,” Auerbach made Loscutoff his first-round draft pick. Loscutoff adjusted to his role in Boston almost immediately, realizing that despite his college stats, he couldn’t compete offensively with Cousy, Sharman and Macauley. Still, Cousy was impressed with his offensive skills. “Loscutoff had surprising finesse as a finisher. He was completely sure-handed taking it to the hoop, as well as being effective as far as 18 feet from the basket.” During the Celtics championship run, Loscutoff had averaged a double-double per game (ten points, ten rebounds) in his second season in the league.

So when Loscutoff injured his right knee and underwent season-ending surgery in December 1957, it was a major blow. Auerbach would need to rely on other bench players to fill Loscutoff’s minutes, but with Russell and Ramsey available for the full season, the Celtics still had the best collection of talent in the NBA. Russell went on to earn his first NBA Most Valuable Player award while setting a new record for rebounding (22.7 per game), igniting a balanced offensive attack that featured five players averaging over sixteen points per game, and the Celtics finished the regular season with the league’s best record at 49-23. Boston then dispatched Philadelphia in five games to set up a rematch with St. Louis.

Alex Hannum, who had now retired as a player, was back on the bench with all of his key players returning from the 1957 team. The Hawks finished first in the West with a 41-31 record

and crushed the Pistons in the Divisional Finals, winning the last two games by a combined margin of 68 points. Boston and St. Louis split the first two games of the series at the Garden, including a rousing 136-112 win by the Celtics in game two that featured sixteen points off the bench from Sam Jones, but the turning point of the series came in the third quarter of game three. After blocking a shot by Pettit, Russell landed awkwardly on his left foot, severely spraining and fracturing the ankle. While the Celtics initially rallied from a twelve point deficit after Russell left the floor, the Hawks won the game 111-108. Russell missed the next two games, and with Cousy also hurting with a foot injury, Celtics won the fourth game in St. Louis but lost at home four days later to push them to the brink of elimination. Russell returned for game six but played just twenty ineffective minutes, while Pettit was brilliant, finishing with a playoff record fifty points, including nineteen of the Hawks' last twenty-one points. Pettit's basket at the 6:16 mark of the fourth quarter gave St. Louis a 95-93 lead they never relinquished. The 110-109 victory earned the Hawks their first championship. In the Celtics locker room, Auerbach attempted to console Russell, who had just finished a season without a championship for the first time since 1954. "There will be other seasons, Russ."

AS AUERBACH LOOKED FORWARD to the 1958-59 campaign, he knew he needed to rebuild his bench. Guard Andy Phillip retired to succeed Hannum as coach in St. Louis after the latter left due to a salary dispute with Ben Kerner, and Russell's backups Arnie Risen and Jack Nichols had also called it quits. Auerbach filled their spots on the bench with much younger players, resulting in a team that had just two players – Sharman and Cousy – who were 30 or older. K.C. Jones had been discharged from the Army and replaced Phillip in the rotation. Jones, no relation to teammate Sam Jones, had continued to develop his basketball skills by playing AAU basketball while in the service. After leading an Army All-Star Team to the AAU national quarterfinals in 1957, Jones and former Olympic teammate Carl Cain starred on the 1958 Fort Leonard Wood (Missouri) team that reached the AAU national semifinals. Jones also played some football at Fort Leonard Wood along with John

Morrow of the Los Angeles Rams, and Rams general manager Pete Rozelle, who had spent a late draft choice on K.C. in 1955, invited him to training camp. However, after playing in a few exhibition games as a defensive back, Jones suffered a thigh injury, and when the coaches demanded he play anyway, he quit football for good and reported to the Celtics.

Auerbach still needed backups for Bill Russell and Tom Heinsohn up front. In the first round of the draft he selected 6'8" Bennie Swain from Texas Southern, described as a "big, strong rebounding type of guy." A native of Talladega, Alabama, Swain was also black. By adding him and K.C. Jones, the Celtics now featured four black players, more than a third of their regular eleven man roster, which was unprecedented in NBA history. Then the Celtics reached back into their past and re-signed Gene Conley. A colorful player with a "boyish charm" who Russell claimed "was the only Celtic who could play with a hangover and without sleep," Conley had been signed by Auerbach after the 1952 draft on the recommendation of Bill Sharman. Sharman had played against Conley in college and the minor leagues – Conley would frequently remind Sharman how he struck him out – and shared a love for baseball. Conley had already risen through the minors as a pitcher, and would post a 0-3 record for the Boston Braves that season, but the Celtics convinced him to sign with them that fall. After playing sparingly in thirty-nine games, and spending the 1953 baseball season back in AAA, the Braves offered Conley more money if he would concentrate on baseball so he left the Celtics at the end of the year. Conley moved with the Braves to Milwaukee, winning forty-two games over the next five seasons, including an appearance in a losing effort against the New York Yankees in game three of the 1957 World Series, which the Braves eventually won in seven games. When Conley struggled during the following season, he was receptive when Walter Brown and Auerbach approached him about returning to the Celtics. Cousy recalled that Conley's toughness was a welcome addition. "Gene is a nice gentle guy to this day, but on the floor he was exceptionally combative," and frequently got into fights. As Loscutoff colorfully put it, Conley "was a wild man when he got mad." Auerbach also appreciated

his work ethic, and Conley spent the season working on his hook shot to improve his offense.

Lastly, Auerbach had spent training camp torturing Jim Loscutoff to get him ready for the new season. All summer, Loscutoff had been working with new Celtics trainer Buddy LeRoux, who Auerbach had recruited from the Bruins when Russell was injured during the 1958 series against the Hawks, but Loscutoff came into camp with a lot of doubts. "I was really afraid. I had lost my confidence. ... I wasn't sure the knee was going to hold up." Auerbach sensed this immediately, and responded by forcing Loscutoff to spend hours diving to the floor chasing basketballs and performing other drills. "It was a confidence-builder," Loscutoff said later. "[I]t really helped me psychologically, and I don't think I'd have made it if it wasn't for that."

When the season began, the Celtics got off to a slow start, losing three of their first five games, all by three points or less. But Boston then won twenty-one of their next twenty-six games, including an eleven game winning streak in December, to build a three and a half game lead in the Eastern Division by New Year's Day. While Russell was back to his dominant self, and would break the rebounding record he set the previous season, Auerbach was pleasantly surprised by the play of his young guards. Sam Jones was averaging in double-figures, while K.C.'s defense was just as impressive. "Every time you put him in the game, you increased your position," Auerbach told reporters. "If you were 6 ahead, next thing you know you were 10 ahead. If you were 6 behind, next thing you're even." Combined with Loscutoff's return, which allowed Frank Ramsey to return to his sixth man role, the Celtics bench was once again the deepest in the league.

The 1958 Finals had been a time of mixed emotions for Ramsey. He was playing a larger role as a result of the Celtics injuries, and his disappointment at losing the title was tempered by seeing his friend Cliff Hagan emerge on the winning side. The two had met a decade earlier, during the 1948 Kentucky high school state basketball tournament, when Hagan's Owensboro team eliminated Ramsey and Madisonville High School in crushing fashion. Owensboro failed to win the title that year, but

won the following year as Hagan set a single-game scoring record. Ramsey and Hagan were both recruited by Adolph Rupp, and their friendship developed during a recruiting trip to watch Kentucky at the NCAA tournament that spring. After accepting Rupp's scholarship offers, Hagan and Ramsey quickly adjusted to their new environment. Hagan earned the nickname "The Bronze God" for his good looks and his teammates called him "Amos Athlete" because he took basketball so seriously.

As sophomores the duo teamed with Bill Spivey to lead Kentucky to a 32-2 record and an NCAA title, but after a 29-3 record the next season, their careers were put on hold when the Kentucky program was suspended for a year due to recruiting violations. Ramsey and Hagan spent the season playing intra-squad games, sometimes in front of as many as 8,000 basketball-starved Wildcat fans, and looked forward to the extra year of eligibility they had been granted by the NCAA. But Red Auerbach didn't plan on waiting – he knew Ramsey, Hagan and their teammate Lou Tsioropoulos from coaching them at basketball summer camps at Kutsher's Country Club in the Catskills, and armed with a rule that he helped pass to allow Eddie Gottlieb to take LaSalle's Jack George when his original college class had graduated, Auerbach proceeded to draft *all three* of the Kentucky players in the 1953 draft, including Ramsey in the first round. Since they all planned to play for Kentucky the next season, drafting them was a fairly gutsy move for a coach who had been in Boston just three years and needed an infusion of fresh talent for his team. Auerbach's patience would pay off. Years later, after he drafted another "junior-eligible" in the first round (Larry Bird), he explained that he'd "rather have potential *great* fresh blood than potential *good* fresh blood coming into your organization. ... So what's one year? It goes by very quickly..." While Auerbach waited, Hagan and Ramsey led the Wildcats to an undefeated season, and their friendship deepened off the court. They worked together that summer as "laborers on a flood control project on the Arkansas River," and served as ushers at each other's weddings. While Hagan immediately entered the Air Force for a two year stint after leaving Kentucky, Ramsey played one season with the Celtics before joining the Army. By the time Ramsey returned in

December 1956, Hagan had been dealt for Russell, so the two friends were now opponents again.

As the calendar turned to 1959, the Celtics continued to dominate the league, posting a 13-4 record in January and coasting to another division title with a 52-20 mark. The Celtics rested while the Syracuse Nationals upset the second place Knicks in two straight games to open the playoffs. Nats owner Danny Biasone, who had transformed the sport (and helped his Nats win their only NBA title) by proposing the 24-second clock in 1954, was the last “small-town owner” in the circuit. The Royals and Pistons had abandoned Rochester and Fort Wayne, respectively, after the 1956-57 season, for the (financially) greener pastures of Cincinnati and Detroit. Rochester’s population had remained relatively flat since the 1930s, while Fort Wayne, at less than half the size, was simply too small to compete as a “major league” city. Syracuse now had the smallest ticket base in the NBA, as the Onondaga War Memorial Auditorium held just 8,000 fans.

However, Danny Biasone was committed to Syracuse. A small, bald, Italian man, Biasone had owned a combination bowling alley-restaurant named the “Eastwood Recreation Center” since World War II, and openly admitted that the creation of the Nationals was purely by chance. “I owned a semipro football team before World War Two. After the war, I didn’t have enough guys to play football on my team. But I did for basketball, even though I didn’t know a thing about the game.” Biasone knew that Les Harrison had an NBL team in Rochester, and he wanted to tap into the rivalry between the cities that were linked, both geographically and historically, by the Erie Canal. So for \$1,000 in 1946, the Nationals were born. Biasone was his team’s number one fan. “He sat on the bench during games,” center Johnny Kerr recalled, “usually next to the coach, with that cigarette clenched between his teeth. He’d yell at the officials, but seldom said anything to his coach during the games.”

This year, the Nats had been a disappointment during the regular season, suffering through early losing streaks of seven and eight games, followed by a 2-8 stretch from late January through early February, and finished with a 35-37 mark, their

first sub-.500 finish in three years. Biasone had made two significant moves since the Celtics and Nationals last faced off in the playoffs. After the 1957 season, he purchased Syracuse area-native guard Larry Costello from the Warriors for \$5,000, and earlier this year, Biasone traded veteran swingman Ed Conlin to Detroit for George Yardley. Costello, dubbed "The Comet" by local sportswriters, had been an All-American at Niagara, and once played sixty-nine minutes in a marathon six overtime game against Siena. While Costello's forte was defense and playmaking, Yardley was a scorer, the first player in NBA history to score 2,000 points in a season. But Yardley disliked Detroit, and had worn out his welcome with owner Fred Zollner. "When I was playing I was a real bitcher," Yardley later recalled. "I was a moaner, just a spoiled kid..." The acquisition of Yardley led to some creative salary negotiations because Biasone insisted that Dolph Schayes remain his highest-paid player. Biasone "resolved" the situation by giving Schayes a raise and cutting Yardley's pay by several thousand dollars. According to Yardley, the salary issue and concerns about how two prolific scorers would share one basketball threatened to undermine what was already a tenuous relationship. "[B]efore I played with him I couldn't say enough bad things about him. I just detested the way he looked on the court. ... And he'd beat us all the time, which really didn't help our relationship." But as teammates, Yardley and Schayes developed a good relationship, based on their common engineering background and interests that spanned a number of subjects outside of basketball. "I don't think any of the other players were concerned with who was the premier of Russia, the welfare state, Social Security, or anything like that," Yardley later recalled. "I don't think they understood much of what went on around them."

Dolph Schayes had the distinction of having been drafted by both the Nationals and Knicks in 1948, when the two teams were in opposing leagues. Syracuse outbid the Knicks for his services, and Schayes spent the next sixteen seasons compiling one of the great careers in pro basketball history. Throughout the 1950's, Schayes regularly finished in the top ten in the league in both scoring and rebounding, and could make shots from twenty-five feet outside to draw defenders away from the basket.

Schayes also benefited from the style of play in pro basketball's early days. "I would always play against the defensive forward and he couldn't score. So I was able to kind of free-lance. I was very fortunate in that respect because it really helped my rebounding a great deal." When he retired in 1964, Schayes had collected the second-most rebounds in NBA history, behind only Bob Pettit, a remarkable feat for a player who admitted that he needed to compensate because he was not a leaper. "But because of the freedom I had, I was able to bound in from the outside, time the ball, and get to it before anybody got there, even though there were better jumpers than I was."

Already stocked with a frontline of Schayes, Yardley, and Johnny Kerr, Biasone and player-coach Paul Seymour had drafted center Connie Dierking in the first round of the 1958 draft to improve their depth. However, Syracuse unearthed a real prize in the second round when they selected shooting guard Hal Greer. Schayes would later recall that "[i]t didn't take Hal long to catch on. His great speed, ability to recover and quick hands – which he still has – enabled him to overcome other faults." By the midway point of the season, Greer had replaced Al Bianchi in the lineup. Greer's mental toughness and intensity had been honed in college, where the Huntington, West Virginia native endured racial slights as he integrated Marshall College as its first black student-athlete. Bianchi later remembered this side of his personality. "We called Greer Bulldog, because he had that kind of expression on his face, and it never changed."

The Eastern Divisional Finals began at Boston Garden and then alternated between Boston and Syracuse. Jim Loscutoff later recalled that the Celtics were "relaxed" and "confident." "In my opinion, this was the Celtics' greatest team. It had size, strength, speed, youth, experience, everything..." Game one was a blowout, as Boston won 131-109, but the Celtics knew that game two would be a different story. In Syracuse, the Nationals' players had thousands of loyal allies in the stands. "There was great pride in Syracuse about their town playing against the big league," Schayes recalled. "We were like the Green Bay of the NBA." The blue-collar fans, many of them employed by the local General Electric plant, would pelt opponents with anything they could get their hands on. "There was a night the stuff being

thrown at us was so bad that the officials told all of our subs to leave the bench and stay in the dressing room for our own safety,” according to Frank Ramsey. “The coach was out there alone. When Red Auerbach wanted to make a substitution, he had to stop the game. He’d send the player who was coming out into the dressing room with the message of who Red wanted as an replacement.” One particularly notorious fan, a 300- pound “gentleman” known as “The Strangler,” would regularly roam the sidelines, screaming at opposing players and referees alike, and even assaulted Warriors owner Eddie Gottlieb on one occasion.

Getting to the dressing room after the game could also be a challenge. Cousy was particularly glad on these occasions that Auerbach liked to keep an enforcer like Loscutt on the roster. “When you’re playing in Syracuse – where the homefolk come down after you and police protection is, shall we say, sparse and unenthusiastic – it is a comfort to have Lusky around.” Schayes concurred. “The fans were always feeling their oats and I honestly think that the policemen who were brought in to control the crowds weren’t too happy with the Bostons, Philadelphias, and New Yorks.” The referees were hardly beyond their reach. Once, during the 1953-54 season, when John Nucatola called Schayes for an offensive foul in the closing moments of a game that the Nats lost to the Knicks, the referees had to run a gauntlet. “[I]t took 15 or 20 cops to get us off the court,” Nucatola remembered. “We went through the crowd, and they had programs and newspapers and handbags and were slapping [his fellow referee Sid] Borgia on the head – and I had made the call!” A sympathetic policeman who had refereed some college games and knew Nucatola was so concerned about their safety that he spread a false rumor the refs were headed to the airport, and then chauffeured them to the train station instead.

There was also some recent bad blood between the Celtics and Nationals that further spiced things up heading into the series. Barely a month before game two was set to tip-off, the Celtics had visited Syracuse and lost 113-105 in a game marred by three fights in the fourth quarter that had to be broken up by the police when fans become involved in the action. The under card included a confrontation between Borgia and a fan while

Russell and Syracuse's George Dempsey squared off. But the "highlight" of the night was a shoving match between Schayes and Heinsohn that was escalated by Seymour and eventually involved so many fans that it took police five minutes to clear the court. Now on March 21, nearly eight thousand partisan fans greeted the Celtics, who responded by holding the Nats without a field goal for four minutes early in the game. After trailing by as many as seven points in the second quarter, an 11-0 run propelled Boston to a 60-57 halftime lead. The game remained tight until late in the fourth quarter, when Yardley scored six of seven straight points by the Nats to break a 108-108 tie and gave Syracuse the lead for good. Schayes led all scorers with thirty-four, and Yardley added twenty-seven, while Frank Ramsey contributed nineteen points and eight rebounds in just eighteen minutes for the Celtics. The two teams continued to trade punches, each holding serve on their home court. The third game featured another strong performance from Ramsey, who scored fifteen of his twenty-four points during a decisive 34-18 second quarter, and Russell was particularly dominant, grabbing twenty-seven rebounds to go along with fifteen points. After Syracuse tied the series with a 119-107 win back at home, in a game that saw Biasone ejected from the game after arguing with referee Arnie Heft, Boston returned to the Garden and blasted the Nats again, 129-108.

The two teams were very familiar with each other, since they played twelve games a year, and the NBA's version of the reserve clause kept rosters stable from year to year. As a result, both teams became familiar with the nuances of each other's games. Frank Ramsey remembered how Auerbach would look for the smallest detail when scouting the opposition, such as the Nationals' Bob Hopkins, who would frequently score "17-18 points a game" against Boston earlier in his career. "[O]ne day Red is watching Hopkins in a game and notices that Bob is favoring one of his knees – that no matter where he stands near the basket he always turns counter-clockwise to shoot. We got the message," Ramsey said. After that, Hopkins seldom scored more than seven or eight points against us. Either he never caught on to the fact that we were overplaying him to one side, or else he couldn't shoot any other way."

When the series returned to Syracuse, the Nationals won again, 133-121, holding off a furious Boston rally that nearly erased a nineteen point deficit. The Celtics headed back home for the seventh game riding a seven-game home winning streak against the Nats, and had won their three home games in the series by margins of 22, 22 and 21 points. The players traveled to Boston without their coaches, as Auerbach and Seymour went to Cincinnati for the 1959 NBA draft meeting. After completing their selections, Auerbach and Seymour flew to Boston on the same plane; Seymour missed the Nats final practice, entrusting Schayes to run the team, while Auerbach returned in time to oversee part of the Celtics workout. Some of the players had their own distractions to deal with that day. Gene Conley had been traded by the Milwaukee Braves to the Philadelphia Phillies as part of a six-player deal, and Frank Ramsey was fitted with “a short cast over the first joint of his index finger” that was not expected to affect his shooting. On the Nationals side, backup forward Togo Palazzi would miss the game after his wife gave birth to their third son. Russell summarized the Celtics mood as tense. “Well, a lot of people are going to be very tight in here tomorrow evening. And I am going to be one of those players, believe me.”

Russell’s words were prophetic. The Celtics were “completely disorganized” early in the game, and trailed by as many as sixteen points in the second quarter before closing to within six, 68-60, at the half. In the third quarter, Ramsey heated up again, “simply flying over the court,” and hit a hook shot to give Boston their first lead at 95-94. Ramsey finished with twenty-eight points, twenty in the second half, despite having the wind knocked out of him briefly after halftime. The Celtics appeared to have captured the momentum midway through the fourth quarter, taking a 115-108 lead with five and a half minutes remaining. But the Nationals were far from finished, and ran off the next ten points during a sequence that began with Larry Costello hitting two jumpers and ended when Ramsey fouled out trying to guard Schayes, who was on his way to another stellar effort, finishing with thirty-five points and sixteen rebounds. Schayes’ two free throws gave the Nats a 118-115 lead with less than four minutes left. Ramsey joined Loscutoff on the bench,

who had also committed his sixth foul against Schayes earlier in the quarter. The Syracuse fans in attendance were now cheering enthusiastically, sensing a dramatic victory. A typically raucous group had made the trip, and at one point during the game, one of them nearly started a fight with referee Arnie Heft, who had to be restrained by Paul Seymour to stop him from punching the verbally abusive fan.

With their hottest shooter now out of the game, the Celtics were using a lineup of Russell, Heinsohn, and Conley up front, with Sam Jones and Cousy in the backcourt. Russell and Schayes traded baskets, then Cousy, weakened by a virus that left his legs “shivering like reeds in the wind,” nonetheless “saw a little daylight” and tried to drive against Costello. His hook shot missed, but Costello was called for a foul. Cousy’s two free throws brought the Celtics within one at 120-119, as the player known as “Mr. Basketball” began to take over the game. After Sharman replaced Jones in the lineup, Russell stripped Yardley, leading to a basket by Cousy that put Boston back in front. Cousy then rebounded misses by Kerr and Heinsohn, and found Russell under the basket for an eventual three-point play that gave the Celtics a four point lead. Moments later, Yardley returned the favor, drawing Russell’s sixth foul with 1:53 remaining, and hit one of two free throws to cut Syracuse’s deficit to 124-121. Russell had played the entire game to that point, collecting thirty-two rebounds to go along with eighteen points.

Syracuse had a chance to draw closer, but Yardley missed a shot and then Kerr was unable to score off the rebound. Conley grabbed Kerr’s miss with just over a minute remaining, and got the ball into Cousy’s hands. Then Cousy displayed his dribbling skills, running off twenty-two seconds before sinking a hook shot with forty-five seconds left that all but sealed the victory. “Seemed like I was dribbling for hours,” Cousy told reporters after the game. “How many were after me? Three? Well, they fell off looking for me to pass and I guess that was the easiest shot of all.” Schayes and Costello added a pair of baskets, sandwiched around two free throws by Sam Jones, to account for the final 130-125 margin. An exhausted Cousy, who had been the

key to the Celtics decisive 9-1 run in the fourth quarter, was carried off triumphantly by the Garden crowd.

Waiting for the Celtics in the NBA Finals were the Minneapolis Lakers, who had shocked the Hawks and 1959 Most Valuable Player Bob Pettit in six games to win the West. The Lakers had posted a 14-8 record over the final two months of the season, raising their mark to a rather unimpressive 33-39, and were winless in nine games against the Celtics that season, including a memorable 173-139 loss on February 27. The midweek matinee was held in the afternoon during school vacation week after a free youth basketball clinic featuring Auerbach, Ramsey, and Sam Jones of the Celtics along with Vern Mikklesen and the Lakers rookie star Elgin Baylor. While the clinic focused on fundamentals, the game that followed was hardly an example of textbook defensive basketball. Seven offensive records were set, including the most combined points and field goals by two teams, and Bob Cousy handed out twenty-eight assists to smash Richie Guerin's old record of twenty-one. The lack of defense coincided with Russell's absence due to a strained tendon in his right leg, just one of two games he would miss all season. Ironically, the high-scoring result touched off debate over the integrity of the game, forcing commissioner Podoloff to "investigate" the remarkable offensive explosion less than five years after the shot clock had been introduced to encourage more scoring.

That game had been a harsh reminder of how far the Lakers had fallen since their glory days. Following a dismal 4-40 inaugural season as the Detroit Gems, jeweler Maury Winston was eager to cut his losses, and sold the team to a group of Minneapolis investors for \$15,000 in 1947. The steep price tag for a fledgling NBL team was justified because the Gems dreadful record earned them the number one pick in the college draft – and first choice of any players from teams who folded during the upcoming season. That was a distinct possibility, especially this year, because Maurice White had decided to pull his championship Chicago American Gears team out of the NBL and build a new Professional Basketball League of America around the Gears' top player, George Mikan. Mikan, whose black glasses and number 99 jersey became the iconic image of

1950's basketball, was the top player in the country and also the richest, having signed a five year contract estimated at \$60,000. But when the PBLA lost ten times that amount over just a few weeks and collapsed, White filed for bankruptcy and disbanded the Gears. The relocated Gems, now named the Lakers, pounced on the chance to grab Mikan, and signed him to a \$15,000 deal for the remainder of the 1947-48 season.

The dividends were immediate. With former University of Minnesota player and St. Thomas College coach John Kundla leading the team, and rookie forward Jim Pollard adding scoring punch, the Lakers won three consecutive championships under three different league affiliations. After winning the NBL crown in 1948, the Lakers jumped to the BAA and won the championship again, then completed their run by capturing the first NBA title in 1950. By this time, Slater Martin was running the team from the point guard spot, though, as he later recalled, their slowdown style did not require much creativity. "Mikan, even if you got a fast break, wasn't involved in it because he was back at the other basket." It was fitting that the 1950-51 Lakers were on the losing side of the lowest-scoring game in NBA history, the infamous 19-18 contest against the Pistons.

The Lakers were tripped up by the Royals in the Western Finals that season, but promptly regained their stride, winning another three titles in succession from 1952 through 1954. Mikan's retirement then ended the Lakers dynasty, whose plodding offense would have been severely challenged by the introduction of the 24-second clock even if Mikan had continued to play. In 1957, a small group led by trucking magnate and former assistant U.S. attorney Bob Short had bought the club, booted Kundla upstairs as general manager, and installed the legendary Mikan as coach. The moves could not stop the Lakers' slide, and Kundla was given back the coaching job after the team skidded to a 9-30 start. Another last place finish put the Lakers in position to draft the NBA's next superstar, consensus All-American Elgin Baylor. Baylor made an immediate impact, averaging twenty-five points and fifteen rebounds per game, but the rookie could not carry the team alone. Mikan's successor in the pivot, former All-American Clyde Lovellette, had worn out his welcome in Minneapolis, and was dealt to St. Louis. With the

undersized Larry Foust, Jim Krebs and Vern Mikkelsen teaming with Baylor on the Lakers frontline, they appeared to be no match for the Celtics, and rumors during the series that Kundla would leave the Lakers to succeed coach Ozzie Cowles at the University of Minnesota added to the dreary atmosphere around the team.

Boston won the first three games fairly easily, and heading into game four, Kundla summarized the Lakers plight. "Russell has our club worrying evey [sic] second. It's getting so every one of the five men on the court thinks Russell is covering him on every play. I never sensed that a defensive player could mean so much to the game..." With Walter Brown making a rare road trip to Minneapolis, Russell scored fifteen points and added thirty rebounds as the Celtics finished off the Lakers 118-113. The team returned to Boston the following afternoon, and was escorted through the city by the police to a celebration with local politicians and fans. Following another breakup dinner, which was already growing into a more formal affair at the Hotel Lenox, the Celtics settled into the offseason, knowing that they had a team which was built for the long haul. As Bob Cousy said, "This is a great team – yes, better than the '57 club. It can do more things. This team had everything." The 1960s would bring a series of new challenges, on and off the court, personal and professional, and some that would greatly overshadow the game of basketball. But the Boston Celtics were ready to stake their claim as the greatest sports dynasty of all time.

Chapter 6

New Frontiers

WHILE THE CELTICS WERE ATTRACTING some sellout crowds in the playoffs, their regular season attendance was in the midst of a six-year slide from a peak of 10,517 per game during their initial championship run in 1957. However, there were some rabid fans that would gladly wait in line for tickets and passionately followed the team. As a token of appreciation after that first title, the Governor of Massachusetts had awarded each player official license plates for their cars that featured their uniform numbers. Some fellow drivers would pull along side to gawk at them and in the words of Marie Cousy, “toot their horns fiercely” to draw attention to themselves and show their love for the team.

Still, Boston was primarily devoted to its Red Sox and Bruins, and the Celtics were relative also-rans, partly due to New England’s uneven basketball history. Dr. James Naismith invented the game just a hundred miles west of Boston in Springfield, but within a few years he had left New England and surrendered leadership of the game to the AAU. While colleges and early pro leagues helped popularize the game over the next three decades, New England was scarcely represented. The New England Basketball League and New England Basketball Association each included a handful of teams across Massachusetts and nearby New Hampshire, but both circuits disbanded after their maiden seasons in 1904 and 1905, respectively. Over the next forty years there were several “pro” leagues with dozens of teams in the New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania area, plus many cities in the upper Midwest, but

there was only one such team in Massachusetts – the Boston Whirlwinds, who folded after a 6-10 start in the 1925-26 edition of the American Basketball League. At roughly the same time, the Boston public school system dropped the sport, and would not resume playing basketball for nearly twenty years, weakening the appeal of basketball inside the city.

While college basketball, particularly Holy Cross, drew well at the Garden in the 1940s, pro basketball promoters, especially those in the BAA, were self-professed “hockey guys” who encouraged a rougher style. “[S]ome powers in the league office insisted that a brawl was good for both the heart and the gate,” referee Norm Drucker remembered, and the league even considered adding an NHL-style penalty box to punish fighting. The rowdy fans in the stands only added to the circus-like atmosphere, spitting on players and throwing miscellaneous food and garbage. The overall product was not very palatable to TV sponsors, who were slow to cover basketball as extensively as baseball and football, and local fans were rarely able to watch games broadcast from the Garden, as Brown and his fellow owners also enforced blackout rules to protect their ticket sales.

While Brown was proud of the Garden, the area around the building didn’t help attract fans. As Jeff Greenfield described in his book, *The World’s Greatest Team*, “Going to see the Celtics meant a long journey into what may charitably be described as a ‘working class’ neighborhood, with all the discomforts and dangers of crowded streets, inadequate parking, and grimy surroundings that can unsettle the comfortable.” The atmosphere was not improved when the Central Artery was built through the area in the early 1950s. Not only did the elevated highway consume neighborhoods throughout the city, but it dramatically altered the landscape in an era when the Boston skyline was dominated by relatively short buildings of ten stories or less. The new expressway ran perpendicular to the Garden, over the Forest Hills-Everett elevated railway line that had been built in 1901, creating a towering set of structures that dwarfed the cars and pedestrians below on Causeway Street. As the Artery passed by the North Station Industrial Building that sat on the Garden’s eastern flank, the roadway became a three-tiered monster, with the north and south travel lanes splitting into two

levels as they approached the new double-decker Charles River Bridge, while a ramp to Storrow Drive curved beneath them.

To help boost attendance, the Celtics turned to marketing gimmicks. Giveaways became common, especially basketballs, but there were also more unique – and potentially dangerous – promotions, such as a Louisville Slugger day and a (glass) beer stein night. Walter Brown, like many of his fellow owners, would frequently schedule doubleheaders featuring another matchup between NBA teams, or barnstorming clubs like the “Harlem Stars” or “Harlem Magicians,” and even local high schools. NBA doubleheaders, which gave fans a chance to see half of the league play in one evening, were partly responsible for the proliferation of games held at “neutral sites” in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For the 1959-60 season, the NBA added three games to its schedule, after having played a seventy-two game slate since the 1953-54 campaign. But the Celtics would play three *fewer* games at home (twenty-seven) than the year before, less than forty percent of their overall schedule.

BOSTON STARTED THE SEASON 11-1, then ran off seventeen straight victories after Thanksgiving, tying the NBA record and raising their overall mark to 30-4 as they arrived in Detroit on New Year’s Eve. The Celtics were preparing to face the 10-27 Cincinnati Royals as part of a New Year’s Day doubleheader that also featured the Pistons against the Hawks. Red desperately wanted to top the record that his Washington Capitols had set back in 1946, to the point where he held a mandatory New Year’s Eve party for the team. “There were no more sober citizens in the United States on New Year’s Eve than the Celtics that night in Detroit,” Russell later recalled. Auerbach might have been motivated by superstition; the Caps’ 1946 streak had been halted in Detroit on New Year’s Day by the lowly Detroit Falcons. Unfortunately for Auerbach, the subdued celebration did not prevent history from repeating itself – the Celtics lost to the Royals 128-115 – and he never threw another New Year’s Eve party for the team.

Despite losing Jim Loscutoff for the season again, this time due to back disc surgery after twenty-eight games, Boston finished the year with a 59-16 record, claiming the best regular

season winning percentage since Auerbach's 1946-47 Caps. Frank Ramsey moved into the starting lineup, and Sam and K.C. Jones played increasingly important roles off the bench, which allowed Auerbach to rest Cousy and Sharman to keep them fresh. Gene Conley improved upon his performance from the year before, averaging nearly seven points and eight rebounds a game, and helped to fill the void caused by the absence of Loscutoff and the career-ending knee injury suffered by the promising Bennie Swain. Statistically, the Celtics fast break was at its peak, setting a new league record by scoring 124.5 points per game. Scoring was up across the league, and every team in the Eastern Division averaged more points than the old record of 116.4 Boston had just set the previous season.

The arrival of Wilt Chamberlain in Philadelphia provided the most dramatic evidence of how the game was changing. Russell had dominated the center position for three years, and annually led the NBA in rebounding by a wide margin, but now he faced his greatest challenge yet. Not only would Chamberlain take away Russell's rebounding crown, but Wilt could score. A lot. Just two years after George Yardley amazed the basketball world by becoming the first player to score 2000 points (2001), Chamberlain made 1065 *field goals* en route to 2707 points and an awe-inspiring 37.6 average. Chamberlain was hardly an overnight sensation, as he was a nationally known phenom for over half a decade before joining the Warriors. In 1953, while still attending Overbrook High School in Philadelphia, Chamberlain was invited to play with the country's top college players at Kutsher's Country Club. Owner Milt Kutsher, whose resort was one of the most popular in the Catskills region in New York, imported high-profile players and coaches every summer to provide entertainment for his guests. Wilt's coach that summer was not enamored of his spoiled, already uncoachable personality – Wilt's high school coach occasionally benched him to try to keep him in line – but Red Auerbach knew talent when he saw it. Auerbach joined the hundreds of basketball coaches who attempted to sink their claws into the young star. Mindful of the territorial draft rule, Auerbach tried to convince Wilt to attend college in New England, and even suggested to Walter Brown that they should try to bribe Wilt if necessary. Brown,

whose commitment to fair play was unmatched, politely declined, but most of Wilt's pursuers were far less scrupulous. Two years later, as *Life* magazine featured photos of a smiling Chamberlain in his number 5 high school jersey touching the net while standing flat-footed, and easily dunking over opponents, college coaches were salivating, offering far more than simply a free college "education." The Warriors' Eddie Gottlieb was already looking ahead to Chamberlain's pro career, successfully lobbying his fellow owners to extend territorial draft rights to high school players, thereby granting him the right to draft Chamberlain regardless of where he went to college.

Chamberlain was recruited to Kansas by the legendary Phog Allen, who tried to assuage Wilt's concerns about the heavily segregated area around Lawrence, Kansas by reducing the number of games the freshman team played against Southern schools. As one of only two black players on the team, Chamberlain frequently faced down segregation, using his popularity to open doors that were previously closed to blacks. When Allen retired after that season, Dick Harp inherited the unenviable task of coaching Chamberlain during his first year on the varsity. Looking for advice on handling a high-profile center, Allen reached out to Phil Woolpert, who had just led Russell and USF to their second consecutive NCAA title. During a two hour meeting at a Chicago hotel, Woolpert dismissed comparisons between their situations. "When Bill first came to me, he was unknown, unheralded. He was unspoiled, nobody expected very much from him – they didn't expect much of *me* – so we started out together largely removed from pressure. But now you take Wilt – the big guy has been prostituted in high school, ruined, too many pressures." Chamberlain, to put it mildly, was also disinterested in academics. One classmate, future four-time Olympic discus gold medalist Al Oerter, recalled that Chamberlain missed ninety percent of a business class they were both enrolled in, and when the final exam was given, he saw a white student taking Chamberlain's exam in his place. Wilt preferred to spend his time on the basketball court, or listening to his record collection in his Carruth-O'Leary dormitory room, and indulged his love of jazz and blues during a brief radio career as

the host of the “Flippin’ with the Dipper” show on campus station KANU.

Chamberlain dominated college competition from the start, setting a school record by scoring fifty-two points and grabbing thirty-one rebounds in his debut against Northwestern. Averaging nearly thirty points and nineteen rebounds per game, Chamberlain led the Jayhawks to a 21-2 regular season record and the Big Seven title, as Kansas spent the entire season ranked first or second in the AP national poll. While blocked shots were not yet an official statistic, there are documented reports of Chamberlain recording at least two triple-doubles that season, including forty points, thirteen rebounds, and twelve blocks in Kansas’s regular-season finale against Colorado. The Jayhawks qualified for the NCAA tournament for the first time in four years, survived an overtime game against SMU, and then defeated Oklahoma City 81-61 in the Midwest regional final to earn a matchup with defending champion San Francisco. Phil Woolpert had coached the now Russell-less Dons to a third straight trip to the national semifinals, but Chamberlain and Kansas ended their championship run with a 80-56 victory.

The national championship game featured Kansas and the undefeated North Carolina Tar Heels. Coach Frank McGuire and All-American Lennie Rosenbluth led North Carolina to the ACC title and then swept their first four NCAA tournament games, including a 74-70 win over Michigan State in the other national semifinal. Against Kansas, North Carolina took a 29-22 halftime lead, but midway through the second half the Jayhawks had pulled ahead 40-37. Then the game fell into a tedious pattern of stall tactics, with neither side even taking a shot for the next five minutes. Regulation ended in a 46-46 tie, and the national title game went into overtime for the first time in the history of the tournament. The three five-minute overtimes featured more inaction than action. Chamberlain scored Kansas’s only basket in the first extra session, a short driving jumper to tie the game at 48. After a scoreless second overtime, the two teams combined for eleven points in the decisive third stanza, when North Carolina’s Joe Quigg hit two free throws to give the Tar Heels the championship with a 54-53 victory.

Chamberlain's junior year was even more of a disappointment. Kansas sprinted to a 10-0 start, but with Chamberlain occasionally hobbled with injuries, the Jayhawks finished the year 18-5, falling out of the top five in the rankings by March, and failed to make the NCAA tournament. Chamberlain had another strong year statistically, and he was still considered a can't miss pro prospect. Since he had no desire to stay in college, Chamberlain was receptive when Abe Saperstein, owner of the Harlem Globetrotters, made him a \$65,000 offer to leave Kansas and tour for a year while waiting to become eligible to play in the NBA. Saperstein made it official at press conference in June that was held at Toots Shor's, the popular New York City hangout of sports stars and other celebrities. It was a high-profile venue fit for a larger than life basketball star. Then, in March 1959, Gottlieb exercised his territorial rights and grabbed Chamberlain for his Warriors.

In contrast to the stability of the Boston Celtics, the 1959-60 Philadelphia Warriors were in transition. The Warriors had won the NBA title four years earlier with a lineup that included future Hall of Famers Paul Arizin and Neil Johnston, along with Tom Gola, who averaged a double-double as a rookie. However, Johnston was nearing the end of the line, and when Gola spent the next year, and part of the 1957-58 season, in the military at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, the Warriors slumped, barely finishing above .500 and were quickly dispatched by the Celtics in the playoffs two years in a row. When Johnston's knees gave out during the following season, the Warriors skidded into last place, and Gottlieb fired Coach Al Cervi and replaced him with Johnston. In hindsight, it was a terrible hiring, since Johnston had no idea how to run a team, and to make matters worse, the newly arrived Chamberlain believed he already knew more basketball than his new coach. Chamberlain was such a dynamic force that the Warriors, with nearly an identical supporting cast, still managed to improve to 49-26, ten games behind the Celtics, but three games better than the Hawks, who won the Western Division.

The talent around Chamberlain included Paul Arizin, a college star at Villanova who had spent two years in the Marines. Arizin, who had earlier won two NBA scoring titles, was still

scoring twenty-two points per game as a thirty-one-year-old veteran in 1960, and averaged over eight rebounds per game despite being an undersized 6'4" forward. Joining Chamberlain and Arizin on the frontline was Woody Sauldsberry, who Gottlieb had bought from the Globetrotters in 1957. Sauldsberry had left Texas Southern University after his sophomore season because he needed money to support his newborn daughter, and Abe Saperstein signed him to a \$12,000 contract. After two seasons on the road, Sauldsberry gradually came to hate the Trotters clowning style, so he jumped to the Warriors along with teammate Andy Johnson. A talented defensive forward with an effective jumper, Sauldsberry quickly established himself as a starter, even handling the mid-court jump ball instead of Neil Johnston, and won the Rookie of the Year award on the strength of his twelve points and ten rebounds a game.

While Sauldsberry and Arizin both saw their statistics decline slightly with Chamberlain's arrival, the Warriors backcourt was stabilizing now that Gola and Guy Rodgers had both completed their military service. Rodgers was a quick, flashy point guard who was another local Philadelphia product. A basketball and baseball star at Northeast High School, Rodgers spurned an offer from the Globetrotters and instead teamed with Hal Lear to lead Temple University to the NCAA national semifinals in 1956. Rodgers, who stood a shade under six feet, handed out seven assists a game during Chamberlain's first seasons in Philadelphia, many on creative passes such as bouncing the ball off the backboard so Wilt could jam it through the basket to cap a fast break. "I never saw anyone take the ball from [him]," Gola remembered. "He was quick, kept the ball low." The Philadelphia fans loved his style, though not everyone appreciated his approach to the game. Future Warriors coach Frank McGuire grew tired of watching him over-dribble, and once gave Rodgers a deflated basketball in practice to force him to pass. Celtics radio announcer Johnny Most detested Rodgers, mostly because he was not playing for Boston, and was practically gleeful on the air whenever Rodgers' flamboyant style led to a turnover.

The Celtics finished the regular season with a 148-128 thrashing of the Knicks and then awaited the winner of the

Warriors-Nationals first round playoff series. The Warriors cruised to a 2-1 victory, winning both games at home by more than twenty points to deliver the playoff matchup that fans had been anticipating – Russell vs. Chamberlain. The suspense had been building since their first meeting back in November, a 115-105 Celtics victory in which Russell out-rebounded Chamberlain thirty-five to twenty-eight while being outscored thirty to twenty-two. “You can’t relax a second against him,” Russell said afterward. He’s the best rookie I’ve ever seen. I wish I was that good when I started.” Red Auerbach agreed, but told reporters that Chamberlain “never will be as good as Bill Russell. Chamberlain is bigger, has a better jump shot and he’s just as fast. ... But he can’t play Bill’s defense.” The Celtics backed up Auerbach’s bluster by winning eight of their thirteen games against the Warriors during the regular season, even as Chamberlain was elected the league’s Most Valuable Player, outpolling Russell, Pettit and Cousy to capture the honor. The schedule for the Eastern Finals was designed to maximize television exposure of the NBA’s new marquee matchup, with games two through four planned for three consecutive days, Friday night through Sunday. This worked against the Warriors when Chamberlain lost his cool in game two. Trailing 1-0 in the series after losing to the Celtics in the opener, Chamberlain took offense when Heinsohn, under orders from Auerbach, began standing in his way after the Warriors made a basket. The two had tangled earlier during the regular season, and after an exchange of sharp elbows, Chamberlain took out his frustration on Heinsohn by shoving him nearly twenty feet across the floor. Heinsohn later recalled what happened next. “...I was scrambling off the floor to defend myself. I was about halfway up when Tommy Gola ran between us as a peacemaker just as Wilt let one go, hitting Gola in the back of the head.” Chamberlain’s hand took the brunt of the impact. Although it was not broken, the pain and swelling severely hampered his game. The Warriors went on to win the second game, but Chamberlain, his hand heavily bandaged, struggled over the next two contests. Russell scored twenty-six and grabbed thirty-nine rebounds as the Celtics won game three in a rout, 120-90, then Boston blew a nineteen point lead the next day before rallying to

win 112-104 to take a commanding 3-1 series lead. Chamberlain and the Warriors regrouped during game five in Boston, as Philadelphia raced to a 14-6 start and extended their lead to 65-45 by halftime. Chamberlain poured in fifty points as Philadelphia stayed alive, with a 128-107 victory.

Two days later, Heinsohn had the last word, tipping in a Bill Sharman miss at the buzzer to give the Celtics a 119-117 win that ended the series. In the four games after his injury, Chamberlain outscored Russell 112-90, but he had scored just sixty-two of those points during the Warriors three losses. Following the series, Chamberlain blasted the NBA game as too rough, complained that referees allowed opponents to beat up on him, and announced his “retirement.” It was an inglorious end to the best rookie season in NBA history, and Chamberlain spent most of the summer considering his options, including a \$125,000 offer to return to the Globetrotters, before returning for a second season with the Warriors.

Awaiting the Celtics in the Finals was an exhausted St. Louis Hawks team that had rallied from a 3-1 deficit to defeat the Lakers. The narrow margin of victory would ultimately spell the end of Ed Macauley’s brief coaching career. A year earlier, Ben Kerner had canned former Celtic Andy Phillip after a 6-4 start, and with Macauley struggling on the court, Kerner told him that the only way he could stay with the Hawks was as their coach. The Hawks went on to finish first in the Western Division, but lost to Elgin Baylor and the Lakers in six games. Now, in the spring of 1960, as Kerner assumed he was watching history repeat itself, he interviewed Paul Seymour and reached an agreement to have Seymour replace Macauley when the series ended. The relationship between Kerner and Macauley was complex. Kerner had traded for the hometown hero to help attract fans – which worked, as Kerner made money every year in St. Louis – and leveraged his star’s popularity off the court by entering into a mini-golf business partnership with him and Hawks broadcaster Buddy Blattner. However, Kerner had already hired thirteen coaches in thirteen years as an owner, so his public denials during the series that a coaching change was brewing – “Macauley is my coach. He has another year on his contract. He’s done a good job, an exceptional job. There’s no

reason to make a change.” – were largely disregarded by the press. With the Hawks players aware of the rumors that were swirling around their coach, St. Louis won three in a row over the Lakers to reach the Finals and keep Macauley employed for another two weeks.

The Celtics had won six of the nine meetings between the teams that season, and Macauley knew that the Hawks were in trouble, later writing that he confided to his wife before the series that “[i]f we win one game we’ll be lucky,” because of their lack of “firepower in the backcourt.” Publicly, Macauley was confident, predicting a Hawks victory, in an attempt to keep his team’s spirits up. The Hawks had retooled since their 1958 championship, but were still built around Bob Pettit and Cliff Hagan at the forward spots. Together with Clyde Lovellette, who had been acquired from the Royals for five players in September 1958 and supplanted Chuck Share at center, the Hawks starting frontcourt averaged over seventy points and thirty-eight rebounds per game. Lovellette’s colorful off-court personality was matched by his talent. He had set many of the records that Chamberlain later broke at Kansas, then played for the Phillips 66ers and won a gold medal at the 1952 Olympics before heading to the NBA. The Hawks added to their frontcourt depth during the season by trading Share to the Lakers for veteran center Larry Foust and acquired 6’6” forward Dave Piontek from Cincinnati, where he had been a starter for the last-place Royals.

Macauley’s fears about the backcourt were well-founded. Jack McMahon had missed most of the season with injuries and would not play in the series. He was joined on the sidelines by Slater Martin, which meant that Johnny McCarthy and Sihugo Green would be the starters. Green, the former All-American who had been drafted ahead of Russell in the 1957 draft, had been acquired from Cincinnati a year before in exchange for Med Park, and averaged just nineteen minutes per game as a backup guard and forward during the regular season. With Al Ferrari as their only backup, McCarthy and Green were forced to play forty minutes a night during the playoffs. The Hawks didn’t receive any help for their fatigue from the NBA. To accommodate NBC’s television schedule, game one was scheduled the day after they eliminated the Lakers. Boston took full advantage,

using a 46-26 second quarter to build a twenty-five point halftime lead that they never relinquished. Cousy, without Slater Martin to contend with, scored twenty points and was spectacular in the first four minutes of the decisive period, with four points, four assists, and four steals. Russell helped put the clamps on Pettit, who scored just eleven points in the first half and twenty for the game, well below his normal average.

Pettit and the Hawks got their revenge two days later. While Russell and Sharman were brilliant – Russell scoring twenty-one points and breaking his own playoff record with forty rebounds as Sharman scored a team-high thirty points – Pettit bounced back to score thirty-five. St. Louis rallied from an early 11-3 deficit to take a 25-21 lead at the end of the first quarter, but Boston led by seven at the half. The third quarter featured twelve lead changes as the Hawks eventually regained the advantage, but the score remained close until St. Louis opened up a double-digit lead with a few minutes left in the game. Their 113-103 win tied the series, and infuriated the Celtics, who had lost their home court advantage and now had to play the next two games in St. Louis on Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

The first two games had been predictably rough, and tempers were growing short. The opener had featured a brief bench-clearing brawl, and Pettit had collided with John Richter and injured his back. The shorthanded Hawks were also concerned about the status of Larry Foust, who missed practice after game two with knee and heel injuries. Auerbach and Macauley were jawing at each other in the press, with Red claiming that Lovellette was getting away with beating up Russell inside. These charges were nothing new for Lovellette, who was once described by ten-year NBA veteran Tom Meschery as “the single dirtiest player in NBA history.” Heinsohn remembered how Lovellette would mask his true intentions by engaging in small talk on the court. “He would say: ‘Glad to see you. Did you have a good summer? How’s the wife and kids? I heard you have a radio show.’ Then you would take a foul shot and he’d rap you right in the mouth. The original Mr. Nice.” But Lovellette’s teammates loved him, despite the fact that he rarely passed them the ball. “He meant a lot to my game,”

Cliff Hagan said, “because his shooting brought the opposing center away from the basket and opened the middle for me.”

Boston’s vaunted defense was a no-show for the first half of game three, as St. Louis shot fifty-one percent from the floor, including making fourteen of twenty-five shots in the first quarter. However, the Celtics shot nearly as well, and by halftime trailed by just a point, 55-54. The second half was a different story, as the Celtics tightened up their defense and the Hawks missed thirty-eight of their forty-eight second half shots. Bob Pettit, playing hurt, was held to six points after halftime. Pettit’s personality on the court was the polar opposite of the colorful Lovellette, but he wasn’t afraid to look for an edge. “He wasn’t that physical,” Meschery later recalled. “He didn’t hurt you. But you’d think you had him blocked out, and you’d feel his elbows in your back and shoulders, pushing you out of the way. He was a very sneaky rebounder.” Macauley would later call Pettit the best player he ever played with, high praise from a former teammate of Bob Cousy. “[Pettit] was probably the most dedicated ballplayer,” Macauley said. “He just did the job. He had a lot of fun. He was a great poker player, he liked the girls, and he didn’t drink much.” Pettit had worked hard to build up his body. At LSU he had played center but was switched to forward by Red Holzman as a rookie because he felt that Pettit “just wasn’t strong enough to play center in the NBA.” His reputation changed after bulking up from 215 to 240 pounds; Heinsohn believed Pettit was the strongest player he ever faced. The Celtics feared Pettit so much that they used several players (including Heinsohn, Conley and John Richter) to defend him in order to avoid foul trouble.

As Pettit struggled in the second half of game three, the Celtics outscored the Hawks 48-31, led by Heinsohn’s thirty points, and Boston retook the series lead with a 102-86 win. Russell contributed fifteen points and nineteen rebounds (and unofficially, twelve blocks), while Cousy, despite a thumb injury that limited him to three-for-sixteen shooting, came within one rebound of a triple-double. The Hawks were convinced they had beat themselves by playing poor defense and committing twenty turnovers that led to twenty-four of the Celtics’s points. St. Louis did not repeat those mistakes the following afternoon. Boston

trailed nearly from start to finish, frequently by double-digits, as St. Louis won 106-96 behind thirty-two from Pettit and twenty-five by Hagan. The Hawks committed only twelve turnovers and held the Celtics below 100 points for just the second time that season. The next day, the papers were dominated by two stories – Cousy's thumb injury and the exceedingly rough play in the series.

Cousy had continued to struggle, making just one of thirteen shots in game four, and committed more turnovers (six) than assists (four). Now he openly discussed the possibility of benching himself for the next game in Boston. "I'm completely exhausted. I've never had this feeling before in a playoff ... I'm going to try once more Tuesday night. If things don't go right, I'll ask Red to put in Sam or K.C. ... I'm not going to hurt the club." Auerbach stood by his star, saying, "Cousy will have to ask me. ... I'll never pull him." For his part, trainer Buddy LeRoux was doing his best to downplay the injury and told reporters that the thumb was improving.

Meanwhile, there was no confusion regarding Tom Heinsohn's opinions about Clyde Lovellette. The two had tangled under the basket late in the fourth quarter of game four, and Lovellette had elbowed Heinsohn above his left eye, blacking the eye and creating a tear that required two stitches to close. Lovellette claimed the elbow was accidental, saying, "I never threw an elbow intentionally in my life," but Heinsohn was having none of it. "That big goon has caused too many 'accidents' in this league. I'll tell you one thing, if Clyde wants to get rough, we'll accommodate him, starting right here in Boston tomorrow night." Characteristically, Auerbach backed up his player. "Lovellette had been throwing his weight around, but maybe our guys will answer with some of the stuff." The Hawks fired back by complaining about the rough tactics of the Celtics guards.

For all of the pregame talk, the next game unfolded quite differently than expected. The two teams were whistled for forty-one fouls, nine fewer than the previous game, and Lovellette was largely neutralized by Russell, who held him to eleven points and seven rebounds. Meanwhile, Russell summed up the Celtics performance with two words: "Cousy's back." A day after telling

reporters that he was “ruining this playoff,” Cousy scored twenty-one points and handed out ten assists. Cousy played the first eighteen minutes of the game without taking a break, sparking a 20-3 Boston run that broke the game open. In an electric performance, Cousy sparked a thunderous ovation from the Garden fans midway through the first quarter by sinking a twenty-five foot shot for his first basket of the game. “Boy, did that help,” Cousy told reporters after the game. “[T]he law of averages finally [caught] up with me.” His friend Tom Heinsohn was the other star of the game, letting his jumper do his talking instead of his elbows, leading all scorers with thirty-four and helping to limit a still hobbling Pettit to nine points in the second half and twenty-three for the game. Only Hagan’s twenty-eight points kept the game from deteriorating into a complete rout, as he helped the Hawks make runs in the second and third quarters that briefly cut their deficit to single-digits. However, the Celtics led by a comfortable margin most of the way, winning 127-102 to take a 3-2 series lead.

Heading back to St. Louis for game six, Boston had reason to be confident. Not only had the Celtics taken their three victories in the series by large margins but the Hawks depth was now further taxed by the loss of Foust, who had added to his injury woes by breaking his left hand early in the second half of the fifth game. Tom “Tarzan” Spencer, who had been playing for the Hazelton Hawks in the Eastern League, was added to the roster to replace Foust but would not play in the remainder of the series. However, the Celtics got off to an awful start, going scoreless for over three and a half minutes and trailed 24-16 at the end of the first quarter. Boston rallied to tie the game by halftime, but then the Hawks shredded the Celtics defense during a 21-3 third quarter run, building a lead that appeared insurmountable. With the Hawks leading 99-81 midway through the fourth, Auerbach turned to his bench and brought in K.C. Jones and Sam Jones, alongside rookies John Richter and Gene Guarilia. The Hawks began to ease off, and K.C. and Sam combined to score twenty-two points to ignite a spirited comeback that brought the Celtics within eight at 102-94 with 2:03 left. Auerbach quickly reinserted Cousy, Ramsey and Heinsohn, and when Heinsohn followed up a Russell turn-around

with a put back of his own, Boston drew within a basket, 104-102. Then Ramsey fouled Sihugo Green with nine seconds left. Green made the first free throw, missed the second, and Lovellette grabbed the rebound to seal a tougher than expected 105-102 win. Despite the victory, St. Louis fans were outraged over the officiating of Jim Duffy, and had been pelting the court with “paper containers, ice cubes, and even hot dogs” throughout the game. The closeness of the final margin was little consolation for the Celtics, who were “steaming” in the locker room after the game because their comeback proved to them that they were the better team and had wasted a chance to close out the Hawks. When Cousy, prior to departing St. Louis with his teammates on TWA flight 360, promised “A new day in Boston,” there was little doubt what he meant.

In game seven, the Celtics were committed to running the Hawks off the floor to take advantage of their short-handed roster. Russell was dominant, scoring twenty-two points and collecting thirty-five rebounds despite being frequently roughed up by the Hawks big men, leading a remarkably balanced attack by Boston that produced a rousing 122-103 victory and their third title in four years. Sam Jones scored twelve off the bench during the decisive 41-23 second quarter, Cousy dished out fourteen assists to go along with nineteen points, and Ramsey and Heinsohn combined for forty-six points and twenty-one rebounds. Even little-used John Richter played nine quality minutes against Pettit and Piontek, holding them to six points. The Celtics 83-47 rebounding edge stymied the Hawks’ plans for slowing the game down, leaving them unable to control the pace. When the game ended, Kerner graciously shook hands with Auerbach as the Boston fans stormed the court, carrying Cousy off on their shoulders while falling short in their efforts to do the same with the heftier Russell. Boston’s top two stars had played nearly the entire game, and in the locker room they savored their triumph, joining Ramsey as he tossed Auerbach into the showers and doused him with beer. As the Celtics sampled pieces of a cake decorated with their names in green and white frosting, Bob Pettit was gracious in defeat. Speaking in the Hawks’ locker room, Pettit told reporters, “That man Russell is a credit to basketball. I think he played today what could be called one of

the truly great games of all time.” Pettit also appreciated how Russell controlled his temper, despite another rough game that left Russell with a sore jaw. “He never opened his mouth when things got a little cool for his club a couple of times. And he played the game like a gentleman.” The Celtics became the first team to repeat as champions since the Lakers won three in a row from 1952 through 1954.

LESS THAN A WEEK LATER, Red Auerbach began preparing to equal the Lakers feat by selecting Tom “Satch” Sanders as the team’s first round pick. As the 1960-61 season began, Sanders was lone new face on the roster, replacing John Richter, but there were still some question marks. Jim Loscutoff was trying to come back from another injury, and Auerbach was nervous that Loscutoff could be risking permanent back trouble if he continued to play. Auerbach’s response was to personally run Loscutoff through another series of strenuous drills during training camp in an effort to convince Loscutoff (and himself) that the burly forward was ready to play. Loscutoff would play a smaller role that season, averaging fifteen minutes a game off the bench, as Ramsey continued to start in his place. There was also the touchy subject of getting Sam and K.C. Jones more playing time. While Cousy welcomed the reduction in minutes to preserve his energy as he got older, Sharman bristled, seeing the move as a “threat” to his career. But the talent of the youngsters could not be denied, especially in light of their performances in game six against the Hawks, and Sam Jones and Sharman would equally split time at shooting guard while posting almost identical statistics.

The Celtics cruised through the regular season again, posting a 57-22 mark that was slightly behind their pace the year before but still eleven games ahead of Chamberlain and the Warriors. Russell won his second Most Valuable Player award, but there was no Russell-Chamberlain rematch in the playoffs this season, as the Syracuse Nationals, led by new coach Alex Hannum, swept the Warriors in three straight to reach the Eastern Division Finals. Boston split the first two games, but then dispatched the Nats in five games, punctuated by Russell’s thirty-three rebounds, twenty-five points, and six blocks in the clincher.

The series was marred by a particularly ugly brawl in Syracuse. Heinsohn later described what happened. "Suddenly a fan appeared in our huddle during a time-out and began swinging. Nobody bothered to ask why. He was passed around once Auerbach put him in motion. ... Conley and Loscutoff double-teamed him. One hit him in the stomach and the other straightened him up. They repeated the process several times." As the rest of the team joined in, the Syracuse fans began storming the court, and a nationwide television audience watched as local police spent ten minutes restoring order.

By contrast, the Finals against the Hawks were more civil, and much easier than the seven game struggle a year earlier. The Celtics jumped out to a 2-0 lead, dropped a 124-120 decision in St. Louis, and then finished off the Hawks in five games to capture their third straight championship. Once again, Russell saved his best performance for the final game of the series, scoring thirty points and adding thirty-eight rebounds while playing every minute of the game. Afterwards, Hawks' coach Paul Seymour gave Russell a glowing review. "Russell never stopped. Every time I looked, he was dunking shots, blocking shots, playing every guy on the floor at one time or another, just to let them know he was." Auerbach agreed, but also gave credit to his entire team. "They could have toyed with any of the top basketball teams of the past," he said, and brazenly summarized their secret of success. "With most teams you can win if you stop one man. Stop Chamberlain and you win. Stop a Pettit, a Baylor, a Schayes and you win. But you can't stop the Celtics that way. That's why we're the best." While Paul Arizin, Cliff Hagan, Jerry West, and Johnny Kerr might have disagreed, the Celtics hold on the championship was unquestioned.

1960 AND 1961 WERE ALSO GOOD YEARS for another Massachusetts native. Buoyed by his victory in the Wisconsin presidential primary in April 1960 (on the same day as the Celtics game five win against the Hawks), Senator John F. Kennedy had captured the Democratic nomination that summer at their convention in Los Angeles. During his acceptance speech at the Memorial Coliseum, Kennedy dismissed the notion that the settlement of the Western United States had forever closed the

“American frontier.” Instead, Kennedy redefined the concept, declaring that “the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won.” Acknowledging Woodrow Wilson’s “New Freedom” and Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal,” Kennedy borrowed their phraseology, foreshadowing the inaugural address he would deliver the following January after winning the presidency. “[T]he New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises – it is a set of challenges. It sums up not what I intend to offer the American people, but what I intend to ask of them.” When Kennedy spoke of “unsolved problems of peace and war, unconquered pockets of ignorance and prejudice, [and] unanswered questions of poverty and surplus,” he had the entire world in mind. As the 1960s unfolded, Kennedy’s words proved prescient, and in their own ways, though far less significant in comparison with world events, the NBA and the Celtics continued their transformation during the remainder of the decade. Kennedy quoted scripture that day in Los Angeles, and his words would echo throughout the remainder of what became a turbulent, troubling decade. “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.”

Chapter 7

Kaleidoscope

THE COVER OF THE FEBRUARY 17, 1961 EDITION of *Time* magazine featured a painting of the Cincinnati Royals' Oscar Robertson in action against the Syracuse Nationals. The accompanying story, entitled "The Graceful Giants," focused on Robertson's spectacular rookie season, but devoted a number of paragraphs to the recent "dramatic transformation" of basketball.

Within recent memory, basketball was a game of pattern plays as formal as any cotillion, of two-handed set shots that were lovely to watch but easy to block, of rules that set officials' whistles to shrilling at the flick of physical contact, and of defensive systems that held most scores well below the 60 mark. By those standards, today's game is absolutely unrecognizable in the professional National Basketball Association, which inevitably sets the style for college, high school and playground basketball.

By adopting the 24-second clock, the NBA had created a game where "at least 75% of the action develops from the kaleidoscopic swirl of the instant," dominated by motion, and requiring levels of speed and athleticism that were unimaginable a decade earlier. Former player and current Lakers coach Fred Schaus commented, "It's incredible, but it's true that today's N.B.A. man, an average man, would have been a great star six, seven or eight years ago. Maybe now he's just a fourth or fifth man instead of a star."

The exciting style of modern basketball was broadening the appeal of the game at all levels of competition. *Time* reported that “[t]his season an estimated 150 million Americans will watch games played by some 20,000 high schools, 1,000 colleges, and swarms of amateur teams...” Indiana was particularly a hotbed of basketball fervor. Its annual high school tournament was drawing 1.5 million fans a year, and the 1960 tournament took in over a million dollars. The NBA was the most significant beneficiary of this surge in interest, and Commissioner Maurice Podoloff could not have been happier. “The public certainly likes the game. They come to watch. Believe me, if there’s any slackening of interest, we’ll find ways of curing it—and in a hurry.” There was little reason for concern in February 1961. Attendance was growing at better than twenty percent a year, and NBC had expanded its coverage of the league, providing \$500,000 in steady income for the owners, compared with an average of less than \$20,000 per team per season five years earlier. Home teams were now assured of \$15,000 for each televised game during the regular season, and \$20,000 for each playoff game broadcast on the network’s 224 affiliates across the country. The infusion of cash was greatly appreciated by the previously struggling owners, but was hardly impressive when compared against the lucrative deals being negotiated by Major League Baseball and the National Football League. NBC was paying \$250,000 to broadcast the Baseball All-Star game and \$3 million more for the World Series. And in 1962, after NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle helped push the Sports Broadcasting Act through Congress, an anti-trust exemption that allowed sports leagues to sign a single league-wide television contract to broadcast all of their games, CBS eagerly agreed to a two year deal with the NFL for \$9.3 million. With eighty-nine percent of American families – over forty-seven million – now gathering around television sets produced by Philco, RCA, and Zenith, the latter brand made famous by its breakthrough four-button “Space Commander” remote control, the growth potential of sports on television was becoming clear, especially as the networks began broadcasting sports in color by the middle of the decade.

The most visible sign of the NBA's new-found popularity was the addition of the Chicago Packers for the 1961-62 season, the first expansion team for the circuit since the BAA and NBL had merged twelve years earlier. The 1950 merger agreement was designed to end the rivalry for players and teams that was financially draining and destabilizing on both leagues. That conflict reached its peak in 1948 when both of the NBL's finalists, the Lakers and Royals, defected to the BAA, and the NBL responded by creating a team consisting exclusively of former University of Kentucky stars in order to keep them from joining teams in the BAA. However, the merger resulted in an awkward and bloated seventeen team NBA. Over the next four seasons, nine franchises disbanded, a tide that would rid the league of "minor league" cities such as Sheboygan and Waterloo, but also deprive the circuit of representatives in Washington, Baltimore and Chicago.

Podoloff and the owners were soon thinking about expansion as a means to generate more revenue. In December 1956, Baltimore and Louisville were floated as possible candidates, a year later *Sports Illustrated* declared that Kansas City would "likely" host a team the following season, and Podoloff began scheduling neutral site games in Houston, Dallas, San Francisco and Los Angeles in order to scout for locations for new franchises. The commissioner hoped to follow the lead of the NFL and MLB and create a coast-to-coast league, but some of his owners did not share his enthusiasm. Hawks owner Ben Kerner proposed adding a second pro basketball league instead of expanding the NBA, claiming that expansion teams would take a long time to become respectable, while in a new league, "all of the teams would be starting from scratch." The proposal was curious, since the memories of the player wars between the BAA and the NBL were still fresh in his fellow owners' minds.

So the NBA would expand, but would proceed at a glacial pace. Abe Saperstein first lobbied for a team in Chicago in 1958, and although former Lakers executive Max Winter and insurance executive Dave Trager were awarded a franchise there in September 1959, their inability to reach an agreement to play at Chicago Stadium delayed the Packers debut until 1961. In the meantime, Podoloff had to be satisfied with the relocation of

several clubs. Two years after the Hawks moved to St. Louis in 1955, Fred Zollner moved his Pistons out of Fort Wayne, signing a six-year deal with Detroit's Olympia Stadium, bringing pro basketball back to the automotive Mecca of the country. Seven weeks later, in April 1957, after listening to offers from groups in Cleveland and Kansas City, Les Harrison and his brother Jack agreed to relocate their beloved Royals to Cincinnati.

The most dramatic shift took place in 1960. The Lakers financial difficulties in Minneapolis had deepened considerably since Mikan's retirement. Before the Lakers glory days, Max Winter was forced to provide perks such as free jump-starts for fans stranded in the Minneapolis Auditorium parking lots on frigid nights, and when the team stopped winning in the late 1950s, attendance at the antiquated facility dropped below 1,000 on many evenings. Now Bob Short tried spicing up the games with cheerleaders – dubbed the “Lakerettes” – and even hired models to escort some season ticket holders to their seats. Attendance still lagged the rest of the league. Then, on January 31 and February 1, 1960, the Lakers played two games against the Warriors in California. The Lakers lost both games, but drew well at both the Cow Palace in San Francisco and at the new Los Angeles Sports Arena, where over 10,000 fans were in attendance. With the Dodgers drawing two million baseball fans in Los Angeles while Lakers fans stayed away in droves, Short and Frank Ryan bought out their minority investors to gain complete control, and sought approval from the league to move. Their fellow owners wanted a team in California but were concerned about the extra travel expenses required to fly their teams to Los Angeles. While jet aircraft had made flying faster, cheaper, and therefore, far more popular – the number of Americans who flew doubled between 1953 and 1961 – the Lakers' move would dramatically increase travel costs for the rest of the league. Unlike the NFL and baseball's National League, which each had two teams in California, the Lakers would be the only NBA team west of St. Louis. When their fellow owners initially voted against the move, Short and Ryan agreed to compensate visiting teams to help defray their travel costs, but that was only part of the reason the NBA granted their stamp of approval on April 27, 1960.

As Short was laying the groundwork for his western gamble, Abe Saperstein unveiled his plans for an entirely new league. Having been rebuffed in his efforts to get an NBA expansion team in Chicago or on the West Coast, Saperstein announced the creation of the American Basketball League, and prepared to take the court with teams in Los Angeles, San Francisco (which would be his personal franchise), Cleveland, Kansas City, Washington and his hometown of Chicago. NBA owners, unwilling to cede California and its booming population to an upstart league, approved the relocation of the Lakers in an attempt to spoil Saperstein's plans. The confident promoter, who, after all, had christened his barnstorming team the "Harlem Globetrotters" while they still played exclusively in small towns surrounding Chicago, was not deterred. If *Time* magazine was featuring pro basketball on its front cover and declaring this era the "golden years" of pro sports in America, and a second pro football league, the AFL, was a few months away from beginning its inaugural season, surely a second pro basketball league could succeed? Even so, it would take over a year before the ABL played its first games in the fall of 1961.

The ABL was born as AAU basketball was deteriorating. American corporations realized that they could no longer afford to compete with the NBA's escalating salaries, and were unable to attract the best players to play the AAU's brand of "amateur" basketball. 1960 had been a turning point for the AAU. First, the AAU representatives at the U.S. Olympic Trials were soundly defeated by teams stocked with college stars, and then the NIBL was unable to sign or retain any of the prominent Olympians. In March 1961, just days after winning the AAU tournament, the Cleveland Pipers announced they were leaving the NIBL altogether and joining forces with Saperstein. The NIBL subsequently collapsed, the latest sign of the AAU's waning popularity.

Saperstein was not satisfied with just bringing the Pipers into the fold. After an ownership swap that resulted in Saperstein owning the Chicago Majors, he convinced his fellow owners to approve a three-point shot and a wider foul lane, both designed to make the ABL game unique. By tapering the lane from eighteen feet under the basket to twelve feet at the free throw line,

Saperstein believed there would be greater movement of players inside, which would “give the little man a chance.” Saperstein also engaged in some cross-promotion by announcing doubleheaders in every ABL city featuring his Globetrotters. Then, in a marketing coup, Saperstein used his connections to secure an agreement with Chicago Stadium to host his Majors, forcing the NBA’s Packers to try to compete at the International Amphitheater that held less than half as many fans.

The ABL then began to raid the NBA for players and coaches. Jack McMahon had retired as an NBA player and agreed to coach the Kansas City Steers, Neil Johnston resurfaced with the newly formed Pittsburgh Renaissance, and former Celtic Andy Phillip signed on as Saperstein’s coach in Chicago. By October 1961, they were joined by nineteen former NBA players who had jumped to the ABL, which was now an eight team circuit stretching from Pittsburgh to Honolulu. Those who joined the new league included retired former star George Yardley and two-time all-star Kenny Sears from the Knicks, but most were marginal pros such as Hal Lear or youngsters like Dick Barnett or Russell’s former USF teammate Mike Farmer who were looking for more playing time. The battle for players led to legal wrangling in which the NBA’s standard reserve clause was repeatedly challenged in court. In most cases, the two sides would reach a monetary settlement that allowed the player to suit up for the ABL, but some turned ugly.

Two of the most contentious fights involved former Celtics, though for different reasons. 1961 had been a difficult year for Bill Sharman. With his playing time declining, and an expansion draft looming, Sharman’s future with the Celtics was already cloudy. On January 17, the NBA formally approved expansion teams for Chicago and Pittsburgh for the 1961-62 season. That night, John Harris, the representative of the Pittsburgh group, announced that he had hired Bill Sharman as his head coach. The press jumped on the story, but there were two problems. For starters, Walter Brown had no intention of letting Sharman go, but more importantly, Harris had never spoken with Sharman about the job. When Brown told Harris that Sharman was not available, Harris completely reserved course and withdrew his franchise application with a refreshingly

candid explanation. "I decided to go into the game only because I thought I had Sharman. I either jumped the gun or misunderstood Walter when I announced that I had signed him. I have been aware of my lack of knowledge about basketball, but now I'm firmly convinced that I know nothing about it." Harris's about-face meant that Chicago would enter the NBA as its lone expansion franchise.

In the subsequent expansion draft, the Celtics left Sharman unprotected, preferring to keep their younger stars. When Chicago selected him, Sharman became the first significant member of the 1957 championship team to leave Boston. But Sharman did not go quietly. On April 17 Sharman accepted Len Corbosiero's offer to coach the ABL's Los Angeles Jets. Sharman also announced that he planned to play for the Jets, which drew the attention of the NBA because Sharman would be the highest profile active player to defect to the new league. By October, Podoloff was advising Brown to withhold Sharman's playoff share, and an angry Sharman told friends, "they want to get even with me." Sharman would eventually win the right to play for the Jets, but was a shell of his former self, averaging less than six points over nineteen games. In contrast, Sharman's coaching career got off to a solid start, as the Jets sprinted to a 24-15 record in the ABL's Western Division behind George Yardley's nineteen points per game. But the team was failing financially, and with Corbosiero physically ailing and unable to run the club on a daily basis, the Jets folded on January 10, 1962. The Jets' players were dispersed to the rest of the league, but Sharman went home, ending his playing career.

Gene Conley became a casualty of the Sharman situation. Sharman's refusal to go to Chicago gave them the right to select another Celtic, so they grabbed Conley. However, Conley followed Sharman's lead and switched leagues, signing with the ABL's Washington Tapers in October. Conley was still playing baseball, currently with the Boston Red Sox, and their vice president Dick O'Connell joined the anti-ABL chorus. Claiming that baseball commissioner Ford Frick would ban all ABL players from baseball due to the upstart league's policy of allowing players implicated in college basketball betting scandals, such as Connie Hawkins, to play, O'Connell "strongly

advised” Conley to quit basketball. When the Tapers and Saperstein threatened a lawsuit, the controversy subsided, and Conley played a productive season for the hapless Tapers before rejoining the Red Sox and winning fifteen games during their forgettable 1962 campaign.

Meanwhile, Cleveland Pipers owner George Steinbrenner was taking the first steps towards building a reputation as a “difficult” owner. When Steinbrenner bought the Pipers from Ed Sweeney, he inherited a talented NIBL team with John McLendon as his coach. McLendon, a Kansas native who attended Kansas University in order to take classes taught by Dr. James Naismith, became the first black graduate of their physical education program in 1936. A devotee of fast break basketball, McLendon was a very successful coach at North Carolina College and then Tennessee State in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), a league comprised of predominately black colleges. Gene Tormohlen, who played for McLendon at Tennessee State and then with the Pipers, remembered him as “a quiet, mild-mannered human being ... I’m sure he got upset with us, but if you get beat Saturday and go to church on Sunday, he said you were okay. No yelling or screaming.” When McLendon accepted the Pipers’s coaching job, he recognized that race might make his task more difficult. Cleveland’s roster was a mixture of six blacks and seven southern whites, and he didn’t know if the white players would listen to a black coach, later saying that he “thought it was an interesting challenge.” When the Pipers moved to the ABL, McLendon became the first black coach of an integrated team in an American professional basketball league.

McLendon and Steinbrenner had an uneasy relationship from the start. Pipers general manager Mike Cleary recalled that Steinbrenner “was tough on John, and John wasn’t used to handling a Steinbrenner-like personality.” McLendon and the players were angered by Steinbrenner’s heavy handed tactics, such as selling Grady McCollum to the Hawaii Chiefs during halftime of a game between the two teams, and when Steinbrenner had trouble making the payroll, the players complained in the local newspapers. Steinbrenner’s reaction was pure bluster – he blamed the problem on a “clerical” error, and

ordered team captain Jack Adams to tell the press that the players were satisfied. By then, Cleveland was also struggling on the court. After compiling the best record in the Eastern Division during the first half of the season (24-18) the Pipers had lost seven of their last nine games, including three in a row after the salary dispute became public. McLendon chose to resign as head coach on January 30, kicking off a turbulent week that resulted in Steinbrenner announcing he was selling part of the Pipers to his friend Ralph Wilson but would continue to run the club, and the rehiring of McLendon as a team vice president. Plus, the Pipers also hired a new coach – Bill Sharman. The new leadership team shook up the roster, and the Pipers captured the ABL's first championship, rallying from a 2-0 deficit to defeat the Kansas City Steers in five games.

BACK IN BOSTON, Sharman's former teammates were attempting to win an unprecedented fourth consecutive NBA title. The 1961-62 season would be Red Auerbach's twelfth on the Celtics bench. Not only was he the longest tenured coach in the NBA, but a recent flurry of coaching changes meant that Auerbach was the only coach in the league with more than one year of experience in his current position. The departures of Sharman and Conley forced Auerbach to adjust his rotation. Sam Jones was now the unquestioned starter at shooting guard, while rookie Gary Phillips and former Knicks player-coach Carl Braun were added to the roster to strengthen the team's backcourt depth. Up front, the absence of Gene Conley forced Russell to play slightly more minutes per game than ever before, since Heinsohn was an undersized backup center. Russell responded with a career-best 18.9 points per game, finished second behind Chamberlain in rebounds with 23.6, and captured another MVP award. The main beneficiary of the roster moves was Satch Sanders. After showing a great deal of improvement during his rookie season, averaging nearly nine points and nine rebounds in the playoffs, Auerbach rewarded Satch with a spot in the starting lineup.

Tom Sanders was born on November 8, 1938, in the Harlem section of New York, and earned the nickname "Satch" because of his physical resemblance to Satchel Paige, especially

on the pitcher's mound. Sanders eventually abandoned his dreams of a baseball career and focused on basketball, drawing the attention of scouts while attending Seward Park High School. Satch was not a "natural athlete." Cal Ramsey, who later played with Sanders at NYU and against him in the NBA, remembered that "Satch was the tallest, most uncoordinated kid in junior high." But the lean Sanders was also a fast learner who excelled academically, and viewed basketball simply as a means to an end. "Basketball was a game I enjoyed and I appreciated what it meant. I hoped it would help me go to college and help me get a free education, but that was the end of my scheme with basketball. I had no plans to turn pro." Sanders set several school records and established himself as a good defensive player as the starting center on the 1960 NYU team that reached the NCAA national semifinals before losing to eventual champion Ohio State. Still, Satch did not consider himself pro material, partly because Pete Newell had rarely played him during that year's Olympic tryouts. "I figured NBA coaches would feel I wasn't so hot if I couldn't play with other senior picks. When Boston drafted me No. 1, I was both amazed and overjoyed."

Auerbach still had to convince him to turn down an offer to work for the Tuck Tape company and play on its AAU team, but Sanders agreed to a contract with Boston and reported to training camp ready to make an impression – albeit a bad one. Sanders stepped onto the court wearing glasses and large knee and elbow pads. Auerbach was not amused. He arranged for Sanders to get contact lenses, because, in his words, glasses made him "look timid," then Auerbach conspired with Jim Loscutoff to hide the knee and elbow pads before exhibition games, to convince Sanders that he didn't need them. The ruse worked, and Sanders quickly adapted to the pro game, finding that his defensive skills were effective against NBA veterans. After his rookie season, he feared the Celtics would leave him unprotected in the expansion draft, but Auerbach had no such plans. Sanders later recalled how that gave him "the final confidence boost I needed."

Satch also proved to be quite a character off the court. His teammates invariably described him as "a thinking basketball player and a thinking man," who always carried a briefcase

stuffed with books and investment reports that he would study endlessly. Satch also immersed himself in community activism, helping secure federal grants to rehabilitate housing projects in Boston, and later helped create the organization “Athletes for a Better Urban Society.” What made Satch memorable to his teammates were his quirks. Sanders had never driven a car before arriving in Boston, and according to K.C. Jones he was not exactly a “natural driver” either. “When he asked me if I would teach him to drive, he told me I was the only one on the team with enough patience, which was probably true. Satch gave a good nudge to a telephone poll [sic] when we began our second lesson. We were using my car. Satch was immediately transferred to a drivers’ education school in Cambridge.” Sanders also had a fear of being robbed while on the road, and set up elaborate James Bond-style devices designed to wake him up if an intruder entered his room, such as placing a glass ash tray on top of a waste basket wedged against the door, or using a collection of empty beer bottles as an impromptu set of “wind chimes.” His roommates on the road soon realized that if they returned late at night after Satch had gone to bed, they needed to wake him up before entering their room, or risk an uncertain, and probably loud, fate.

Boston rolled through the regular season, posting a 60-20 record and winning the East again by an eleven game margin, but their accomplishments were overshadowed by what was happening in Philadelphia. After the Warriors unexpected loss in the first round of the playoffs, Eddie Gottlieb hired Frank McGuire to replace Neil Johnston. McGuire, who had led North Carolina to the 1957 NCAA championship and St. John’s to the title game in 1952, had twice been named the college basketball coach of the year, and his comprehensive scouting methods were ahead of their time. Using a cadre of assistants, McGuire would assemble a file on every opponent that included game film, and then spent hours lecturing his players. Francis Joseph McGuire was a native New Yorker, the youngest of thirteen children raised by their mother in Greenwich Village after the death of their father, an Irish policeman. A star athlete at St. Francis Xavier High School, McGuire was later named captain of the basketball and baseball teams at St. John’s University, then

returned to coach and teach history at Xavier, and served in the Navy during World War II. In 1947, McGuire succeeded Joe Lapchick as the head basketball coach at St. John's, and compiled a 103-35 record over the next five seasons – while also serving as the Redmen baseball coach. He then moved on to North Carolina, which was not yet a basketball hotbed. “When I got to North Carolina, there was little or no interest in college basketball there. Everybody was a football fan.” McGuire built the program by creating an “underground railroad” in reverse; he would recruit in New York City and convince them to move to Chapel Hill. The entire starting lineup of his undefeated 1957 Tar Heels was comprised of native New Yorkers.

McGuire was also a far more sophisticated man than the typical NBA coach. “Frank was a first class guy. He wore starched, white shirts, silk ties and nice jackets,” Tom Gola recalled. “He lived at the Cherry Hill Inn, which was very exclusive. His favorite drink was a J&B Mist.” A regular Roman Catholic communicant, McGuire was devoted to his wife and three children and had recently become a grandfather. His life off the court was revolved around his son Frank Jr., who had been born with cerebral palsy. “Frank was very close to his son and worried about him a lot,” Al Attles recalled. “There were times when Frank would tell us, ‘Look, I’ve got to go home [to North Carolina] and see Frank Jr. I want you guys to have practice. Just do the things we normally do.’” Attles remembered that the entire team “would show up, we’d scrimmage and guys didn’t mess around. We had a lot of respect for Frank.”

McGuire’s transition to life as an NBA coach was not always as smooth. Players chafed when McGuire would lecture them about not smoking, drinking or enjoying the nightlife on the road. It was not uncommon for players to have an assortment of companionship when they were away from home; Russell, while describing his own indiscretions in his 1979 book, *Second Wind*, observed that “if a bomb had blown up our road hotel on any given night, it’s safe to say there’d have been a large number of extra bodies in the wreckage.” McGuire also frequently clashed with Gottlieb over the Warriors excessively frugal budget, which left McGuire without the extensive staff he had enjoyed at North Carolina. “I had a couple of fancy titles [with the Warriors], but

let me tell you, I was also the traveling secretary, the ticket agent and a lot of other things. I spent almost as much time trying to get my team transported from one game to another as I did coaching.” McGuire nearly quit before the season even started, when Gottlieb skimped on hotel rooms and transportation during an exhibition tour.

McGuire biggest challenge was literally his biggest challenge – Wilt Chamberlain. After accepting the Warriors job, McGuire spent \$400 calling fellow coaches for advice about how to handle the superstar, including Chamberlain’s college coach Dick Harp, fully aware of his new star’s reputation as a coach-killer. McGuire decided that if the Warriors were going to beat the Celtics, they needed Chamberlain to score more, not less, and gave him free reign to do whatever he wanted on the floor, though he did persuade him to try shooting free throws underhanded. McGuire even permitted him to “save his legs” by taking it easy at practice, which disturbed his teammates, but their new coach convinced them this was best for the team. “I had meetings with each of the players. We talked about their careers and about the team. I said that Wilt was the most dominant force in basketball history and I wanted him to get the ball two-thirds of the time. Guy Rodgers said to me, ‘Coach, whatever you say is fine, but will you sit in with us when we go to talk contract with Eddie Gottlieb?’” McGuire agreed, knowing that Gottlieb would try to use their reduced scoring numbers against them during salary negotiations. McGuire stuck with his plan, and the players eventually saw the humor in the situation. “Once,” the Lakers Hot Rod Hundley remembered, “I stopped in the Warriors’ dressing room before the game and I saw Tom Gola throwing the ball against the wall. I asked, ‘What are you doing?’ Gola said, ‘Practicing our offense – throw the ball to Wilt and then stand there.’”

However, the early results were mixed. The Warriors had essentially the same team as the year before, with rookie Tom Meschery replacing Andy Johnson at forward. By November 19, Philadelphia was 6-2 in games where Chamberlain had scored fifty or more points, but had just an 8-7 record overall. As Chamberlain hit his stride in December, scoring over fifty points *thirteen* times, the Warriors improved their record to 23-14, but a

discouraging pattern was emerging. Philadelphia still could not defeat Boston, losing 116-111 on December 30 to drop their season record against the Celtics to 0-5. So far, Russell had been able to hold Chamberlain to a 38.6 average, with Wilt's only breakthrough coming on December 13 in Boston, when he scored fifty-two in a 123-113 loss.

The Warriors were faring better against the Lakers, splitting their first six games as Chamberlain abused the undersized Jim Krebs and the limited skills of his backup Ray Felix. During the second game of a doubleheader in Philadelphia on December 8, Chamberlain torched Los Angeles for seventy-eight points and forty-three rebounds to set a new single-game scoring record, but the Lakers won 151-147 in triple overtime as Elgin Baylor scored sixty-three. It was the beginning of a thirteen game stretch where Chamberlain scored over sixty points three times, averaging fifty-six points per game as the Warriors posted a 10-3 record. Wilt followed that up by scoring seventy-three against the expansion Packers on January 13 to establish a record for a forty-eight minute game, and even the Celtics were not immune, surrendering sixty-two points to Chamberlain the next day while winning their sixth straight over the Warriors, 145-136. Less than a week later, Philadelphia began a 14-2 run that included four straight wins over Boston. And when Chamberlain put an exclamation point on his historic season by scoring 100 points against the Knicks in a meaningless game in Hershey, Pennsylvania, boosting his season average above fifty points per game, it appeared that the Warriors were in position to challenge the Celtics supremacy, even though Boston had finished eleven games ahead of them in the final standings. Chamberlain had set ten NBA records, and the only thing more remarkable than his statistics was the fact that despite his gaudy numbers, Russell had outpulled him for the Most Valuable Player award.

Restoring the Warriors to prominence was exactly what Eddie Gottlieb had in mind when he hired Frank McGuire. Long before Gottlieb earned the nickname "The Mogul" for his sports promotion prowess, he had emigrated with his parents from Kiev to New York as a young child, and then moved to Philadelphia when he was nine years old. It was there that he began playing basketball. Despite his contemporary appearance as a short,

balding, and rotund Jewish bachelor, with a face that Tom Meschery once compared to a bloodhound's, Gottlieb had set a school scoring record at the Philadelphia School of Pedagogy, but his real talents were off the court. Gottlieb possessed a photographic memory and unparalleled organization skills that he would eventually put to use as the NBA's official schedule maker.

Philadelphia had been a hotbed for basketball since the turn of century, with several teams across the state playing in various early pro leagues. After World War I, Gottlieb created the SPHAs, named after the South Philadelphia Hebrew Association, and promptly won two championships in the Philadelphia League. The SPHAs became so dominant that the rest of the league was unable to compete, and the circuit collapsed. In 1926, Jules Aaronson acquired an American Basketball League franchise, named it the Philadelphia Warriors, and tapped Gottlieb to run the team, who brought most of the SPHAs along with him. This initial version of the Warriors won forty of seventy-two games over two seasons before dropping out of the unstable league that would suspend operations in the early 1930s despite the presence of NFL owners such as George Halas, George Marshall and Tim Mara.

Gottlieb went back to work and reconstituted the SPHAs, who by 1931 had joined a new version of the Eastern League. The team was composed entirely of Jewish players by this point, and they wore uniforms that Gottlieb designed himself, plaid shorts and plain jerseys featuring the Jewish star and the Hebrew letters samekh, pe, he and aleph, which invited anti-Semitism but were worn proudly by the players. The team played their home games in the ballroom of the luxury Broadwood Hotel, and the players earned \$35-\$50 a game in the midst of the Depression. After winning the 1932 Eastern League title and losing in the Finals the following year, the team jumped back to the American Basketball League, which had been reorganized as a regional league centered in the New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania area. Over the next thirteen years, the SPHAs won seven ABL championships and made nine appearances in the Finals. In 1946, when Peter Tyrell, president of the Philadelphia Arena Corporation, was granted a BAA franchise, he resurrected the

name Warriors and hired Gottlieb to coach and assemble the team. Gottlieb brought along three former SPHAs and recruited players who had played basketball while in the military. Led by former Marine Joe Fulks, the Warriors promptly won the first BAA championship.

Gottlieb continued to describe himself as a promoter first and coach second, and developed a strong survival streak which included unquestionable loyalty to his friends. The Mogul owned the Philadelphia Stars Negro league baseball team, and earned extra income by promoting up to 500 amateur, semi-pro, and pro baseball games a week – black and white – including at big league stadiums such as Shibe Park and Yankee Stadium. But when the Knicks were planning to draft Sweetwater Clifton, Gottlieb openly campaigned against the move, fearing that blacks would be bad for his basketball business, possibly alienating white fans and jeopardizing the NBA's lucrative relationship with his close friend Abe Saperstein, whose Globetrotters traditionally had their choice of the top black players in the country. The Warriors would be slow to integrate. LaSalle's Jackie Moore joined the team during the 1954-55 season, but Philadelphia would not feature three blacks on their roster at the same time until 1958.

While McGuire complained about Gottlieb's tightness with money, Gottlieb could also be generous, such as awarding Paul Arizin a Buick after he won the scoring title, or helping to pay for the funeral of Tom Meschery's father. His financial thriftiness would end up saving the Warriors in 1952, when Gottlieb and a pair of other investors bought the struggling team for \$25,000. Gottlieb remained on the bench through the 1954-55 season, then retired after a gall bladder operation, and watched George Senesky coach the Warriors to the NBA title in 1956.

Now Gottlieb was anticipating another championship run. Philadelphia was pushed to the limit by Syracuse in the first round, winning in five games behind Wilt's 56 points in the deciding game, and then all eyes were focused on the Chamberlain-Russell matchup in the Eastern Division Finals. Both players were marathon men that season. Chamberlain played nearly every minute during the regular season, with the exception of a fourth quarter ejection in one game, and both

would play wire-to-wire throughout the playoffs. The two titans had a remarkably friendly relationship off the court, though Gottlieb did his best to stoke a rivalry, complaining in the press about Russell's congenital goaltending, baiting Auerbach into responding in kind about Chamberlain's defensive liabilities. But Gottlieb admitted to Russell that his jabs were intended "to keep our seats filled and our flock growing," and told him not to take the stories seriously.

Russell enjoyed playing against Chamberlain, and their relationship transcended basketball. "[T]he respect was mutual and genuine," Russell later wrote. "He was my toughest competition, and because of our status we shared something that made us friends." The two would call each other by their middle names – Fenton and Norman, respectively – and routinely ate meals at each other's homes. When McGuire suggested to Chamberlain that Russell was using their "friendship" to psych him out, Chamberlain rejected his coach's advice to keep his distance. He knew their relationship was genuine. On the court, both sides welcomed the challenge and adapted their game to gain the upper hand. Cousy believed that Russell shot better against Chamberlain, "because he has to arch the ball higher just to get it over Wilt's head, and that automatically gives him a softer shot." At the other end of the floor, the Celtics used a variety of tactics to help contain Chamberlain. "Russell would sneak out and place himself in front of Wilt so they would have to lob the ball," Heinsohn remembered. "That would give one of us a chance to steal the pass or, as he was catching him, foul him." Cousy recalled how Russell would also play behind Chamberlain to stop him from driving to the hoop, escalating their personal game of basketball chess. "So Wilt countered with his outside shot, and Russell countered by pushing Wilt farther and farther from the basket – often, out of range of his jump shot." Chamberlain then responded by developing his famous fallaway bank shot, and this battle of moves and countermoves would continue for the rest of their careers.

"Fenton" had the edge in the first half of game one, as Russell held Chamberlain to twelve points and the Celtics led 50-35 at the break. While Chamberlain finished with a game-high thirty-three points, Boston won 117-89 to take a 1-0 series lead.

Three days later, the Celtics blew a nine point lead midway through the fourth quarter, as Chamberlain scored forty-two points to help even the series. The two teams split the next two games, Boston taking the third game on the strength of thirty-one points each by Russell and Heinsohn, while Philadelphia rallied in game four for a hard-fought 110-106 victory. In that game, Chamberlain led all scorers with forty-one points, but the key contributions came from forwards Paul Arizin (twenty-six) and Tom Meschery (twenty-three). Meschery had been thrust into a larger role when Tom Gola injured his back, missing game three entirely, and most of the fourth. The young forward was used to facing challenges. A native of Manchuria, Meschery had spent World War II in an internment camp in Japan when his family was unable to depart from China to meet his father in San Francisco. His father, whose last name was originally Mescheriakoff, had fought in the Russian White Army and was forced to leave the country as Lenin's revolutionary forces took control. Meschery became the basketball embodiment of his family's toughness. He starred at St. Mary's, honed his skills as a member of the successful San Francisco Olympic Club AAU team, and developed into a fiery player that would not back down. "[H]e loved to defend, rebound and fight, not necessarily in that order," McGuire later said.

Game five provided evidence that Meschery was not alone in that sentiment. After the Celtics built a twenty-three point halftime lead, the game deteriorated as the Warriors' frustration boiled over. The fun began when Chamberlain and Sam Jones collided as the latter was driving towards the basket. Heinsohn later described what happened next. "Chamberlain claimed he intended to shake hands to show he was sorry, but Sam thought otherwise. 'He had been jawing at me,' said Sam, 'and when we moved his hands toward me, I wasn't taking any chances.'" So despite their off-court friendship, Jones grabbed a nearby photographers' stool to ward off a scowling Chamberlain. Then Guy Rodgers, who happened to be standing next to Carl Braun, smashed Braun's lip with an unexpected punch. That was enough to send Loscutoff and Heinsohn after Rodgers, who followed Jones' lead and grabbed his own stool. As fans and police began to spill onto the court, Rodgers escaped, much to

the chagrin of Loscutoff. "I don't know what I'd have done if I'd gotten my hands on him. I might have broken him in two." After order had been restored, Heinsohn tangled with Ted Luckenbill and earned himself an ejection, the only player kicked out of the game, which the Celtics won easily, 119-104. The only penalties imposed by Podoloff were \$50 fines levied to five different players. It was a fitting introduction to the NBA for the Celtics latest first-round pick, John Havlicek, who was in town to meet with Auerbach and Brown and attend his first game as a spectator.

The Celtics had won despite losing Frank Ramsey after he pulled his left thigh muscle early in the fourth game, an injury that sidelined him for most of game five and would cause him to miss the next game entirely. Philadelphia took advantage, particularly Meschery, who made eleven of fourteen shots while being guarded by Heinsohn en route to twenty-three points in the first-half and twenty-seven for the game. With Chamberlain scoring thirty-two and adding twenty-one rebounds to offset Russell's nineteen points and twenty-two rebounds, the Warriors won 109-99 to force a seventh game back in Boston. Afterwards, Russell made some pointed comments in the locker room, saying, "we've got to get together and play some basketball, not this hot-and-cold stuff we've been putting on. I'm used to winning, and I'll be doing the best I can to keep on winning."

Heading into game seven, the focus in Boston was on the Celtics injuries. Ramsey expected to play, though there was uncertainty about how long he could go, while Loscutoff was nursing torn wrist ligaments suffered during his pursuit of Rodgers back in the fifth game, and Carl Braun's season appeared to be over when he slipped on the court in Philadelphia and injured his foot. Despite these problems, the Celtics were eleven point favorites, partly because the Warriors' Tom Gola was not expected to play. The spectators for the seventh game included the Los Angeles Lakers, who had eliminated the Pistons on the same night that the Warriors had tied the Eastern series. Coach Fred Schaus tried to put the best spin he could on their attendance, claiming that their motivation was simply a desire to watch the game and avoid a pair of cross-country flights from Detroit to Los Angeles and back to Boston or Philadelphia for

game one of the Finals. But it was clear that Schaus was thinking ahead to a Boston-Los Angeles series. On the court, Russell and Chamberlain neutralized each other statistically, as both grabbed twenty-two rebounds and limited each other to nineteen and twenty-two points, respectively. Most of the offense was provided by the supporting casts. Meschery was nearly the Warriors' hero, scoring a game-high 32 points while playing the entire game. Among the injured players, Gola had surprisingly recovered, scoring sixteen points in thirty-eight minutes, while Ramsey played just three minutes for the Celtics, making only one basket.

The game was tight throughout, and during the final two minutes Chamberlain scored five straight points for the Warriors to tie the game at 107 with sixteen seconds left. With Loscutoff and Sanders both fouled out of the game, Auerbach was forced to play a small lineup featuring Russell, Heinsohn, Cousy, and Sam and K.C. Jones. When the Celtics inbounded the ball, Sam Jones took it up court, trying to play for a final shot. But Jones nearly ran out of time. "I heard Red (Auerbach) yelling to shoot. I thought they'd be looking for me to drive to the right so I went to the left. Russell was coming up to set up a block and Chamberlain was with him. I figured that if I could get the ball over Chamberlain's head that Russell could probably tip it in even if I missed..." The eighteen-foot fallaway shot swished through the net with two seconds left. Hundreds of fans rushed the floor, thinking the game was over, but there was time left for one more play. When Russell batted away Ed Conlin's subsequent inbound pass intended for Chamberlain, the Celtics were back in the Finals again. Jerry West, watching from the stands, called the game "the greatest I've ever seen."

DURING THE 1962 SERIES AGAINST THE LAKERS, the *Boston Globe's* Cliff Keane wrote a story under the headline, "'62 Last Chance For Aging C's?" in which an unidentified Celtics player speculated that Boston's run might be nearing its end. "We're getting old, and if we don't win this year it may be a long time before we win a championship again." The series was only tied at that point, which makes this statement even more premature in hindsight, but the story was not without merit – the

Celtics were no longer a young upstart team. Satch Sanders was the only member of the team playing major minutes who was under twenty-seven years old, and Cousy, Loscutoff and Ramsey were all over thirty. In contrast, the Lakers featured just one player in that age bracket, backup center Ray Felix. The core of the Lakers was now the dynamic duo of twenty-seven-year-old Elgin Baylor and Jerry West, who was just shy of his twenty-fourth birthday.

Elgin Baylor had provided a dramatic boost to the Lakers sagging fortunes as a rookie in 1958. Ed Macauley spoke for coaches around the league when he said, "He forces an opposing coach to do a lot of thinking because you have to be very careful who you play against him. Put a small, fast man on him and Baylor will overpower him. He'll get five or six points quickly and you're out of business. Put a bigger man on him and maybe he won't score that quickly, but he'll beat you some other way." Bob Short was so impressed that he hired Baylor's college coach, John Castellani, for his sophomore season. Castellani was eager to leave the University of Seattle for the same reason that Baylor departed with a year of eligibility remaining – his team was still on NCAA probation for a series of recruiting violations. While Baylor continued to excel, Castellani was over his head, and was fired after an 11-25 start. Nonetheless, Short followed a similar formula in 1960, drafting Jerry West and hiring *his* college coach, Fred Schaus. Schaus was better prepared for the job, having played five years for the Pistons and Knicks in the early 1950s, and the Lakers had been pursuing him for years. However, until the team moved to Los Angeles and drafted his star pupil Jerry West, Schaus had resisted taking the job. Schaus was described as a "likeable, friendly person" off the court, whose personality morphed into an irritable, foot-stomping "battler" once the game began, a trait that he carried over from his playing days. The Navy veteran had returned to his alma mater, West Virginia, and rebuilt the Mountaineers' basketball program around a flashy recruit named Rodney Clark Hundley, better known as "Hot Rod." While Schaus did not always approve of his antics – his free throw "technique" sometimes included spinning the ball on his finger and punching it toward the basket – Schaus liked him as a player. "He never embarrassed

an opponent, nor did his antics ever cost us a game. In the middle 1950s college basketball was coming off the scandals and it needed a shot in the arm, someone to bring the fans back. That's what Hot Rod did." With Hundley averaging 24.5 points per game over his three varsity seasons, the Mountaineers qualified for the NCAA tournament each year, though they consistently lost in the first round. Hundley earned first-team All-American honors as a senior, and was drafted by the Cincinnati Royals with the number one overall pick in 1957, before being shipped to the Lakers as part of the Clyde Lovellette trade. Hot Rod was still there three years later when his former college coach arrived in Los Angeles.

However, it was Schaus' next star recruit that was ultimately his ticket back to the NBA. Jerry West was the son of a coal mine electrician from Cheylan, West Virginia. A self-described shy, "gangly, extremely skinny" kid who did not develop a love for basketball until high school, West led East Bank High School to its first state title in 1956 after a mediocre .500 record the previous season. West scored forty-three points and grabbed twenty-three rebounds against Mullens High School in the semifinals, and then added thirty-nine points in the championship-clinching 71-56 victory over Morgantown. Those performances led to several scholarship offers, and West chose to stay close to home and enroll at West Virginia.

Jerry West stepped into the Mountaineers lineup just after Hundley graduated, and West Virginia did not miss a beat, posting an 81-12 record over the next three seasons. In 1959, West earned first team All-American honors and was named the Most Outstanding Player in the NCAA tournament despite losing to California, 71-70, in the title game. West scored thirty-eight in the national semifinals against Louisville, and led all scorers with twenty-eight points and grabbed a game-high eleven rebounds against California. That one point loss haunted him. "I had my hands on the ball about midcourt with no time left on clock, and I said, 'If I could have just gotten one more shot...' But it wasn't to be." West rebounded nicely, averaging nearly thirty points and seventeen boards a game as a senior with the Mountaineers, and then teamed with Oscar Robertson to win a gold medal in dominant fashion at the 1960 Olympics.

The Lakers had selected him as the second overall choice in the draft, but surprisingly, Schaus frequently buried West on the bench early during their rookie season in Los Angeles, claiming that the transition to the pros rougher style of play would be difficult for him, which seems odd considering that West had broken his nose four times in college while continuing to play. In reality, Schaus was more concerned about West's fragile psyche, since, even as a college star, he tended to dwell on his most minor mistakes. Schaus believed that teamwork and mental toughness were the keys to winning basketball. "Every team in the NBA has good players. The attitude of the players is what makes the difference. The mental approach is 60% to 70% of the ball game." West waited patiently for more playing time, and soon Schaus could no longer ignore West's talent. By the twentieth game of the season he was in the starting lineup, ending his rookie season with averages of 17.6 points and 7.7 rebounds per game while playing thirty-five minutes a night.

Then in the fall of 1961, world events conspired to help elevate his game to superstar status. When President Kennedy responded to the construction of the Berlin Wall by calling up the National Guard and Army Reserves to active duty, Baylor was among those recalled, and for the rest of the season he split his time between the Lakers and his post at Fort Lewis in Washington. The year before, the Lakers had moved their training camp to San Antonio so Baylor could complete basic training at nearby Fort Sam Houston and play with the Lakers at night, a schedule that is exhausting to contemplate. Baylor played the entire season with the Lakers that year, but the 1961-62 season would be different. The Lakers star was limited to forty-eight games during the regular season, though he would be given a pass for the duration of the playoffs. With Baylor sidelined, Schaus was forced to play West over forty minutes a game, and more importantly, empowered West to assert himself as the leader of the team. Having a year of experience also helped. "I have a lot more confidence now," West told Roger Williams of *Sports Illustrated* early that season. "Last season I was afraid of making a mistake, because I might hurt the team and make myself look bad." In January 1962, he scored sixty-three points against the Knicks despite suffering from a virus-

induced fever. West averaged thirty points a game in his second season, after scoring thirty points in a game only once as a rookie, while also improving his defense. Lakers statistician John Radcliffe later claimed that West would have led the league in steals that year if they had been recorded as an official statistic.

The remainder of the Lakers starting lineup was filled with role players. Forward Rudy LaRusso, a Dartmouth graduate who was dubbed “Roughhouse Rudy” by the Celtics’ Johnny Most, was regularly assigned to guard the best scoring forwards in the league, such as Pettit and Heinsohn. In addition to bringing toughness to the Lakers lineup, he also possessed a solid offensive game himself, averaging seventeen points that season in the shadow of Baylor and West, to go along with ten rebounds. Frank Selvy, who set scoring records as a collegian at Furman (including a 100 point game in 1954), teamed with West in the backcourt, although neither was a true point guard in the traditional sense. Selvy had bounced around as a pro, playing for five teams over the past seven years, and now, in his second stint with the Lakers, Selvy was able to take advantage of opponents’ preoccupation with West to overcome his lack of speed and a slow release on his shot. Off the bench came Hot Rod Hundley and forward Tom Hawkins, an effective rebounder who helped facilitate the offense by setting picks. The Lakers weak spot was at center, where 6’8” Jim Krebs was the smallest starter in the NBA, and as such, preferred to shoot from the outside instead of banging away underneath. But Russell recalled one occasion where Krebs challenged him verbally and physically, by persistently pushing and shoving him. “Each time he gave it to me, it got worse. The next time he did it, I said: ‘Krebs. Put your guts where your mouth is.’ He threw one punch and I broke his jaw.” Krebs’s backup was 6’11” Ray Felix, who was so overmatched against Russell that he once had four straight shots blocked by the Celtics superstar.

As the series began in Boston on a Saturday afternoon, just 7,467 fans showed up at the Garden for the opener, which was nationally televised by NBC. In the second quarter, Krebs’ elbows were flying, and one of them landed on K.C. Jones’ nose, breaking it. But Jones continued to play, and with Sam Jones scoring twenty-four points, Boston won 122-108. The second and

third quarters had been decisive, as Boston outscored Los Angeles 66-42. Baylor led all scorers with thirty-five and West added twenty-one.

The Lakers turned the tables the next day, using a 43-23 second quarter edge to build a lead that reached twenty-four points, 90-66, four minutes into the third period. Jerry West led the charge, scoring the Lakers first eleven points and had twenty by early in the second quarter when he took his first break. West finished with forty, but the Celtics used a 15-3 run to help close the gap, and by the start of the fourth quarter the Lakers lead had nearly evaporated as Boston closed to within four at 102-98. The Celtics briefly took the lead at 112-111 on a hook shot by Sanders, but Los Angeles regained control from there and won 129-122. As the series shifted to the West Coast for the third game, the Celtics blew an opportunity to regain the home-court advantage. The Celtics led 115-111 with a minute left, but West scored the next four points, including two free throws, to tie the game. Then West finished off Boston when he stole Sam Jones' inbound pass that was intended for Cousy, and drove the length of the floor for a layup. While Baylor and West were pacing the Lakers by their hot shooting, Los Angeles was winning the series on foul shots. In game three, Baylor and West combined to make twenty-seven of thirty-two free throws while the entire Celtics team made just twenty-five, part of a developing trend. Over the previous two games combined, the Lakers had outscored the Celtics 80-41 at the free throw line, attempting thirty-six more free throws while out-shooting Boston eighty-three to sixty-eight percent.

Boston rebounded to tie the series the next day, winning 115-103 in front of 15,000-plus Los Angeles fans plus a television audience back in Boston. Leading from start to finish, the Celtics had six players in double-figures while playing suffocating defense, holding West to twenty-six points and making Baylor work for his thirty-eight. The Lakers still made a few more free throws, and though the Celtics had cut the margin to a more reasonable 29-21, that didn't stop Walter Brown from complaining in the press. "I've just checked the team figures for the eighty-game season and our opponents had a little over three more three tries a game than we did," Brown said. "But in this

series Los Angeles is getting almost fifteen more tries a game. It just seems to me the figures shouldn't be so lopsided when two good teams meet." The injured Carl Braun preferred to focus on the task at hand. "The key man again is Jerry West. Elgin Baylor will get his 35 points a game, regardless. We need to hold West in the mid-20's in scoring – 24 or 25."

Braun's teammates were successful in that task in the fifth game, holding West to twenty-four points, but Elgin Baylor scored *sixty-one* and grabbed twenty-two rebounds, as the Lakers regained the series lead with a 126-121 win. A capacity crowd at the Garden, the first sellout in Boston during the series, saw Baylor break Wilt Chamberlain's month-old playoff record of fifty-six points. The Celtics now faced possible elimination in Los Angeles, an ominous sign. During Boston's four successful championship campaigns, they had never trailed in the Finals. West and Baylor, aware that a title was within their grasp, came out firing in the sixth game, scoring twenty-three and twenty-one points, respectively, in the first half to give the Lakers an eight point lead at halftime. But Sam Jones, who had scored seventeen points in the second quarter to keep the Celtics in the game, scored ten more during the opening six minutes of the third, and Boston's defense limited West and Baylor to just twenty-two points between them the rest of the way. Sam finished with thirty-five points. "I didn't feel any pressure tonight," he told reporters after the game. "I don't know why – I was just really relaxed out there." The 119-105 victory sent the series back to Boston for a decisive seventh game.

Celtics tickets were now in high demand. Fans had started arriving at the Garden box office just after 2am Boston time, less than an hour after game six had ended in Los Angeles, and by 7:30am "several hundred fans" were waiting in line for tickets even though the windows would not open until ten. By 11am, as the Celtics were landing at Logan Airport, an estimated 8,000 fans stood in a long line that stretched out from North Station down Causeway Street past the Hotel Madison towards Nashua Street. Forty-five minutes later the game was officially a sellout, with nearly 7,000 fans forced to go home disappointed. The *Boston Herald's* Arthur Sampson took the opportunity to lament the fickle nature of Celtics "fans."

It's a shame, however, that it took a final playoff game to build up such enthusiasm. Boston has never had such an outstanding team as the Celtics have been for six years. Unfortunately, many of those inside the Garden tonight will be seeing them in action for the first time this season and a goodly number who have watched them quite often will be denied admission.

With his ticket revenue secure, Walter Brown had no objections to televising the game locally, much to the chagrin of ticket scalpers.

Once again, trainer Buddy LeRoux was busy as the Celtics were nursing several injuries. Ramsey was still hobbling with his thigh injury, Heinsohn required six stitches to close a cut over his right eye, Russell was having trouble with an ankle, and Cousy re-injured his right hand in a collision with Frank Selvy in game six. While the morning papers speculated about a possible bone chip, precautionary x-rays were negative, and the diagnosis was a torn ligament that would not prevent Cousy from playing. However, the injury was clearly affecting him. "When I released the ball on a shot, it really hurt. After a while I didn't want to shoot anymore."

Cousy scored just eight points that night, and his backcourt mate Sam Jones had a horrendous first half, missing nine of ten shots. Incredibly, the Celtics were still able to build a 53-47 halftime lead. "I was tight in the first half," Jones said afterward. "Frank [Ramsey] got hold of me at halftime and told me to loosen up. 'It's just another ball game.'" Ramsey's halftime talk inspired Sam, who made eleven of his next twenty-one shots from the floor, ended the game with twenty-seven points, and Ramsey scored twenty-three in what was his best game of the series. However, the first forty-two minutes of the game were simply a preamble for what became the most memorable sequence of events in Celtics-Lakers history.

With the score tied at 88, the Celtics were running out of players. Heinsohn had just picked up his sixth foul, joining Sanders and Loscutoff on the bench, who had each fouled out while futilely attempting to stop Baylor. Even the hobbling Carl

Braun was pressed into service for a few minutes to guard the Lakers superstar. The Celtics had been unable to hold several leads of between six and nine points, and now the Lakers seemed to have the upper hand, were it not for the dominance of Bill Russell. Russell was smothering the Los Angeles offense, and finished the game with forty rebounds and thirty points including a basket that gave Boston a 96-91 lead late in the fourth quarter. After a pair of West jumpers, and free throws by Russell and Baylor, Los Angeles closed to within 98-96. Selvy took three of the next four Laker shots. The first was blocked by Sam Jones, who hit two free throws to extend the Celtics lead, but Selvy responded with a driving layup and then put back a miss by West to tie the game at 100 with eighteen seconds left. Ramsey misfired on a hook shot, and the Lakers called timeout with five seconds remaining. While Schaus had instructed Hot Rod Hundley to try to find Baylor or West, Hundley spotted Selvy, who had been left open when Cousy doubled-team West. "It was a fairly tough shot," Selvy said later. "I was almost on the baseline, so far I couldn't bank the ball. I thought the shot was good." Selvy's shot hit the front rim, then the back rim, and then rolled off. Russell grabbed the rebound, with some help from a slight Sam Jones push-off of Baylor, and the game went to overtime.

Russell was exhilarated and exhausted all at once, lying on the court for nearly half a minute before slowly walking to the Celtics bench. Convinced that Selvy's shot was going in, Russell knew how close they had come to losing the title. Jerry West, who was emotionally drained as well, remembered watching Russell as the teams took a break before starting the five minute extra session. "His body seemed limp, his head was hung, and sweat was pouring off of him. I figured he had nothing left." West could not have been more wrong. The Lakers had posted an undefeated 7-0 record in overtime games that season, but this was game seven of the championship Finals, and Russell was not about to let this second chance slip by. In overtime, he tied the game at 102 with a dunk, then, after a three-point play by Sam Jones, Russell drew Baylor's sixth foul and hit two free throws to give the Celtics a 107-102 lead with 2:20 left. The game was now a battle of attrition. Ramsey had fouled out at the start of

overtime, forcing Auerbach to play little-used Gene Guarilia, making his first appearance of the series, on Baylor, and now Schaus had lost both Baylor and LaRusso. After Sam made another jumper that gave the Celtics a 109-103 lead, Boston got the ball back, and when Krebs fouled Cousy, the game was over. The Lakers offense had completely disappeared, and Los Angeles failed to make a basket in the extra session until Tom Hawkins hit two inconsequential shots in the final seconds with the Celtics safely ahead. The final score was 110-107 Boston, as Cousy raced around the court, dribbling out the clock while the fans prepared to rush the Garden floor one more time.

After the game, there were plenty of relieved smiles in the Boston locker room. Russell was overcome with emotion, saying "I'm glad *that's* over," before joining the celebration. Ramsey praised LeRoux's work on his injured thigh, saying that he hoped LeRoux "never runs out of tape," and Guarilia, the most unexpected hero who had contained Baylor early in overtime, told a cadre of reporters that he was not nervous when Auerbach sent him into the game. Even Fred Schaus visited the locker room to offer his congratulations, a stark contrast to the Warriors' Frank McGuire, who had spent the moments after game seven of the Eastern Finals blaming referees Mendy Rudolph and Sid Borgia for the loss and refusing to congratulate the Celtics.

The Celtics' fourth consecutive championship elevated them to a rarified status in North American pro sports. Only the New York Yankees, Montreal Canadiens and Cleveland Browns had strung together more titles, each winning five in a row. The Yankees were still the gold standard for sports dynasties, and that fall they would win their tenth World Series since the end of World War II, but the Celtics were gaining ground. In order to overtake them, they would have to master the Yankees formula of incorporating new generations of Hall of Famers into their lineup. Mickey Mantle was merely the latest superstar in a line that stretched back from Ruth and Gehrig to DiMaggio and Berra and Ford. For the Celtics, this process would take on greater urgency in the coming year. When Bob Cousy missed the 1962 breakup dinner due to a previous business commitment in Miami,

it was not a major story, but it foreshadowed a new challenge to the Celtics dynasty.

Chapter 8

Faded Hopes

ON JANUARY 31, 1963, THE CELTICS WERE preparing to play the Cincinnati Royals in College Park, Maryland, the third game in a stretch of four games in as many days, each scheduled in a different city. Boston had won five in a row, raising their season record to 37-16, placing them comfortably eight and a half games ahead of the Royals and Nationals in the Eastern Division. That morning, the team was scheduled to tour the White House, a trip arranged by Frank Dooley, former manager of the 1947 Holy Cross championship team. The invitation had drawn a mixed response from the players, understandable given the Celtics hectic schedule, and Bill Russell and Dan Swartz missed the tour because they “overslept.” They did not know that when President Kennedy reviewed the White House visitor’s list that morning he had noticed the Celtics, and made it known to staffers that he wanted to personally greet the team.

It had been a busy week for the President. On January 24, Kennedy proposed over \$13 billion in tax cuts to help stimulate the economy, including reductions of personal and corporate tax rates and tax code reforms which, according to the *New York Times*, “would be the biggest overhaul of the Federal tax code in 21 years.” Cuba was also prominently on the President’s mind. Arizona senator Barry Goldwater was urging Congress to hold new hearings on the 1961 “Bay of Pigs” fiasco, and those stories were accompanied by rumors, which proved to be overstated, of a new round of Soviet military activity in Cuba just months after the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis. These topics were all fair game at the President’s forty-sixth press conference, which

contained a mixture of foreign and domestic policy questions, punctuated by a humorous exchange when Kennedy was asked whether Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara would run for President in 1968 – as a Republican. The President responded, “I have too high a regard for him to launch his candidacy yet.” Over the next few days, Kennedy announced plans to visit Costa Rica in March, proposed a \$1.2 billion education package aimed at building new public schools and increasing college tuition assistance, declared that 1962 was a turning point in American space exploration – “the most successful [year] in our brief but active space history”- and mourned the death of Robert Frost, who had recited a poem at Kennedy’s inauguration.

On January 31 itself, Kennedy was monitoring reports from the University of Mississippi, where twenty-nine-year-old James Meredith was beginning his second semester as the lone Negro student on campus. There had been newspaper reports that Meredith, who had been harassed and struggled academically throughout the fall, might not return to campus. Kennedy briefly addressed the matter at his press conference on the twenty-fourth, saying that he hoped that Meredith would continue attending classes. Now, a week later, Meredith and his wife and son left their home in Jackson, Mississippi at 6am for the first leg of the trip back to the university. After dropping off his family at his parents’ house in Kosciusko, Meredith drove his white Volkswagen to the campus in Oxford, arriving around 10am. Meredith was met by Assistant Attorney General John Doar and two of the fifteen deputy U.S. Marshals who were assigned to personally guard him, part of a large law enforcement presence on campus that included 300 military police, local and state police, and even an Army helicopter circling overhead. As a result, the atmosphere was far different than the previous September, when violence led to two deaths and forced Kennedy to intervene so Meredith would be allowed to enroll. Today, Kennedy would be relieved as he received reports that there were no incidents as Meredith paid the standard \$230 fee for tuition and room and board and then registered for his spring semester classes.

For President Kennedy, the visit by his hometown Celtics was a welcome diversion from the pressures of his normal

routine. He chatted with them regarding their roles on the team and quizzed them about their alma maters. Kennedy even asked Auerbach if the team had been in any fights lately, and Red half-jokingly replied, "Recently in Cincy, I had to poke a fan ... but nothing serious developed." (In reality the incident had landed him in jail until Cousy and LeRoux could bail him out.) After a typical distribution of tie pins and other trinkets adorned with the presidential seal, the entire group posed for a picture in the Oval Office in front of the President's desk, with the blue-green curtains that surrounded the windows behind the desk forming an unmistakable backdrop. Every member of the team received an autographed copy of the photo, and Kennedy shook hands with each of them as they departed. The meeting was breaking up uneventfully, but when Kennedy reached Satch Sanders and wished him good luck, Sanders didn't know how to respond, so he replied, "Take it easy, baby," which sparked good-natured laughter from everyone in the room, including Kennedy. That evening, the Celtics shook hands with another Kennedy, as they briefly met Attorney General Robert Kennedy on the court in College Park before the start of their game against the Royals, which Boston won 128-125.

The team that met with President Kennedy was nearly the same squad that had won the 1962 title, but changes were on the way. Bob Cousy had decided to retire. He would play one more season and then become head coach of the Boston College basketball team. "Two years ago, I had been sounded out about coaching basketball at Holy Cross and I wasn't interested," Cousy wrote in 1963. "A year later, when Boston College contacted me, I was ready." Auerbach and Brown convinced him to come back for the 1962-63 season, a decision facilitated when the college allowed Cousy to take the job a year later, and recruit in the interim while Frank Power filled in as head coach. Cousy was thirty-four that fall, and he knew it was time to quit, using his own brand of impeccable soul-searching logic. "There is no use in kidding myself. It has been increasingly difficult to get up for most of the games. When you run into Wilt Chamberlain's team or the Lakers, well, that's something different. But if we meet the Knicks or Chicago, it's not a case of tremendous incentive."

Cousy was also increasingly bitter about the rough treatment from fans at stadiums on the road, and had tired of traveling, rooming alone and counting the minutes until game time. “All I want to do after a game is get the hell out of town, even if I have to catch an all-night coach making a half-dozen stops.” The nights of going out after games with his friend Tom Heinsohn, who he once described as the team’s unofficial “social director,” were over. Cousy also believed that the grind of the long NBA season was causing players to suffer more injuries, including himself. In a *Sports Illustrated* article written with John Underwood in March 1962, Cousy described a long list of ailments that were hampering his play – “a pulled ligament in the knee, a spur on the elbow, a Charley horse, pulled stomach muscles, a wrenching of the other knee and now a bruised hand. I’ve been shaking hands left-handed for a month.” While these comments could be dismissed as coming from someone who was getting older and being forced to face his basketball mortality, the length of the season would continue to be an annual point of contention between the owners and the Players Association, even after Cousy retired.

Cousy’s status as an NBA living legend had begun to wear on him. “Experience doesn’t minimize pressure,” he wrote, “it magnifies it. With age you become more and more apprehensive about your ability to produce, and you become increasingly protective of the reputation you feel you have established.” Cousy was more than willing to take a step back from the game, spend more time with his young daughters, and continue his off-court charity work for cystic fibrosis, Big Brothers and other causes.

As Auerbach prepared to turn over the starting point guard spot to K.C. Jones the following season, he reduced Cousy’s minutes with the full support of his star, who later said, “[Auerbach] plays me just enough so that I’m able to hustle all the time I’m in there, and when he sees me tiring, he takes me out.” Auerbach also wanted to find a real backup for Russell, after being forced to use Heinsohn in that role the previous season. Luckily, Clyde Lovellette was once again shooting his way out of an NBA city, clashing with new Hawks coach Harry Gallatin while making a comeback from an Achilles tendon

injury that had sidelined him after 40 games in 1961-62. On October 15, the Celtics sent a second-round pick and cash to the Hawks for the volatile big man.

Lovellette would spend the season living in Boston's Sherry-Biltmore hotel with two roommates, Dan Swartz and the Celtics other new arrival, rookie John Havlicek from Ohio State. Havlicek had spent the past three seasons helping the Buckeyes reach the NCAA championship game, winning the title in 1960 and twice finishing as runners-up to their cross-state rivals, the University of Cincinnati. Those Ohio State teams were built around All-American Jerry Lucas, not Havlicek, who openly sacrificed his offense to focus on helping the team defensively. Coach Fred Taylor was amazed. "Defense is hard to sell, but here was John literally jumping at the chance. I never saw anything like it."

It was a decision that sprang from Havlicek's desire to win and be a good teammate, which was inspired by his relatively humble youth. The third child of parents of Eastern European descent, John Havlicek grew up in Lansing, Ohio, where his Czechoslovakian father, Frank, and his mother Mandy (whose father had emigrated from Yugoslavia) owned a grocery store at 1368 National Road next to a movie theater where young John spent many enjoyable nights. Having learned the business at John's grandfather's store in Dillonvale, Frank struck out on his own in the middle of a working-class region in eastern Ohio dedicated to coal mining and steel mills. Their business success was uneven at best. After selling the store as part of a plan to move to Cleveland when John was six, the deal fell through, and the smaller shop that Frank opened in a different location in Lansing would eventually fail. Frank's work schedule kept him from attending most of John's basketball and football games, and while he was pleased when colleges offered to pay for John's tuition in exchange for playing sports, Frank Havlicek never really understood why the ability to shoot a basketball was so important. But he never stood in his son's way, giving John the freedom to pursue his passions. "He was the type of person who allowed you to make your own decisions," John later recalled. "If I ever asked him for advice, he'd say, 'Do what you think is best.'"

Living 150 miles away from Cleveland, Havlicek grew up as a Browns and Indians fan, and he played both football and baseball at Bridgeport High School in addition to basketball. Havlicek was an end and part-time quarterback his first two years before earning the starting quarterback job as a junior. At 6'3", 180 pounds, Havlicek outweighed every member of his offensive line, inspiring the team's unofficial nickname, "Big John and the Seven Dwarfs." As a baseball player, he played well enough to draw attention from major league scouts for Baltimore, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and the New York Yankees.

Havlicek grew to love basketball more than any other sport. "I was probably as good or better in other sports. I think I reached my own potential in high school as a basketball player, but I don't think I ever did in football or baseball. I guess I definitely put more into basketball." In Havlicek's sophomore year, Bobby Carroll, a former teammate of Fred Schaus at West Virginia, took over as head coach and taught the team the fundamentals of fast break basketball. Havlicek later wrote that Carroll "never built the offense around me. I did a lot of running, and was a pretty good offensive rebounder, so my points came by running on the break, on follow-up shots, or by moving around and getting open for an easy shot." It was an excellent apprenticeship.

By his senior year, Havlicek was averaging thirty points and twenty rebounds a game. Dozens of scholarship offers came pouring in, and most were full-time football scholarships or a combination for both football and basketball. Ohio State wanted Havlicek for both sports, but Havlicek had decided to concentrate on basketball, and play alongside fellow Ohio natives Jerry Lucas, Larry Siegfried and Mel Nowell, who knew each other as teammates of a high-school All-Star team. Havlicek successfully resisted Woody Hayes's attempts to get him on the football team, and starred on the basketball court, where the Buckeyes posted a 78-6 record during his three varsity seasons. Besides the two NCAA championship game losses in his junior years, Havlicek's other major disappointment as a collegian came during the 1960 Olympic Trials, when he was passed over for a spot on the team

despite being the leading scorer for Ohio State in two games in the tournament.

Havlicek's notoriety, and some fortunate timing, made him a hot property after his college career was over. Red Auerbach had drafted Havlicek at the end of the first round in 1962, realizing that Havlicek had sacrificed his personal stats for the good of the team, and as always, appreciating the value of adding a player from a winning program. The Celtics offered him a \$15,000 contract, but Havlicek had two other offers to consider. George Steinbrenner was looking to build the Cleveland Pipers around former Ohio State stars. Siegfried had already played for them during the ABL's inaugural season, and now the Pipers set their sights on Havlicek and Lucas, who the Royals had selected as a territorial draft selection on the same day that Auerbach picked Havlicek. Steinbrenner offered Havlicek and Lucas packages that included stock in his American Shipbuilding company, a car, an apartment and other perks. On May 16, Lucas signed a two-year deal with the Pipers, turning down a more lucrative offer from the Royals in part because the ABL schedule would allow him to finish his college degree. When Lucas told the press that Havlicek was still considering the Pipers' offer, there was speculation that by landing the pair, the ABL might be able to secure a national television deal.

Havlicek also had an offer from the NFL's Cleveland Browns to return to football, which was appealing because he had his doubts about pro basketball, especially the fledging ABL. "I was basically skeptical about the league, a skepticism which turned out to be justified. The fact is that I was a little skeptical about pro basketball in general, because in the area where I lived it received very little publicity. I was happy to be drafted by the Celtics, who were a championship team and who played a style I enjoyed, but the NBA didn't have the glamour of the NFL back in 1962." So Havlicek signed with the Browns and reported to Paul Brown's training camp, forcing Auerbach to wait back in Boston, prompting memories of K.C. Jones's dalliance with the Rams a few years earlier. The Browns had drafted Havlicek in the seventh round as receiver, where they were already well-stocked with veterans Ray Renfro and Rich Kreitling, and

youngsters Bobby Crespino and Gary Collins who were Cleveland's first round picks in 1961 and 1962, respectively. After not playing at all against the Lions in the Browns preseason opener, Havlicek went without a catch against the Steelers and was cut by legendary coach Paul Brown the following Monday. Havlicek then turned down offers from Baltimore, Washington and the AFL's Houston Oilers and reported to Celtics training camp.

Meanwhile, Havlicek's fears about the Pipers credibility turned out to be well-founded. The signing of Lucas, initially hailed as a coup, actually touched off a series of events that led to the collapse of the franchise two months later. Steinbrenner already had a rocky relationship with his fellow owners, who had voted on a motion back in February to expel the Pipers from the ABL. The vote was 5-1 against expulsion, but the fact that the vote was held at all tarnished the league's already fragile image. Then, in early July, Steinbrenner announced that the Pipers were joining the NBA, and that he was going to resign as team president while keeping his majority stake in the team. "I believe somebody who gets along better with the public will be more qualified to handle the team's affairs." While initial newspaper reports claimed that ABL commissioner Abe Saperstein had endorsed the move – or even initiated it – by July 25 he was threatening a lawsuit if the NBA accepted the Pipers. From an NBA perspective, pursuing the Pipers to bring Lucas into the fold was reminiscent of the BAA's acquisition of the Lakers from the NBL 14 years earlier in order to steal away George Mikan.

By this point, Steinbrenner had backed off his "resignation" pledge and was running out of money. If the Pipers jumped to the NBA, the Cincinnati Royals planned to exercise their rights to Lucas. Steinbrenner needed to keep his star gate attraction, but the Royals insisted on payment of \$100,000 as compensation, and the NBA demanded an additional \$150,000 as a franchise fee. For the financially challenged Pipers, the payments were a deal-breaker, as they could not afford to pay a fraction of that amount. By the end of the month, Steinbrenner officially backed out, and the Pipers soon disbanded. Lucas

chose to sit out the entire year, leaving the NBA and the Royals without him for the 1962-63 season.

The demise of the Pipers left the rest of the ABL on life support, and the NBA, after months of courtroom battles over player contracts, could not have been happier. In May, Eddie Gottlieb had helped give the ABL a nudge into the abyss by selling the Philadelphia Warriors to a group of investors who moved the team to San Francisco. Gottlieb had been swayed by an \$850,000 offer which gave him a remarkable return on his original investment. While the NBA was delighted to be moving a second team to the West Coast, they were hesitant to leave Philadelphia without a team, and the Warriors eastern rivals were angered that Wilt Chamberlain would be making fewer appearances in their arenas. Gottlieb attempted to get another team for his adopted hometown, but negotiations to move an existing franchise (Chicago, Detroit and Syracuse were mentioned as candidates) or to create an expansion team were unsuccessful. Still, after three weeks of lobbying, the NBA owners approved the move and the Warriors left Philadelphia.

The response from the ABL was typical – threaten and then back down. San Francisco Saints owner George McKeon filed a lawsuit to block the move, but by mid-July the Saints moved across the Bay to become the Oakland Oaks. Abe Saperstein's house of cards was collapsing. The Jets had not survived the first season, the demise of the defending champion Pipers severely weakened the league, an "expansion" team planned for Denver never materialized, and the relocation of the Hawaii Chiefs to Long Beach, California and the New York Tapers to Philadelphia – to take advantage of the Warriors absence – added to the air of instability that surrounded the upcoming 1962-63 season. By New Year's Day 1963 it was officially over; after at least \$1.25 million in losses over two years the ABL shut down operations, and NBA teams lined up to sign the newly available players. The ABL had introduced the three point shot and broke the coaching color barrier with a pair of black head coaches (former Globetrotter Ermer Robinson coached the Oaks that season), but were doomed by poor financial decisions such as inflating travel costs by placing a team in Honolulu, and overestimating pro basketball's appeal to

Americans. The country might be ready to support two football leagues, but at least for now, the NBA would remain unchallenged.

For the Celtics, the drama was squarely on the court, as the Bob Cousy farewell tour weaved its way across the country. Cousy endured pre-game ceremonies in each city on the road, which he accurately saw as an effort to exploit his popularity to help the gate, and the Celtics continued their winning ways, leading the league in rebounding and assists while averaging seven points a game more than their opponents. There were some minor cracks beginning to show, such as a 4-5 mark against the Lakers, the first time in four years that Boston had lost a season series, but the Celtics 58-22 record was the best mark in the league and just two games behind their previous year's pace.

Meanwhile, Havlicek was nothing short of a revelation. While Auerbach and his teammates had to constantly hound him to shoot more, Cousy saw the strengths of his game right away, writing after the season:

He's not a great shooter by any means, either, maybe a little better than adequate. But he picks up a lot of garbage baskets with that second and third effort, and after Arnold [Auerbach] had worked him into the backcourt, he was frequently playing against smaller men whom he could overpower on sheer strength and hustle. ... It has been a long time since I've seen a rookie with his fierce desire to win.

Havlicek was learning what every Celtic veteran already knew – if you were open, Auerbach expected you to take the shot, and if you missed, Russell would take care of the rebound. While Havlicek was subject to rookie hazing rituals – such as carrying the 24-second clocks into the Rhode Island Auditorium before one game – he earned his teammates' respect immediately. By early 1963, Russell was comparing Havlicek's game to Frank Ramsey and the rookie's work ethic to his own, and Auerbach admitted, "I'll be honest. He turned out better than I thought he'd be." Havlicek's ability to perform under pressure made him even more valuable, and unlike Sam and K.C. Jones, who played

relatively small roles during their rookie season, Havlicek averaged the third-most minutes per game of any Celtic, trailing only Russell and Sam Jones, which allowed most of the other veterans to play fewer minutes than the previous season. While Havlicek's fourteen points and six rebounds per game weren't flashy enough to earn Rookie of the Year honors, which went to Terry Dischinger of the Chicago Zephyrs, who averaged twenty-five points in fifty-seven games for a last place team, Havlicek earned a spot on the All-Rookie team, along with a single second-place Most Valuable Player vote.

The climax of the regular season was an emotional "Bob Cousy Day" on St. Patrick's Day in Boston. Cousy had planned a short speech, but was interrupted so often with applause and his own tears that it took him twenty minutes to finish. After the ceremonies ended, Boston defeated Syracuse 125-116 and looked forward to meeting them again in the playoffs. But the Royals upset the Nationals in the first round, three games to two, winning the deciding game on the road 131-127 in overtime. The Royals were still led by Oscar Robertson, who finished third in the MVP voting behind Russell. Robertson was unable to average a triple-double for the second consecutive season, falling just a half a rebound per game short, but that statistical quirk was irrelevant – he was just as dominant a force on the court as ever.

OSCAR ROBERTSON WAS BORN in Charlotte, Tennessee on Thanksgiving Day 1938. A descendant of slaves and sharecroppers, Oscar's father Bailey was as committed to providing a better future for his sons (Oscar and Bailey Jr.) as Charles Russell had been. "No nearby white school admitted black children, and none of the black high schools were close enough for us to attend," Oscar later wrote. "My father was intent on making sure his children had more chances at an education and a better living that he'd had." So during World War II, encouraged by relatives, Bailey and Mazell Robertson moved their young family to Indianapolis, and settled in a small house with no indoor plumbing located next to the Lockefield Gardens housing project. Indianapolis was more progressive than Tennessee, but the city was hardly a hotbed of racial tolerance. Beginning in the 1920s, the city's schools became segregated

through a series of carefully crafted “zoning ordinances,” and the Indiana High School Athletic Association prohibited games between white and black schools. While black high schools were allowed to participate in state sanctioned games beginning in 1942, the atmosphere at those games could turn ugly, including death threats hurled from both sides. Robertson, who by the fall of 1952 was attending the all-black Crispus Attucks High School, described the corrosive effects of racism in Indianapolis as more subtle than overt. “Oh sure, racism was present in my life, but it was sort of like polluted air. I inhaled it and did not realize the damage it was doing.”

Robertson’s high school basketball career would help accelerate the integration of Indianapolis schools after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954. After spending hours playing basketball at the Lockefield Gardens’ courts as a kid, Robertson began learning the fundamentals of the game in junior high, and by the time he reached high school his talent was obvious. Robertson then began to bulk up, a result of long days of work on his grandfather’s farm back in Tennessee during the summer, and by his sophomore year Robertson had grown to 6’3” and was able to play all five positions on the court. Oscar was attempting to follow in the footsteps of his older brother Bailey, who had helped lead the Tigers to the 1951 state semifinals, then set scoring records at Indiana Central College and later played for the Globetrotters. Oscar exceeded those expectations, leading Crispus Attucks to back-to-back state championships, including a forty-five game winning streak that spanned his junior and senior years. The Tigers were so dominant that white schools in Indianapolis grew concerned that they would be unable to compete athletically with black schools, and began openly recruiting black athletes to help even the playing field. As a result, the desegregation of Indianapolis schools proceeded faster than anyone could have predicted a few years earlier. Decades later, Robertson wrote, “Crispus Attucks played a huge role in that change, and I’m proud to have been a part of that.”

The newly crowned “Mr. Basketball” was heavily recruited by colleges, who were also impressed by his academic achievements, which included membership in the National Honor

Society. Spurning offers from UCLA and over seventy other institutions, Robertson enrolled in the College of Business Administration at the University of Cincinnati, influenced by a visit from alumni Jack Twyman of the Cincinnati Royals and a recruiting pitch that included the promise of a paid co-op with Cincinnati Gas and Electric. Robertson walked into a foreign world with very few blacks on campus, and the entire Cincinnati basketball team had been white before his arrival. The school newspaper was hardly welcoming, frequently carrying letters that expressed sentiments such as “it was degrading to import black student-athletes,” and Robertson had to confront more overt racism on the road. During a trip to Houston, Texas, Robertson was forced to live on the Texas Southern campus while the rest of the team roomed at the segregated Shamrock Hilton Hotel, and then fans threw food at him during the game. Afterwards, Robertson told Coach George Smith he would quit if he was ever separated from his teammates again, and Smith complied with his young star’s wishes. When the Bearcats traveled to North Carolina in Robertson’s junior year, the players roomed together at a fraternity house at North Carolina State, and Smith angrily confronted the referees when they failed to protect Robertson from the debris that rained down on him from the stands.

By that time, Robertson had truly earned the nickname “Big O” that broadcaster Dick Baker had bestowed on him during his first varsity game as a sophomore. As a freshman, “Oz,” as he was called by his friends and teammates, had led his team to a 13-2 record that included an 87-83 victory over the varsity. The next season, Robertson dominated the Missouri Valley Conference, averaging thirty-five points and fifteen rebounds a game, highlighted by a fifty-six point performance at Madison Square Garden in New York against Seton Hall. Robertson’s arena-record-setting performance in the 118-54 win made national headlines, and Louis Effrat, writing in the *New York Times*, described him as “a smooth, stylish, sure-handed forward,” who was “the best collegian player seen here in many a season.” Knicks scout Fuzzy Levine added that Robertson was the best sophomore he had seen since Wilt Chamberlain, and St. John’s coach Joe Lapchick also praised his “wonderful” performance. Robertson went on to collect the first of three

consecutive college player of the year awards and first-team All-American mentions, and led Cincinnati to a 25-3 record before losing to Kansas State in the NCAA regional finals. The privately-held university, seeking to cash in on the popularity of its new superstar, responded by expanding Armory Fieldhouse to 8,000 seats for Robertson's junior year.

The next two years were a mixture of triumph and disappointment. In one month alone, in February 1960, Robertson broke Frank Selvy's college career scoring record, eclipsed Elgin Baylor's career field goals mark, and established a new single-game school record with 62 points against North Texas State. While his all-around scoring, rebounding and passing ability drew comparisons with the multi-faceted brilliance of baseball's Willie Mays, the Bearcats were unable to capture a national title. Their nemesis was the University of California, led by All-American center Darrall Imhoff, who defeated Cincinnati in the 1959 and 1960 national semifinals. Robertson did find success in international competition. He was the leading scorer on the United States Gold Medal-winning 1959 Pan American Games team coached by Fred Schaus that featured the typical mix of college and AAU stars, including former Olympians Dick Boushka, Billy Evans, Burdette Haldorson and Bob Jeangerard. It was during this tournament in Chicago that Robertson first met Jerry West, and the following year the duo would team with Imhoff, Jerry Lucas and Terry Dischinger for an equally dominating performance at the Summer Olympics in Rome, capturing yet another gold medal for the United States.

Robertson then turned his sights to the NBA. In April the Royals had, as expected, used their territorial draft rights to select him. The team's interest in Robertson had been obvious for years; while he was still in college, owner Tom Wood had hired Robertson for a low-level job in his insurance agency as part of the university's co-op program, and several of the Royals players, including Jack Twyman and Connie Dierking, had played pickup games with the budding star. The team's interest was enhanced by their current financial situation. While Robertson had been dominating college basketball, the Royals were in free-fall.

Fifteen years earlier, Les Harrison and his younger brother Jack had founded the Royals in Rochester, New York, joining the NBL after walking away from the semipro team they had previously managed for the Seagram liquor company and Eber Bros., a local food and liquor wholesaler. The inaugural version of the team featured Bob Davies, Red Holzman and Al Cervi, with future *football* Hall of Famer Otto Graham coming off the bench. The Royals won the 1946 NBL title, sweeping the Sheboygan Redskins in three games, and played in the NBL or BAA Finals in each of the next three seasons, losing to a George Mikan-led team each time. After a first round loss to the Pistons in 1950, the Royals won their first (and so far their last) NBA title in 1951, a run that included a very satisfying 3-1 series win over Mikan and the Lakers in the Western Division Finals. Even though the Lakers then resumed their role as the Royals' playoff nemesis, with Mikan annually torturing Arnie Risen in the postseason, Rochester remained competitive throughout the early 1950s.

In 1955, Mikan had retired but the Lakers defeated the Royals again, this time in the first round of the playoffs. The Royals had struggled all season, posting a 29-43 record, but they picked a good year to earn a high draft choice. Philadelphia and Minneapolis exercised their territorial rights to select Tom Gola and Dick Garmaker, but Les Harrison was still able to select the rebounder he needed – Maurice Stokes from St. Francis College in Loretto, Pennsylvania. Harrison added Jack Twyman in the second round and emerged from the draft with a rebuilt front line. Stokes had been named the Most Outstanding Player in the 1955 NIT, despite St. Francis's fourth-place finish, and earned spots on the AP and UPI All-American teams. Stokes made an immediate impact, scoring thirty-two points, grabbing twenty rebounds and adding eight assists in his first game, a 100-98 overtime loss to the Knicks. Twyman later recalled that “[Stokes] was a guy who could rebound at one end and dribble through three or four guys and lay it in at the other end. Very quick. A good shooter.” Stokes' future teammates, such as Wayne Embry, would come to love his unselfish play. “[H]e would rather hit the boards and pass than score.” Stokes was also black, which meant he had to face down his share of racism. His talent was

unquestionable, and his all-around ability foreshadowed the future of the new, faster-paced NBA. The Royals finished last with a 31-41 record, but Stokes won the Rookie of the Year award as he finished in the top ten in all three major statistical categories, edging out Bob Pettit for the rebounding title with over sixteen a game, and adding nearly points and five assists.

Stokes continued to improve over his next two seasons, but the Royals remained mired below .500 and were struggling financially. The city of Cincinnati had been attempting to procure an NBA expansion team, and in February 1957, the Harrisons agreed to relocate the Royals there. While their record on the court barely improved, the collapse of the Lakers that season enabled the Royals to qualify for the playoffs. Their subsequent first-round exit against the Pistons was completely overshadowed by the tragedy that befell their star player. During the final game of the regular season against the Lakers, Stokes tripped, fell and hit his head on the cement-like floor of the Minneapolis Auditorium. Despite briefly losing consciousness, there were no obvious indications of a serious injury, and there was far less caution in this era about possible side-effects from head trauma. Stokes traveled with the team to Detroit and played thirty-nine minutes in their playoff opener, scoring twelve points and adding fifteen rebounds despite feeling nauseous and vomiting before the game. Teammate Jim Paxson was suffering from similar symptoms, so everyone suspected that Stokes was suffering from a virus or possibly food poisoning rather anything more serious. But forty-five minutes after their TWA flight left the airport at Ypsilanti, Michigan, Stokes complained about having trouble breathing, and stewardess Jeanne Phillips started to give him oxygen. As his condition deteriorated – including convulsions and more vomiting – teammates were so concerned that they called the airport in Cincinnati to have an ambulance ready, and guard Richie Regan informally baptized him. Stokes drifted in and out of consciousness, and later could not recall being rushed to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Covington, Kentucky. Early press reports described his condition using the term "encephalitis," and failed to make any connection with his earlier fall in Minneapolis. However, it was that fall, and the subsequent swelling of his brain, that were the root cause of his condition,

eventually labeled “post-traumatic encephalopathy.” Stokes remained in a coma for several weeks, and though he regained consciousness, would remain in a wheelchair for the rest of his life, paralyzed, with only limited use of his hands.

As Stokes convalesced, the Royals disintegrated, worsening his already tenuous situation. When the team continued to lose money, reportedly \$14,000 that first season, the Harrison brothers sold the team to a group of Cincinnati investors led by Tom Wood. A series of transactions then scattered his former teammates, as only Jack Twyman and Dave Piontek would remain in Cincinnati for the 1958-59 season. Over the next two seasons the Royals slid back into last place, saw attendance drop to 1,400 per game, and watched as their 1959 first-round draft pick Bob Boozer spurned them to sign with the AAU Peoria Caterpillars. Stokes’s situation was even graver. Since he did not have a multiyear guaranteed contract, Stokes was suddenly faced with mountains of medical bills and no income except for some workman’s compensation checks that required him to live in Ohio instead of returning to his family. Twyman, who had never been particularly close to Stokes, stepped in to serve as his guardian. “Someone had to become his guardian to gain access to the bank account and to sell his car to pay the hospital. Maurice’s parents and family lived in Pittsburgh; they visited him often, but they couldn’t move to Cincinnati because they had jobs and we couldn’t move Maurice to Pittsburgh. Circumstances meant that it fell to me. I was the logical choice.” It was the beginning of a friendship that lasted until Stokes’s death in 1970, as Twyman became an enthusiastic and inspirational advocate for his former teammate.

When Oscar Robertson was drafted by the Royals in 1960, the team needed more than just a talented player, it needed hope and an injection of energy. Cincinnati had finally agreed to terms with Bob Boozer, but they could not afford to lose Robertson, even for one year. Robertson’s attorney took full advantage of Cincinnati’s plight, negotiating a *guaranteed* three-year, \$100,000 contract that included a percentage of the gate – a highly unusual arrangement, especially for a rookie. The Royals would not be disappointed with their investment. In early November, Robertson led the Royals to their first win in Boston

in three years, a 113-104 victory punctuated by his twenty-five points, six rebounds and seven assists. By February 1961, Robertson had scored forty-five against the Lakers and forty-two against Chamberlain and the Warriors, and made the cover of *Time* magazine. Robertson earned respect across the league for his quick adjustment to the NBA. "Oscar was great from Day One in the NBA," Jerry West said, "He is the most advanced player I've ever seen at such an early stage of his career," adding with characteristic modesty, "It took me a long time to catch up with him." Tom Gola recalled holding the rookie to fourteen points in their first meeting and bragging about it to reporters, but when they met again, Robertson torched Gola for over forty points while trash-talking the whole night. Robertson easily won the Rookie of the Year award, a spot on the All-NBA first team, and finished fifth in the voting for Most Valuable Player despite another last-place finish by the Royals.

By 1963, Cincinnati had shifted into the Eastern Division, as the league realigned after the Warriors' move to San Francisco. The Royals 42-38 third-place record was sixteen games behind the Celtics, but they easily qualified for the playoffs ahead of the woeful 21-59 Knicks. The team would be thrown back into financial turmoil by the death of owner Tom Wood just as the playoffs started, but the Royals won their first series in nine years by upsetting the Syracuse Nationals in five games. The Royals were led by their leading scorers, Robertson and Twyman, but their frontcourt also included Boozer and center Wayne Embry, who both averaged double-figures in points and rebounds. Rounding out the starting lineup was durable 6'4" guard Arlen "Bucky" Bockhorn, the youthful Royals oldest player, a few months shy of his thirtieth birthday. Coach Charlie Wolf's bench included defensive specialist Tom Hawkins, guard Adrian Smith, and backup center Hub Reed, who taken together appeared to be no match for the Celtics bench, who could bring in Havlicek, Ramsey and K.C. Jones as reinforcements.

The Celtics had won four straight titles but were now showing signs of having lost their focus. Boston had won seven of their last eight regular season games, including two in a row over Syracuse, and the Celtics were a little surprised to see

Cincinnati as their playoff opponents. “We had been geared up to face Syracuse,” Cousy later wrote, “and we had great difficulty in suddenly readjusting our thinking.” There were also plenty of distractions. The stress of the season had caused Cousy to develop a facial tic under his left eye, and the seemingly unflappable rookie John Havlicek, who would spend much of the upcoming series being harassed by Hawkins, was startled when he awoke one morning in Cincinnati, turned on the *Today* television show, and saw footage of a burning Sherry-Biltmore hotel – his home in Boston. Still, as the Celtics built a twenty-two point lead in the opener, it looked like an easy series, but Boston saw their lead melt away and lost, 135-132. In game two at Cincinnati, Boston evened the series with a 125-102 win, and the pattern repeated itself over the next two games, with the road team winning twice, before the Celtics finally won at home, 125-120, to take a 3-2 series lead. Heinsohn led the Celtics with thirty-four points, and would average nearly twenty-six a game during the series, well above his season average of nineteen, benefiting from his decision to quit smoking in order to get into better shape. Robertson was playing even more brilliantly, scoring thirty-six points in game five, and then adding thirty-six more in the sixth game, as Robertson and Twyman combined for sixty points in a 109-99 victory to tie the series. Both teams then returned to Boston and prepared for the decisive seventh game on April 10.

In the Boston papers that morning, headlines such as “Relaxed Royals Have Advantage Tonight” symbolized the uneasiness among Celtics fans, who read about K.C. Jones suffering from a back injury and Havlicek hobbling with a charley horse caused by being kicked in the calf during game six. Predictably, Auerbach had been complaining about the referees the entire series, and now Heinsohn joined the chorus. “If (Sid) Borgia gets off our back, we can handle Cincinnati, or anyone else. ... He makes such terrible calls that you wind up playing Borgia instead of the opposition. I made what I thought was my best and cleanest block of the series Sunday and he called a foul on me.” In response, Borgia pulled himself out of game seven, and the tandem of Earl Strom and Mendy Rudolph would switch from working the Western series and call the game in Boston.

Sam Jones was feeling pressure on several fronts. The game was just hours away, and not only did he have to worry about guarding Oscar Robertson, his family and friends were barraging him and his wife Gladys with phone calls at home in Sharon, Massachusetts in a futile search for tickets. By mid-morning, Sam had had enough, so Gladys drove him to the local train station and he traveled into the city. After going to a movie double-feature, including watching Sophia Loren and Anthony Perkins in "Five Miles to Midnight," in the afternoon, Jones headed to the Garden around 4:30pm. Auerbach was not pleased to see him, preferring that he rest before the game, but Jones explained that he "was just nervous, and wanted to kill time," so by 6pm Jones was on the court shooting baskets in the darkened arena. "Nobody in the place," he later recalled, "But I wanted to find the right spots."

WHILE JONES COULD WORK OUT his nervousness by practicing his shooting, there was little that the anxious crew of the *U.S.S. Skylark* could do that afternoon as a tragedy unfolded in the Atlantic, 300 miles east of the Boston Garden. Shortly after 9am that morning, around the same time that Jones was starting his commute into Boston, Lieutenant Commander Stanley W. Hecker and his crew had lost contact with the *U.S.S. Thresher*, the Navy's most advanced "hunter-killer" atomic submarine that had cost over \$69 million to build. The *Thresher* was undergoing its first deep-dive trials after the completion of a nine-month overhaul at the nearby Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (New Hampshire) that was intended to correct design flaws uncovered during a series of "shakedown" cruises and tests that had lasted over a year. On Tuesday morning, April 9, the *Thresher* and her crew of 129 men, under the command of Lieutenant Commander John W. Harvey, had left the Shipyard and rendezvoused with the *Skylark* off the coast of Boston. The trials were scheduled to last less than three days, and the ship was due back in port by Thursday afternoon; since most of the crew's families were based in the Portsmouth area, they would be back in plenty of time to attend Good Friday services and celebrate Easter Sunday with their wives and children. After a series of shallow dives near the coastline on Tuesday, the

Thresher headed for deeper water and then surfaced on Wednesday morning at 6:35am, ten miles from the *Skylark*. An hour later, the *Thresher* began its descent for a test dive of 1,300 feet, which was within her design specifications but deeper than previous American submarines had attempted. Everything seemed normal until 9:12am, when the *Thresher* reported a “minor problem.” Five minutes later, the *Skylark* received a garbled transmission, and then nothing but silence.

Inexplicably, while Hecker and the crew of the *Skylark* continued to try to communicate with the *Thresher*, no message was sent to the Submarine Development Group Two command at New London, Connecticut until nearly 11am, and it was transmitted with an “operational immediate” priority rather than a more urgent protocol, which delayed its arrival at the command center until after 1pm. Their lack of urgency was based on the assumption that the *Thresher* was not in any real danger, but had simply lost communications. In the end, the delay made little difference, as the *Thresher* had already fallen to the bottom of the ocean, collapsing upon itself as it reached a depth of 8,400 feet. All 129 men onboard were dead in the worst disaster in United States submarine history. The loss of the *Thresher* was even more jarring because submarines had become such an integral – and reliable – part of the U.S. Navy’s presence around the world. At the time the *Thresher* was lost, over 100 Navy submarines were making approximately 50,000 dives a year.

By afternoon, the *Skylark* was joined in the search for the *Thresher*’s remains by the *U.S.S. Recovery* and a collection of other surface vessels and submarines. Any hope of a happy outcome quickly faded as dusk fell and the *Skylark* and *Recovery* spotted an oil slick on the surface of the water and began pulling small pieces of cork and yellow plastic out of the sea. By 7pm the Navy began the process of notifying the families, sending out officers to perform the somber duty in person wherever possible, but news of the disaster had already begun to spread. The crew included 112 Navy officers and enlisted men, along with seventeen civilians who served various roles as scientists and technicians. Among those killed were civilian electronics technician Robert Charron, who had worked at the Shipyard for thirteen years. His wife Ruth was at their Newburyport,

Massachusetts home with their five children, ages one to fourteen, when a friend called her at 8pm to tell them they had heard about the *Thresher's* disappearance. Engineman second class Robert W. Gaynor from Groton, CT was also dead. When his wife Anita was contacted by a reporter, she told him, "We never give up hope," but her mind must have been swirling with the knowledge that her son Mark, who turned two years old that day, would never celebrate a pain-free birthday, and the unborn child in her womb would never know her father. The Gaynor's children were part of a sobering statistic – 187 children had lost their fathers when the *Thresher* went down.

As the Celtics and Royals prepared to begin game seven, Admiral George W. Anderson, Chief of Naval Operations released a short statement declaring the *Thresher* "overdue and presumed missing." At 9:30pm, Anderson faced the press, and expressed his sadness over the loss of the *Thresher's* crew and reaffirmed the Navy's determination to continue building submarines based on her design. "This is a setback, if it is indeed an accident, but we will overcome it as we have others."

BACK AT THE BOSTON GARDEN, Sam Jones had finished his extended warm-up routine and prepared to take the floor for real. Heinsohn got off to another good start, scoring the Celtics first seven points and nine out of eleven as they built a 35-30 lead by the end of the first quarter. Meanwhile, the Royals were complaining as Strom called a series of fouls on them. The *Boston Herald's* Jim Carfield wrote, "Robertson acted like a cry-baby every time he was hit with a foul, bitterly arguing on each call." By halftime the lead was cut to four, 68-64, and Red gave an impassioned speech in the locker room, telling his players, "Don't forget you're the champions."

Russell was as brilliant as ever, contributing twenty points and twenty-four rebounds, as the Celtics out-rebounded the Royals 61-43 after losing the battle of the boards during the first six games. Heinsohn continued his superb play, scoring thirty-one points while being enthusiastically cheered by the same Boston fans that had booed him a year earlier. But the unquestioned star of the game was Sam Jones. He made seven shots in a row in the second quarter, then scored eight points

during an 18-8 Celtics run to start the third, including a running layup after deflecting a pass from Robertson intended for Embry. Jones finished with a career-high forty-seven points, outscoring Robertson by four. Boston led by twenty-five points in the fourth quarter before fighting off a furious 19-3 run by the Royals as both teams saw key players foul out, including Havlicek, Sanders and Hawkins. Clyde Lovellette later claimed that the rally “took 10 years off my life,” but in reality, Cincinnati never got closer than nine points. The 142-131 win put the Celtics back in the NBA Finals, and two weeks later, Cousy was able to close out his career as a champion, personally dribbling out the clock at the end of game six in Los Angeles to seal Boston’s fifth straight title. Cousy had been forced to the bench with torn ligaments in his left ankle early in the fourth quarter of that game, but as the final seconds ticked off the clock he threw the basketball high into the air and jumped around triumphantly, releasing months (and years) of built-up pressure, enveloped by a surge of pure joy that washed away the pain in his ankle.

WHILE THE CELTICS WERE CELEBRATING, the Navy was conducting their inquiry into the *Thresher* disaster. Numerous witnesses were called over the next month, but no definitive cause was ever determined. On June 30 the Navy released their findings, which reflected a high level of uncertainty.

The Navy believes it is most likely that a piping system failure had occurred in one of the *Thresher*’s salt water systems, probably in the engine room. The enormous pressure of sea water surrounding the submarine subjected her interior to a violent spray of water and progressive flooding. In all probability water affected electrical circuits and caused loss of power. *Thresher* slowed and began to sink. Within moments she had exceeded her collapse depth and totally flooded.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, under the leadership of Rear Admiral Edward C. Stephan, the Navy reviewed all submarine designs and undertook a SUBSAFE program which created strict quality standards for every component, instead of focusing

primarily on “critical” areas such as their nuclear reactors. The goal was to ensure that the *Thresher*’s sister ships, which remained in service, and the country’s *Polaris* missile submarines would be able to serve the Navy and protect their crews, which were foremost on everyone’s mind. President Kennedy’s official statement on the tragedy read in part, “The courage and dedication of these men of the sea pushing ahead into depths to advance our knowledge and capabilities is no less than that of their forefathers who led the advance on the frontiers of our civilization.” In Portsmouth, the mourning would continue, and annual ceremonies are still held to commemorate the loss of the *Thresher*.

Less than eight months later, the entire country would be grieving, as President Kennedy himself was struck down by an assassin in Dallas. The Celtics, who had visited him earlier in the year, joined the country in mourning, not knowing that they would soon suffer an even more personal loss.

Chapter 9

Transition Game

NO ONE ENJOYED THE CELTICS RUN of success more than Walter Brown. Against the advice of his friends, Brown had sunk his own money into the team a decade and a half earlier, and the move had paid off, as Brown was worth over \$400,000 by the fall of 1964. Financial stability only enhanced Brown's legendary generosity, as John Havlicek found out earlier that year. The two had settled on a \$18,000 salary for the season, but by January Havlicek was proving that his freshman year was no fluke, and was leading the team in scoring despite coming off the bench. So Brown gave him an extra \$2,000 that Havlicek had asked for during the offseason, stunning the young star.

Brown prided himself on always keeping his word and placed a high value on loyalty. Auerbach was still comfortable operating on one-year handshake contracts, and Brown, unbeknownst to his coach, was preparing to reciprocate by leaving him part of the team in his will. In an arrangement that would be unbelievable today, Brown enlisted the help of Tom Heinsohn in drafting an estate plan, providing him with full access to his financial records even though Heinsohn had succeeded Bob Cousy as head of the NBA Players Association and could have used the information against Brown in negotiations. In addition, their relationship had been strained almost to the breaking point at the 1964 All-Star Game, when Heinsohn organized a player boycott of the game to force the owners to stop procrastinating on adopting a pension plan for the players. While Heinsohn's protest was directed at the entire league, which stood to be greatly embarrassed if the nationally

televised game was cancelled, Brown took the threat personally because the game was being held at the Garden. While Cousy and a group of “old-timers” played a preliminary game, new NBA Commissioner Walter Kennedy negotiated a tentative agreement that the players accepted just a few minutes before the scheduled tip-off. Although Brown fumed for months until they “made up” at the team’s 1964 breakup dinner, the dispute was over loyalty, not management vs. labor. Heinsohn had never had a problem negotiating a contract with Brown, later calling him “the most accommodating and generous man I ever met,” and asserted that Brown was not virulently anti-union. “Walter Brown had been a liberal force in the anti-union wilderness – at a time when Fred Zollner threatened to fire any and all Fort Wayne Pistons who joined the organization. By contrast, Walter Brown actually paid my way to attend the league meetings as a player representative, when almost all his fellow owners were anti-association.” True to form, Brown forgave Heinsohn after the season ended and the two resumed their friendship.

The 1963-64 season had been a year of transition for the Celtics, with K.C. Jones replacing Cousy in the starting lineup and Willie Naulls joining the team as a backup forward. Jones was in the unenviable position of replacing a legend. “‘I felt the pressure right away,’ he said. ‘It’s tough to make yourself do something you’re not used to handling. Along with everything else, I knew I was going to have to shoot more. It scared me.’” Cousy echoed those same thoughts in his book, *The Last Loud Roar*, published soon after he retired, writing that Jones was “a good enough passer to do the job,” but that “he has completely lost his confidence in his shooting,” despite a shooting percentage that was nearly the same as Cousy’s. Jones’s task was made more difficult because he and Cousy were nearly polar opposites. Cousy was withdrawn off the court but exhibited a flashy, take-charge personality on offense once the game started. Jones focused on playing aggressive defense and was reserved, almost passive on offense during games, but was a jovial presence in the locker room. “Among the players and among his friends,” Cousy wrote, “[K.C.] relaxes and becomes not only extroverted but quite entertaining.” Jones would regularly imitate

other players and Auerbach alike, frequently sang in nightclubs and generally enjoyed being with people.

With K.C. now in the starting lineup, Auerbach knew he needed more help off the bench. Russell suggested signing Willie Naulls, who he played against in college, then together as teammates at the Olympic trials. Naulls had ended the 1963 season playing with his friend Wilt Chamberlain on the Warriors and was looking for a new team. His good looks inspired Russell to nickname him “sweetcakes,” but now Naulls looked like he had eaten a few too many cakes of the confectionary variety. Naulls did not help his cause when he collapsed during his first practice with the Celtics and had to be helped to the training room. Auerbach was willing to be patient because Naulls was a good shooter who easily fit into the Celtics offensive style, so he told Buddy LeRoux to get Naulls to shape up. “Working carefully with our trainer,” Russell later recalled, “he changed Willie’s whole life, trimming him down from a 245-pound whale to a handsome, svelte 190-pound forward.” However, Naulls still had a lot to learn on the defensive end. “Until I came to Boston,” Naulls said two years later, “I never knew a man could derive so much satisfaction from playing a tough defense. ... It was almost a complete reversal of my previous emphasis on offense. But I knew if I was going to play for Red Auerbach, I’d have to do what he told me. And he told me plenty.” With Naulls available to play forward, Auerbach adjusted Havlicek’s and Ramsey’s minutes, playing them more at guard to compensate for the loss of Cousy.

Many in the press believed that Cousy’s retirement would end the Celtics dynasty, but Russell and his teammates were determined to prove them wrong. Auerbach later recalled that fans provided additional motivation. “Some idiot had even come up to Russell on the street and said, ‘You’d better hustle now that you don’t have Cousy to carry the team.’ That really upset Russ, who had been the league’s MVP the past three seasons.” To add some extra inspiration of his own, Auerbach picked Russell and Ramsey as co-captains, and Russell responded with a career-best 1930 rebounds during a season that he would later call the best of his career, though some of his public comments at the time painted a darker picture. In December, an obviously upbeat

Russell was quoted as saying, “Last year I sometimes had trouble getting myself up mentally for games, particularly when we had to play three or four in one week. But this year I haven’t had that trouble. ... In my opinion, this is the best Celtics team I’ve ever played on. Our defense has been great and our offense is more diversified. We’re getting scoring from all five positions and we’re not depending on any one man to win for us.” But by April, Russell was threatening to retire, complaining of a host of problems ranging from press criticism to arthritis in his knees, and even the NBA travel schedule, declaring “I’ve just put in the worst season I’ve experienced in the NBA.”

The Celtics won 59 games and yet another division title. Once again, Boston began the playoffs against Cincinnati, featuring newly crowned MVP Oscar Robertson, and although the Royals had won the season series against Boston 7-5 and had added Jerry Lucas – despite a brief effort by Brown to buy the star for \$100,000 – the Celtics had a surprisingly easy series, winning in five games. Then Russell and the Celtics renewed their rivalry with Chamberlain and the Warriors, this time in the Finals. The under card featured Clyde Lovellette against Chamberlain, who remembered how Lovellette had broken his jaw years earlier when Lovellette was with the Hawks. In the fourth quarter of game two, with the Celtics en route to a twenty-three-point victory and a 2-0 lead in the series, the two tangled again. Referee Earl Strom had a clear view of what happened. “With about 25 seconds left, Wilt caught a pass in the pivot and Clyde struck him with an elbow. Wilt turned, put the ball on the floor, then reared back and punched Lovellette in the jaw.” Auerbach was furious, demanding that Chamberlain be ejected (he was not), and Russell had to restrain him from getting within Chamberlain’s oversized reach. After dropping the third game in San Francisco, the Celtics went on to win the championship in five games, proving they were still the best in NBA, even without Bob Cousy.

That summer, as Loscutoff, Lovellette and Ramsey retired, Auerbach and Brown agreed to yet another one-year deal. It was their last. On Labor Day weekend, Brown suffered a fatal heart attack, just days before he was to sign the estate plans that Heinsohn had drafted. His wife Marjorie now officially owned

the team along with Walter's former partner Lou Pieri, and Auerbach became the team's de facto general manager, entrusted with all of the team's business matters, in addition to basketball decisions. Every year, the Celtics had found something new to motivate them, usually the retirement of a key player, and now they could look at the black patches on the left shoulder strap of their uniforms or up into the Garden rafters, where a white banner with a large green "1" in the center hung in between their 1962 and 1963 championship banners in honor of Brown, and remember a man who, as Auerbach once said, "always thought of the team before he thought of himself."

While the team entered the season with heavy hearts, they were also heavy favorites to win another title. *The Sporting News* declared, "Like General Motors, Gibraltar and other symbols of indestructibility, it has to be the Boston Celtics again in the National Basketball Association race for 1964-65." But there were a few cracks showing. John Havlicek had torn cartilage in his left knee during a stop in Mali as part of a State Department-sponsored basketball tour through Africa, and had surgery on July 7. Havlicek worked out every day with trainer Buddy LeRoux and was ready for training camp, but then three games into the season Havlicek re-injured the knee at practice and would need to have it drained periodically throughout the season. The trio of offseason retirements left the Celtics with a largely untested bench; for the first time since Auerbach had arrived in Boston, the Celtics top three draft choices all made the team.

Oregon star Mel Counts, who had played on the 1964 Olympic team, was their first round choice. "In our position," Red said after the draft, "we look at the entire picture and pick the best all-around player available at the time, regardless of size. We think Counts is that player." But the seven-foot Counts missed training camp to play with the U.S. Olympic Team in Tokyo and started the season slowly; he would end up splitting time off the bench with the Celtics third-round choice, John Thompson. Auerbach, who was still partial to tough players, had taken an interest in the rugged 6'10" forward when Thompson was still in high school, encouraging Joe Mullaney to recruit him for Providence College. In early December, as the Warriors were drubbing the Celtics, Auerbach sent Thompson in to guard

Chamberlain. The eager rookie did not back down, and one of his elbows sent Chamberlain to the hospital for a week with a broken nose, impressing Auerbach. Joining Counts and Thompson on the bench was second-round selection Ron Bonham, who had been one of the stars of the Cincinnati team that defeated Ohio State and John Havlicek in the 1962 NCAA championship game, and was a consensus first-team All-American as a junior when the Bearcats lost to Loyola in the title game the following year. Bonham would be the least-used of the rookies that season, as Auerbach preferred to play Naulls or Havlicek ahead of him.

The veteran who benefited the most from the roster changes was Larry Siegfried. A year earlier, Siegfried was on waivers after being released by the St. Louis Hawks during training camp, and Havlicek had recommended to Auerbach that he sign his former college teammate. Siegfried had bounced around since leaving college in 1961, turning down an opportunity with the Cincinnati Royals to sign with the ABL's Cleveland Pipers, then sat out a year as the Pipers collapsed and his NBA rights were traded to St. Louis. For \$1,000, the Celtics signed a smart, unselfish player who had focused on defense and passing at Ohio State, though he had still been the second-leading scorer for the Buckeyes' 1960 championship team. Auerbach believed that Siegfried had "one of the sharpest basketball minds I've ever run across, but sometimes it gets him into a little bit of trouble. He'll think in a situation rather than simply reacting. And the opportunity will be gone." Siegfried could also be outspoken and moody, as Havlicek knew from their college days, but no one was more competitive on the court.

When the Celtics took the court that season, half of their roster was black, the first time that had happened in their history. While Thompson played the fewest minutes, just over ten per game while appearing in 64 games, the other five black players were all key contributors, and when Heinsohn was injured in December, Naulls moved into the starting lineup, giving the Celtics the first all-black starting five in NBA history. This milestone reached little attention because black players were now so commonplace that an all-black starting lineup was inevitable. The number of blacks in the NBA had tripled since Russell's rookie season, with blacks now filling forty-eight percent of the

league's roster spots. No team featured fewer than five black players, and the 1965 All-NBA teams would feature seven blacks out of ten selections, a new high water mark.

It had been nearly fifteen years since the Celtics drafted Chuck Cooper, and while the team continued to foster a liberal attitude toward blacks, the city of Boston and the rest of the country remained bitterly divided over racial discrimination and the pace of the civil rights movement. A Boston sportswriter had complained that the Celtics were "already too black" when they signed Willie Naulls in 1963, but within the team there was little tension. Tom Heinsohn found that he "was embarrassed, enraged, and sometimes confused by what [he] should do about the treatment Russell, Sam and K.C. Jones, and Satch Sanders were forced to face in the normal pursuit of playing ball and entertaining the very people who insulted them because they happened to be born a different color." Heinsohn remembered only one racial incident between teammates during his playing career, when Sam Jones was angered by Gene Guarilia's ill-advised attempt to be friendly by calling him "Sambo," which was a simple play on his name but also a racially charged stereotype. "Sam accepted the explanation that no racial slur had been intended," Heinsohn later wrote, "and it was forgotten." Whether it was Don Barksdale befriending Celtics broadcaster Johnny Most, who was a member of the NAACP, or Chuck Cooper rooming with a sympathetic Bob Cousy, the Celtics made every effort to eliminate race as a factor within the team. Frank Ramsey was representative of their color-blindness. Once, after replacing Naulls during a game and scoring a couple of baskets, the opposing team called a timeout. Upon returning to the Celtics huddle, Ramsey sparked a round of genuine laughter – among his black and white teammates alike – by declaring, "Well, Red, it looks like ah'm the new white hope." Ramsey also backed up his black teammates when they refused to play in an exhibition game in Lexington, Kentucky in October 1961 that was held to honor Ramsey and his fellow Kentucky alumni and friend Cliff Hagan. The Phoenix Hotel had refused to serve the black players from both sides, and Ramsey openly declared that he was "100 percent behind Bill Russell and the other boys. No thinking person in Kentucky is a segregationist. I can't tell you how sorry I am as a

human being, a friend of the players involved, and as a resident of Kentucky for the embarrassment of the incident.”

Racism was not confined to south of the Maxon-Dixon line, and Bill Russell refused to accept it anywhere, later writing that, “I was always on defense, just like in basketball.” In 1963 he told columnist Phil Elderkin that “I’m acceptable most places as somebody’s guest because I’m Bill Russell, pro basketball player. But in many of those same places I wouldn’t be acceptable as Bill Russell, U.S. citizen, so why should I fool myself? What’s there is there, and I prefer to look at life as it really is.” When the Russells moved into a white neighborhood in Reading, Massachusetts, their house was vandalized in a particularly disgusting manner, and teammates such as K.C. Jones and Satch Sanders faced similar opposition when they moved into other Boston suburbs. Time would eventually soothe some of the Russell’s wounds, but in his 1979 autobiography, *Second Wind*, Russell was blunt while flashing his biting sense of humor. “To me, Boston itself was a flea market of racism. It had all varieties, old and new, and in their most virulent forms. ... I had never been in a city more involved with finding new ways to dismiss, ignore, or look down on other people. Other than that, I liked the city.”

The NBA continued to look the other way when black players refused to play in exhibition games in the South, but when Elgin Baylor refused to play in a *regular season* game in Charleston, West Virginia, in January 1959, the embarrassment to the league, along with the potential financial impact of a superstar sitting out a game, forced Commissioner Podoloff to declare his opposition to segregation. Before the trip to Charleston, Lakers owner Bob Short had been assured that his black players would not encounter any problems, but Baylor and his black teammates, Boo Ellis and Ed Fleming, along with Wayne Embry and Sihugo Green from the Cincinnati Royals, were not allowed to stay with their white teammates at the Daniel Boone Hotel. Baylor was the only player who refused to play in the game, and the positive press reaction to his courageous stand persuaded Podoloff to propose that every team that scheduled a neutral site game would require “a clause which will adequately protect the club and player against any type of embarrassment.”

Even Charleston mayor John Coppenhauer was apologetic, and when Baylor returned two years later to play alongside Charleston-native Hot Rod Hundley in an exhibition against college players, the atmosphere was dramatically different. “We stayed at the same hotel that had refused us service,” Baylor said. “We were able to eat anywhere we wanted. They were beginning to integrate the schools. Some black leaders told me that they were able to use what had happened to me and the other black players to bring pressure on the city to make changes and that made me feel very good.”

THAT SPIRIT OF NONVIOLENT PROTEST, which Martin Luther King had been championing since the Montgomery bus boycott a decade earlier, was now achieving substantial national results. President Lyndon Johnson had leveraged the nation’s desire to honor the memory of President Kennedy to help gain support for the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination in hotels, restaurants, schools, and universities. After months of debate and filibusters by southern senators, Johnson signed the legislation into law in July. King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference organization (SCLC) then moved to capitalize on this success and push for the end of discrimination at the ballot box. “The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave Negroes some part of their rightful dignity, but without the vote it was dignity without strength,” King told supporters. Johnson had directed his administration to investigate a Voting Rights bill, but he planned to move slowly. Both SCLC and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) knew they needed to bring national attention to the issue to accelerate the process, so they chose to focus on the city of Selma, located in Dallas County, Alabama, where just 2.2 percent of qualified blacks were registered to vote, as compared with 66 percent of qualified whites. Following a month of protests that included the brief imprisonment of King and the shooting of volunteer Jimmy Lee Jackson by a state trooper in nearby Marion, plans were made for a fifty-four mile march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. March 7 became known as “Bloody Sunday” as 600 protesters, marching in close formation along the side of the road, were met at the far side of the Edmund

Pettis Bridge by state police and Dallas County Sheriff Jim Clark's deputies. After issuing a brief warning to the crowd to stop and disperse, troopers wearing gas masks strode forward and used their clubs to push the crowd back upon itself, knocking down the protesters like rows of human dominoes. Now physically entangled, the police and the protesters fought with each other until tear gas was fired to disperse the crowd, creating a chaotic stampede back across the bridge. The horrific scenes were broadcast on national television that evening, and the stunning images made Governor George Wallace's claims that he had ordered the march stopped for "public safety" reasons ring very hollow. While SCLC and SNCC clashed over strategy, thousands of blacks and whites from across the country began to travel to Selma to show their support, including the wives of Oscar Robertson and Wayne Embry. President Johnson was initially hesitant to intervene, but the brutality could not be ignored. By the following weekend, the administration had assembled a Voting Rights bill that was ready to be sent to Congress, and the President addressed a tense nation on March 15. "Their cause must be our cause too. It is not just Negroes, but it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we ... shall ... overcome."

The march eventually resumed on March 21, after several days of legal wrangling and negotiations between SCLC, SNCC, and state and federal officials, culminating in a rally of 25,000 supporters at Montgomery four days later. Martin Luther King addressed the crowd and responded to the President's speech, which had moved him to tears. "Confrontation of good and evil compressed in the tiny community of Selma generated the massive power to turn the whole nation to a new course. A president born in the South had the sensitivity to feel the will of the country, and ... pledged the might of the federal government to cast off the centuries-old blight." While acknowledging that the struggle for freedom had a long way to go – "The road ahead is not altogether a smooth one. There are no broad highways to lead us easily and inevitably to quick solutions." – King reiterated his commitment to their cause. "[T]oday I want to say to the people of America and the nations of the world: We are not about to turn around. We are on the move now. Yes, we are

on the move and no wave of racism can stop us.” As King closed his speech by quoting from the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, thunderous applause echoed through the crowd.

King’s talk of a rough road was prescient. The tension between SCLC and SNCC continued to deepen, as more militant factions began to press for less talk in favor of more action and confrontation. Five days after the Voting Rights Act was signed by President Johnson in August, riots erupted in the Watts section of Los Angeles, leaving over twenty people dead, 600 injured, scores of arrests, and substantial property damage in their wake. The civil rights movement had moved to a new phase. While the majority of blacks still believed in King’s message of nonviolence, the press and the public began to focus on the younger, and more radical factions, which weakened what had been broad support for the movement. In 1964 only thirty-four percent of Americans thought the civil rights movement was moving too fast, but two years later that figure had soared to eighty-five percent. By then, the goals King had described in Montgomery seemed even more unreachable. “Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man but to win his friendship and understanding. We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. That will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man.”

THE BIG NEWS IN THE NBA in 1965 was the return of Wilt Chamberlain to Philadelphia. Wilt and the Warriors had headed west three years earlier, leaving the city without a professional basketball team for the first time in decades. But in May 1963, Danny Biasone sold the Syracuse Nationals to a group of investors from Philadelphia that included Irv Kosloff, the founder of the Roosevelt Paper Company, and Gottlieb’s former attorney Ike Richman. The NBA quickly approved their plans to move the team to their hometown, but there were a lot of hard feelings to smooth over. Not only were Philadelphia fans upset that the Warriors had been allowed to move, but now they were being replaced with their most hated rivals from Syracuse. Ownership sensed the problem immediately, holding a contest to select a new team nickname – the 76ers – but the sight of Dolph

Schayes serving as player-coach did little to appease the fans or the newspapers, who did their best to ignore the relocated “outsiders.” Then the team struggled on the court, winning just thirty-four games as Larry Costello and Lee Shaffer both missed significant time with injuries. The 76ers managed to push the Royals to the limit before losing in the first round of the playoffs, providing some hope for the following season.

Philadelphia then added rookie Luke Jackson from Pan American College, a talented and physically imposing player who used his 6’9”, 238-pound frame to rebound and block shots. Jackson had been heralded as a possible number one overall pick, so the 76ers were thrilled to see him available when they selected fourth. Jackson played alongside Chet Walker, who John Havlicek once described as “one of the smartest offense forwards in basketball.” There was also plenty of talent in the backcourt, where Hal Greer averaged twenty points per game and Costello returned for another solid season. However, the 76ers were alternating Connie Dierking and an aging Johnny Kerr at center, who were no match for the likes of Russell, Jerry Lucas, or a young Willis Reed with the Knicks. Fortunately for them, there was a brooding future Hall of Famer in San Francisco who was trying the patience of Warriors general manager Franklin Mieuli.

After losing to the Celtics in the Finals the year before, Wilt Chamberlain had missed the start of the season with pancreatitis, and his four week hospital stay cost him thirty-five pounds and left him out of shape. Meanwhile, Nate Thurmond was playing well as his replacement at center, but the rest of the Warriors were falling apart, slumping to a 5-16 start and struggling to attract fans. Mieuli appreciated Chamberlain’s competitiveness – he had asked doctors for early clearance to play to try to help the Warriors regain ground in the standings – but grew tired of Chamberlain’s aloof off-court attitude, and blamed him for the fans lack of interest. “Chamberlain is not an easy man to love,” Mieuli later said. “I don’t mean that I personally dislike him. He’s a good friend of mine. But the fans in San Francisco never learned to love him. I guess most fans are for the little man and the underdog, and Wilt is neither.” Hannum and Mieuli decided to rebuild around the younger, cheaper, and much more personable Thurmond and started

shopping Chamberlain. By mid-December there were reports of the Lakers offering \$500,000 for him, and by the end of month the Knicks and 76ers were also interested, while Ben Kerner and the Hawks had dropped out of the running, unable to compete financially with the other suitors. Richman had known Chamberlain for years, and knew that bringing him back to Philadelphia would energize his fan base and the team itself, which was floundering around the .500 mark. A few hours after the 1965 All-Star game, Richman and the 76ers acquired Chamberlain from the Warriors for a package of three inconsequential players, including Dierking, plus a sizable amount of cash.

The trade turned the 76ers into instant contenders. Less than two weeks after the deal, the 76ers met the Celtics for a neutral site game in Syracuse. Philadelphia won 104-100, stopping Boston's sixteen game winning streak as Russell missed all fifteen of his shots from the floor. The victory was part of a 9-2 stretch that elevated the 76ers record to 31-25, but soon afterward Chamberlain's pancreatitis flared up and slowed Philadelphia's pace. The only negative aspect of the deal were the tensions that developed between Chamberlain and Schayes, which dated back to when they had played against each other as part of the Warriors-Nationals rivalry. Chamberlain had always disliked how the smaller Schayes resorted to grabbing his uniform in order to distract him underneath the boards, while Schayes felt that Wilt was overpaid and that he put himself ahead of the team. In the aftermath of the trade, Schayes had been upbeat in public, saying that "There's a myth that Chamberlain is uncoachable. It's ridiculous. I think quite a bit of Wilt as a person. He is very coachable." But privately Schayes was worried about being able to control Chamberlain. A month after the trade, Schayes was profiled in *The Sporting News* under the headline, "'I Want Team, Not Stars,' Says Schayes." After repeating a quote from earlier in the season in which Schayes stated, "The Big Dipper is great, but I don't like that style of basketball," the article captured Schayes current thoughts on the subject, which were obviously aimed at Chamberlain. "No team can be built around one man or two; everybody must get into the act. And the only way to play good, solid basketball is to have all

of your players become all-round players, not specialists.” It was a far different coaching philosophy than Frank McGuire had employed during Chamberlain’s previous stay in Philadelphia.

Despite adding Chamberlain, the 76ers finished the season in third place with a 40-40 record, twenty-two games behind Boston, who won the division by fourteen over Cincinnati. Philadelphia then defeated Cincinnati in four games to set up another battle between Russell and Chamberlain. The Celtics won the opener easily, 108-98, leading nearly wire-to-wire and by as many as twenty even though Chamberlain scored thirty-three points and grabbed thirty-one rebounds. Russell scored just eleven but his thirty-two boards helped fuel a balanced Celtics attack, led by Heinsohn’s twenty-three points. When the series shifted to Philadelphia, the Celtics wasted forty points from Sam Jones, losing 109-103 as Chamberlain dominated inside, tying an NBA playoff record with twenty-four rebounds in the first half, and ended the game with thirty-nine points and thirty rebounds.

The two teams continued to trade home victories as the series alternated between the Garden and Convention Hall. Russell nearly held Chamberlain without a basket in the first half of game three, a 112-94 Celtics win, while the fourth game belonged to the supporting casts of both teams. Boston led 126-124 with one second left, but Hal Greer hit a thirty-five-foot jumper from near midcourt to send the game to overtime. The 76ers went on to win, 134-131, as Greer scored twenty-seven and Chet Walker added thirty-one to compliment thirty-four from Chamberlain. Sam Jones scored thirty-six to lead all scorers for the second time in as many games in Philadelphia.

The pattern of home dominance extended to the two centers. In game five, Russell continued his excellent play at the Garden by grabbing thirty rebounds, blocking twelve shots and scoring twelve points to go along with three steals as Boston took a 3-2 series lead with a 114-108 victory. Then Chamberlain responded with a thirty point, twenty-six rebound effort in Philadelphia despite picking up his fifth foul during the opening minute of the fourth quarter. The 76ers 112-106 victory sent the series back to Boston, and Chamberlain knew the Celtics would be favored to defeat him again. “Only when we win that seventh

game can I rejoice. I can't feel like rejoicing now. I have great personal stakes in the seventh game in Boston."

Reporters covering the Celtics were wondering why they were winning relatively easily at home but were struggling in Philadelphia. The home team had won every game in this series, just as had happened three years earlier when Chamberlain and the Warriors fell to the Celtics in seven games. Auerbach's explanation seemed as plausible as any other. "Tell anyone who wants to know to go down to that Snake Pit (Convention Hall) and see what it's like. Those people are something else. They've got a guy down there who sits near the bench and I'd pay 10 bucks to punch him in the mouth." Auerbach also knew that the 76ers were a quality team, and the Celtics could not simply show up at the Garden and expect to win. Before the taking the court, he addressed his team and thanked them for "another great season," adding, "No matter what happens [tonight], you're still all my boys." The players had a wide array of emotions, from Havlicek, who was nervous heading into his second game seven, while Russell later recalled a more confident streak among the veterans. "We started towards the door [to the court] and someone looked back and said: 'Lose? Are you kidding me, baby?'" In the other locker room, Dolph Schayes descended into clichés, telling reporters that Chamberlain would control the outcome, while worrying that rookie Luke Jackson, whose twenty-three points played a significant role in the game six victory, might have trouble handling the pressure back in Boston. Both teams knew that this game would probably determine the eventual NBA champion – the Los Angeles Lakers had already defeated the Baltimore Bullets in six games for the Western crown, but had lost Elgin Baylor five minutes into the series with a season-ending knee injury.

At 8pm, the two teams prepared to tip off. The game was televised in much of the country, but not in Boston, as the Celtics continued their policy of banning most local television coverage to help protect ticket sales. Game seven would be their sixteenth straight playoff game to sellout, and New Englanders who were not fortunate enough to buy one of the 13,909 tickets would need to follow along with Johnny Most on WHDH radio. When Chamberlain met Russell at half-court, Wilt was gracious.

“You’ve played a great series, Russ,” and while Russell felt the same about Chamberlain, Russell later wrote, “But I was thinking: ‘I wish you got hit by a car on the way to the game.’”

During the first six minutes of the game, Russell’s wish was coming true – the luxury sports car known as the 1965 Celtics ran over and around Chamberlain and the rest of the 76ers, building a 30-12 lead that stirred the crowd into a frenzy. With the Celtics still maintaining an eighteen point advantage two minutes later, Schayes went to his bench and inserted forward Dave Gambie, who had not played in the sixth game and was averaging just over six points and eleven minutes per game in the playoffs. Gambie, a former first round pick of the Royals in 1958, had spent the last five seasons with Syracuse/Philadelphia after stops in Cincinnati and St. Louis. Now he provided an instant spark by scoring nineteen points during the rest of the first half, and would end up with twenty-five before fouling out. The 76ers closed the opening period on a 9-0 run that cut the Celtics lead to 35-26, and by halftime, Philadelphia was in front, 62-61.

The 76ers scored the first four points of the second half, and Auerbach was forced to call a timeout just thirty seconds into the third quarter. But the rest of the period belonged to John Havlicek, who scored twenty-five in that quarter alone. Still wearing a brace to protect his left knee, Havlicek had struggled in the first quarter and scored just eleven before halftime. After the timeout, the Celtics went on a 6-0 run, capped by a Havlicek set shot, and Boston regained the lead at 67-66. By the start of the fourth quarter, Boston’s lead was back up to eight points.

The anticipated Russell-Chamberlain matchup did not disappoint. Both played the entire game, Russell scoring fifteen points to go along with twenty-nine rebounds and an impressive nine assists, while Chamberlain grabbed thirty-two boards and scored thirty. Most of the fourth quarter was controlled by the Celtics, who thwarted a series of brief 76ers rallies. Boston held an eight point lead with four minutes left, then Philadelphia climbed to within a point at 104-103, but the Celtics responded with another 6-0 run punctuated by K.C. Jones stealing an inbounds pass and bouncing a toss to Satch Sanders for a layup with less than two minutes to play. Even though Wilt scored six

quick points to bring the 76ers back within a point at 110-109 with six seconds left, the game appeared destined to end with another Celtic, perhaps K.C. Jones, dribbling out the clock on a Boston playoff victory. Then a one-inch thick wire elevated the game into a classic.

The Celtics had already made one uncharacteristically sloppy mistake. Leading 110-107 with thirty seconds remaining, they allowed the 24-second clock to expire without even taking a shot. The 76ers then capitalized by lobbing the ball, directly from out of bounds past midcourt, to Chamberlain for an easy driving dunk around a passive Russell, who did not want to risk a foul and a possible three point play to tie the game. Although the Celtics had a timeout remaining, Russell decided to try to inbound the ball right away. The Celtics were disorganized, as the previous play had unfolded so quickly that both teams were scrambling to get into position. Havlicek and Sam Jones were the closest Celtics to Russell, who was positioned just to the left of the 76ers basket. Chet Walker was harassing him, and Chamberlain was also near the baseline, in between Walker and the basket, effectively sealing off the passing lanes to Jones and Havlicek. As Russell looked in vain for another option, he spotted K.C. Jones running toward the baseline from near half-court. Russell jumped, and with both hands over his head, tried to arch the ball over Walker, but the ball hit a guide wire that extended from the bottom right corner of the backboard to the Garden balcony. As the ball bounced back toward the seats out of bounds, referee Earl Strom signaled that the ball belonged to the 76ers, according to the agreed-upon “ground rules” at the Garden. The wires, which were attached to each of the lower corners of the backboards, along with another set that ran from the top of the boards straight up to the Garden rafters, were intended to help stabilize the baskets, and were installed only a few years earlier. Now, as the *Boston Globe*’s Bud Collins wrote after the game, “from one of these four wires at the Garden Russell very nearly hanged himself and the Celtics.”

Chamberlain reacted instantly, pointing emphatically toward the wire, his excitement enhanced by the importance of the moment – now he had a chance to rewrite his reputation as a perennial loser by finally vanquishing Russell and the Celtics.

Russell, Auerbach and the Celtics fans did not share his enthusiasm. Russell claimed Walker stepped over the baseline and redirected the ball with hand, and Auerbach took up the argument, accusing Walker or Chamberlain of touching the ball. But Strom knew what he saw, and the call stood. The fans jeered Strom and his partner Richie Powers, while Russell was reduced to pounding the parquet floor with his fist in frustration.

The Celtics had called timeout, but wasted time arguing with the officials and now needed to regroup fast. Russell was looking for someone to bail him out, and Auerbach kept his instructions simple – “Play defense but don’t foul.” Those words would have come as a surprise to Dolph Schayes. In the opposing huddle, Schayes was convinced that the Celtics would foul Wilt, a notoriously bad free throw shooter (six-for-thirteen so far in this game, forty-six percent for the season) if the inbounds pass was directed to him. “I knew they would have grabbed him,” Schayes said later, “and he wasn’t the best foul shooter,” despite the fact that Chamberlain would have had three chances to make one free throw to send the game to overtime, or better still, to make two shots to win the series. Instead, Schayes decided to take advantage of Philadelphia’s height up front and give himself two chances to win. Hal Greer would take the ball out of bounds, from the same spot where Russell had just turned it over, inbound the ball to Chet Walker, then Greer would get a return pass behind a pick from Johnny Kerr and shoot from the corner. Luke Jackson, Chamberlain and Kerr would line up standing parallel to the baseline, arranged left-to-right like pieces on a chessboard, to get ready to hit the boards if Greer missed. While Wilt and Russell were an even match, Jackson had a three inch advantage on Satch Sanders, and the 6’10” Kerr towered over Sam Jones by half a foot. For the Celtics, K.C. Jones would pressure Greer to try to prevent him from inbounding the ball, while Havlicek guarded Walker.

What happened next is best described by the man who was about to transform himself into a hero. “When the official handed Greer the ball, I was well aware that he had five seconds to get it into play,” Havlicek later recalled. “I started to count to myself. One thousand one, one thousand two, etc. I was almost at one thousand three and I sort of appraised the situation,

remaining aware of Greer while sneaking a look back over my shoulder at Walker, the man I was guarding. At that time I saw him start to lob the ball to Walker. I knew that it wasn't a good pass and that I would have a good chance of deflecting or intercepting it." Using his football skills, Havlicek cut in between Walker and the pass from Greer, and deflected the ball to Sam Jones who then dribbled out the clock. Delirium gripped the Garden, including Johnny Most, whose screams of "Havlicek stole the ball!" produced an iconic moment for the NBA, on par with New York Giants' broadcaster Russ Hodges's famous "The Giants Win the Pennant!" radio call of Bobby Thomson's playoff home run a decade and a half earlier. As time expired, Russell initially grabbed Havlicek and hugged him, but as fans rushed the floor they were separated by the joyful mob that was so eager for souvenirs that they ripped Havlicek's jersey off and even grabbed rookie Ron Bonham's warmup jacket. While Russell gleefully told reporters, "This is one game that went right down to the wire," Hal Greer was despondent in the 76ers locker room. "I didn't put enough on the ball. That's all there is to it." His coach agreed, acknowledging that K.C.'s pressure on Greer was a factor. "The moment the ball left his hands," Schayes said, "I knew it was gone. I knew it was going to be grabbed." As Bud Collins wrote in his colorful article, "Philadelphians would rather Havlicek had stolen the Liberty Bell, Betsy Ross' bungalow, the Main Line. But he decided on the ball and the ball game." For Chamberlain, it was another year of frustration. Whether the front of his jersey read "Warriors" or "76ers", "Philadelphia" or "San Francisco", Russell and the Celtics always came out on top.

The Finals were anticlimactic, overshadowed by the thrilling finish to the Eastern Division series and Elgin Baylor's latest injury. Diagnosed with calcium deposits in his knee ligaments in September 1963, Baylor spent most of that season struggling while playing through considerable pain. By March he was nearly back to full strength, collecting thirty-one points, ten rebounds, six assists and six steals in a game against the St. Louis Hawks, and finished the season with averages of twenty-five points and twelve rebounds. However, now his career was threatened by a more serious injury, suffered in game one against Baltimore when he tore his left patellar tendon and fractured his

kneecap while taking a jumper. Baylor would eventually spend six weeks in a hip-to-ankle cast with an injury that his doctor, Robert Kerlan (who also treated another famous California athlete, Sandy Koufax) felt would prevent him from ever being more than a role player for the rest of his career.

The Lakers still had Jerry West, who averaged over forty points a game during the playoffs, but were clearly undermanned at center after Jim Krebs died in a freak accident the previous May. Los Angeles now used a trio of big men, Gene Wiley, Leroy Ellis and newcomer Darrall Imhoff, who had been picked up after four disappointing seasons with New York and Detroit. The Celtics swept the first two games in Boston, including a thirty-two point rout in the opener, then split a pair in Los Angeles, with the Lakers winning the third game as Ellis unexpectedly scored twenty-nine to compliment forty-three by West. But West was far from satisfied as the Lakers headed back to Boston facing elimination. "We didn't win [game four] because I didn't shoot well. I cost us the ball game. I tried, but I couldn't get the job done. And don't write that I was tired. I wasn't. I felt great before the game."

The fifth game was a victory lap for the Celtics, other than a scary moment in the first quarter when West accidentally "speared" Russell's left eye, sending Russell to his knees in obvious pain. Russell refused to leave the game, and despite being unable to see out of one eye, scored twenty-two points. Boston led by nine at the half and sixteen after three quarters, then poured it on down the stretch, scoring twenty in a row at one point as the home crowd roared enthusiastically. Auerbach took Russell out with 5:51 remaining, and let the bench play out the string. The one sour note was Auerbach's decision not to put an injured Heinsohn back in the game. Heinsohn had missed a month of the season with an arch injury, and now knee trouble had convinced him to retire at the end of the season. Although Auerbach changed his mind in the final moments, Heinsohn refused the meaningless curtain call, and ended his career on the bench after winning eight titles in nine years.

Afterward, Auerbach praised his team and shared his thoughts on his late friend. While being interviewed on national television from the locker room, Auerbach showed the press the

St. Christopher's medal that Brown's widow Marjorie had given him before the season, and said, "I just wish Walter Brown could have shared this moment with me..."

Chapter 10

Hustle and Guts

RUSSELL AND AUERBACH. RUSS AND RED. They had forged a unique relationship as player and coach, resulting in eight championships in nine years. After the retirement of Tom Heinsohn following the 1965 season, they were the only members of the 1957 team who were still with the Celtics. Years later, Russell summarized the key to Auerbach's effectiveness as a coach. "People tend to think teamwork is some mysterious force. It isn't. It can, really, be manufactured, and he knew how to do that, to serve each player's needs. And people always say you need to know *how* to win. But that's not enough if you want to keep winning. You also have to know *why* you win. Red always knew that, too."

Auerbach also knew that trying to run an entire NBA franchise himself was hurting the team, despite the fact that he won the Coach of the Year award in 1965. "I feel like a machine," Auerbach told Arnold Lubasch of the *New York Times*. "You go at full speed for 20 years, you have to rest the machine. There's the mental thing, the fact that you're tired of the continuous pressure year after year, tired of the travel, tired of the referees, tired of the hostility from the crowds outside of Boston." After Walter Brown's death, Auerbach officially became the team's general manager, and that meant he was responsible for running promotions, representing the team at NBA's meetings, and performing other tasks that caused him to spend a lot of time *not* coaching. "At one point the players were a little upset with Red because they thought he wasn't coaching as well as he had in the past, due to all the extra duties," John

Havlicek later wrote. "He realized at that point that maybe he should be getting out." Auerbach already knew that just coaching and scouting players was more than a full-time job, and he claimed that this had contributed to at least one key drafting mistake that could have been disastrous, were it not for the talented core of players he had already assembled. In 1963, Auerbach, based on a scouting recommendation from a "friend," took Bill Green of Colorado State with the Celtics first round pick, number nine overall. The only problem was that Auerbach's friend didn't know that Green refused to fly. Two picks later, the Bullets selected Gus Johnson, who nearly won the Rookie of the Year award and went on to have a solid ten year career, averaging double-figures in points and rebounds. The next year, Auerbach personally scouted Willis Reed, but in an era before extensive television coverage Auerbach only had time to see him play twice, and he happened to see two of Reed's worst games. As a result, Auerbach took Mel Counts one pick before the Knicks selected Reed, a future star.

Auerbach also had a financial incentive to scale back his role. Walter Brown had bequeathed ten percent of the Celtics to him, and when the team was sold to the Ruppert-Knickerbocker Company in 1965, Auerbach pocketed \$300,000 of the \$3 million purchase price. It was a remarkable figure, more money than the new owners of the Warriors, 76ers and Bullets had paid for their three franchises *combined* over the previous three years, and symbolized the improving financial position of the NBA. In addition to ridding itself of teams in "minor league" markets like Syracuse and Fort Wayne, the NBA had signed a national TV contract with ABC for \$650,000 in 1964, its first deal with a major network in three years. And the Celtics were still a bargain compared to the New York Yankees; CBS had paid \$11.2 million for eighty percent of the baseball team a year earlier.

When the Celtics were sold, Auerbach initially decided to retire as coach, but new team president Jack Waldron talked him out of it, and then Red seized on the motivational power of coming back for one more year. "He really wanted to go out a winner," Havlicek later wrote. "He got up for all the big regular season games, and he really got himself fired up for the playoffs.

He was into every situation. This was his last fling, and he wasn't going to blow it." It was quintessential Auerbach-ian thinking.

Russell once described Auerbach as "the genius of sports" with a split personality. "He is an egotist who had a terrible temper and he is a man who can go off the deep end some times. He can be as gruff and as nasty and miserable a human being as you want to meet. Conversely, he can be quiet, peaceful and a decent guy." Auerbach, who lived in Boston during the season while his own family remained in Washington, D.C. year-round, extended his belief in the division of basketball and family to his players. After he retired, Heinsohn recalled an incident during his rookie year when his wife Diane, along with the wives of Bob Cousy and Togo Palazzi, visited practice after a day of shopping. Auerbach saw the trio and barked, "For Chrisake! Who let the broads in? No broads at practice!"

On the sidelines, Auerbach rode officials mercilessly, earning thousands of dollars of fines, though reportedly many of those were forgiven by Commissioners Podoloff and Walter Kennedy. Auerbach yelled at rowdy fans, stomped his right foot after bad calls, and carried a rolled up program so he could smack it against his other palm without bruising his hand. Auerbach could be particularly acerbic at sportswriter's banquets and press gatherings on the road. Once when he was booed at such an event in Philadelphia he replied, "Do me a favor and shut up, will ya?" At the 1963 All-Star Game in Los Angeles he berated local sports writers who dared to call their city the "basketball capital of the world" when the Lakers could never beat his Celtics when it counted. Even retirement would not soothe this part of his demeanor. In 1967 Auerbach was invited to coach the East All-Star team – and was promptly ejected in the third quarter by referee Willie Smith for his profane sideline commentary.

Of course, there was also the ever-present "victory cigar," which inspired anger and resentment throughout the league. "The reason that Auerbach is disliked is simple," wrote Myron Cope in the *Saturday Evening Post* in March 1966. "He had been the most infuriating winner in the history of professional basketball. It isn't the fact he wins – it is the way he does it. When the Celtics have built up a safe lead ... Auerbach lolls back on the

bench as though he were soaking up the sun in Miami and elaborately, deliciously, lights up a cigar.” While the opposition and their fans dreamed of Auerbach lighting up prematurely, Cousy wished he would stop doing it. “When he [lit up], it got everyone’s attention. And hell, we had enough hostility focused on us as it was. This was another trigger point. ... The fans would get more belligerent and hostile towards us, and we had to bust our tails to keep the lead because once he went for the cigar, the other team’s intensity went up one hundred percent. I hated that thing.” Auerbach would try to downplay the controversy by explaining that 1) he had smoked cigars since his Navy days, 2) he had an endorsement deal with a cigar company, and 3) that lighting up was to signal his players that, “this game, for all intents and purposes, is over. And everything we do now should help us in the next game.” But Auerbach clearly had another motive – to send a simple message to the losing team and their fans: *We won. You lost. It’s over.*

Auerbach was also willing to look under every rock for an advantage. In 1958, Phil Elderkin wrote that, “If there is a way to beat the rules legally, chances are Auerbach is the first to discover it,” and rival coaches, general managers, and players saw many examples over his career in Boston, such as his drafting of three junior-eligibles from Kentucky in 1953, or, before the rules eventually prohibited it, substituting a taller player for a shorter player if he happened to force a jump ball. Auerbach also looked for psychological edges. “I had rules for our huddles. One rule was that I didn’t want anybody sitting down. I wanted to show contempt for the other team. *They* had to sit down. *They* were tired. *They* needed rest. But *we* were in superb physical condition. The Boston Celtics were not tired!” However, they were superstitious. During warm-ups, Auerbach said that he “always liked the last shot to go in before they came to the bench,” and designated Jim Loscutoff, and later John Havlicek, as the player responsible for ensuring that this was the case.

Auerbach would later say that “[c]oaching is simple: you need good players who are good people. You have that, you win. You don’t have that, you can be the greatest coach who ever lived and you aren’t going to win.” But even the best players

needed to be led and motivated, and that is where Auerbach really shined. “You must have the ability to communicate. That is your key,” he would later say. “It’s not what you say, it’s what did they absorb.” Auerbach recognized that the best way to get his message across was to keep varying it just enough so the players weren’t sure what was coming next. “Every once in a while, when we’d lose a ball game, I’d come in and I’d say to the guys, ‘Fellas, this one’s on me. I had a bad night. I made bad decisions and I didn’t have you ready to play. ... I’ll take the hit.’” Auerbach also knew that Heinsohn, Loscutoff and later Satch Sanders could take verbal abuse, so Auerbach would yell at them to keep the entire team in line. To balance those frequent outbursts directed at his “whipping boys” in practice, he would occasionally also yell at players like Russell who didn’t react well to a tongue-lashing. However, Auerbach would soften those verbal blows by meeting with them privately before practice to tell them the rant was coming. Auerbach treated everyone as a unique individual, and never tried to hide his pragmatic side, believing that treating everyone “equally” was ridiculous because those who produced more on the floor deserved a little more leeway. If Russell was tired after playing nearly every minute on a tough road trip, Auerbach would rather give Russell a day off instead of watching him loaf through practice. And if Cousy, who always practiced hard, had an appointment in New York to film a commercial, Auerbach would let him skip a workout. Cousy understood what the master was doing. “As time went on, [Russell] and I got special treatment in the sense that Arnold only got on those he thought he could get on. Russ and I came with so much intensity that getting on us would have been counterproductive.” Auerbach also made sure he did not ignore his bench players, especially veterans like Clyde Lovellette, who after retiring said that Auerbach “had a unique way of convincing the most unused guy on the club that he belonged.” Auerbach had made himself into a good amateur basketball player with hard work rather than natural talent, and he loved players who made a place for themselves in the league on what he called “hustle and guts” – players who embodied his belief in the importance of clutch play and “heart” rather than “meaningless” statistics.

Most of all, Auerbach knew how to balance the need to impose his will on the players while giving them a voice on the team, even during timeouts at critical times during games. “[I]f everything is quiet after I’ve given my instructions and a player wants to say something he thinks is important, I let him. I’d be a fool not to utilize the experience of my players, who often have a feel for something that is happening on the floor that I don’t have.” He regularly asked players to suggest options for his famous seven plays, and they appreciated having input. “There may be other coaches who know just as much basketball, I won’t argue that,” Frank Ramsey once said, “But nobody has Red’s knack for handling men. He’ll work you. He’ll get on you in practice about some little thing you’re doing wrong and stay on you until you’ve corrected it. But he’s fair and he backs up his players on the floor.”

IN THE FALL OF 1965 Auerbach needed another forward to help replace the retired Tom Heinsohn. Havlicek could start alongside Satch Sanders, but was too valuable as a backup guard to be used exclusively up front. Naulls was slowing down, and by the playoffs he would rarely play more than a few minutes a game, if he got off the bench at all. With Mel Counts struggling to adapt to the NBA, John Thompson regressing, and recent draft picks Ron Bonham and Ron Watts unable to earn major roles, Auerbach needed another option, and, like he would do in the Celtics huddle, he turned to his veterans for advice.

NBA teams regularly carried twelve players in this era, even though the official roster limit for a game was eleven. The twelfth player would be “farmed out” and assigned to a team in a minor league such as the Eastern Professional Basketball League. The Eastern League had franchises in smaller cities, and although the slate of teams frequently changed, the league attracted a rabid following of fans to watch teams such as the Allentown Jets, Camden Bullets, New Haven Elms and Trenton Colonials play in high school gyms, CYO centers and armories. Rosters were typically a mixture of former college and marginal NBA players, including retired stars such as Paul Arizin, and some blacks, such as Andy Johnson, Hal Lear and Cleo Hill, who had fallen off NBA rosters partly because of their race. Three days into the

1965-66 season, the Los Angeles Lakers, who had traded guard Dick Barnett for forward Bob Boozer in the offseason, decided to waive forward Don Nelson rather than farming him out as a twelfth player. Nelson had entered the league with the Chicago Zephyrs in 1962, and was a key reserve for the Lakers the following season, playing eighteen minutes a night and seeing action in every game in relief of Elgin Baylor and Rudy LaRusso. Nelson became an afterthought during the 1964-65 campaign, as Fred Schaus sought to offset his lack of a quality center by relying on taller, bigger reserves such as the newly acquired Darrall Imhoff. But when Baylor's knee injury knocked him out of the playoffs, Nelson returned to his previous role, averaging six points and over five rebounds per game. The Lakers lost to the Celtics in five games, but Nelson made a good impression, particularly on Heinsohn and Russell. When the Lakers dumped Nelson, they both recommended him to Auerbach, who signed him for the waiver price of \$1,000.

Don Nelson was a perfect fit for Auerbach's model for a role player. Nelson learned the value of hard work doing chores on his family's farm near Rock Island, Illinois, made his high school team as a 6'4" center despite having never played organized basketball as a youngster, and went on to earn a scholarship to the University of Iowa. At Iowa, he set school records with 1,522 points and 784 rebounds, averaging over twenty-three points a game as a junior and senior. In his junior year, Nelson led Iowa to an 18-6 record, including a second place finish in the Big Ten. It was the Hawkeyes best season since 1956, when current coach Sharm Scheuerman had played for Iowa in the NCAA title game against Russell and USF. Scheuerman raved about Nelson, later saying that "the tougher a game got, the tougher Don played. He always had a lot of savvy. Don did some things you just can't coach." For Nelson, winning was more important than style. His free throw technique was frequently compared to a "shot-putter" – he would lean toward the basket and jump slightly while shooting with one hand – and while Nelson was not going to break any of Russell's old marks in the high jump, he always hustled and moved well without the ball, which was essential for fitting in with the Celtics. "I couldn't believe how the Celtics players worked for each other

when I first came to Boston,” Nelson said. “I’d have the ball and I’d be looking to pass off and Russell or Sam Jones or one of the guys on the bench would be yelling at me to shoot. When I played with the Lakers, the only two guys who were ever allowed to control the game were Baylor and West, but I found that if you got open with the Celtics, you got the ball.” Nelson took full advantage, averaging a career-high ten points a game in his first season in Boston.

The other newcomer in the frontcourt had taken an even longer road to Boston. Woody Sauldsberry had been a star at all-black Texas Southern University, and as a sophomore led them to a spot in the NAIA tournament, where they faced a field of thirty-one all-white teams. Texas Southern fell short of the title despite Sauldsberry’s solid play, which caught the eye of Abe Saperstein. With a wife and young daughter back in his adopted hometown of Compton, California, Sauldsberry needed money and signed with the Globetrotters rather than finishing college. After two seasons of “Showtime” basketball, Sauldsberry had had enough of playing the role of a black cartoon character in a basketball “minstrel” show and wanted out. “We were comics,” Sauldsberry later said. “We wanted to play serious ball. That’s the only way you would know how good you are. So we stayed angry all the time.”

In 1957, Eddie Gottlieb drafted Sauldsberry and purchased his contract from his friend Abe Saperstein. By mid-season Sauldsberry was earning a reputation as an above average defensive player with “the prettiest jump shot in the league,” and had pushed Joe Graboski out of the starting lineup. Sauldsberry won the Rookie of the Year award, averaging twelve points and ten boards a game, and followed up with an even better sophomore campaign. But when his numbers slid in 1960, and the Warriors drafted Al Attles, Sauldsberry was traded to the St. Louis Hawks, a move that was motivated by a salary dispute and, apparently, Philadelphia’s desire to keep only four black players, consistent with the unofficial quota system across the NBA. Sauldsberry’s stint in St. Louis came to an abrupt end in the fall of 1961, when he was traded to the expansion Chicago Packers just weeks after refusing to play, along with the other black players on both sides, in the infamous Hawks-Celtics exhibition

game in Lexington, Kentucky that was marred by segregation. Sauldsberry was still an effective player, averaging in double-figures and occasionally scoring twenty or more, but when he returned to the Hawks later the next season, he clashed with new coach Harry Gallatin. The two had tangled with each other as players, and when Sauldsberry loafed through practices and games, the Hawks suspended him for “insubordination” and released him in June 1963.

Out of the league and working for TWA, Sauldsberry’s career was supposed to be over, as NBA Commissioner Walter Kennedy had imposed a league-wide suspension on Sauldsberry after the Hawks released him. However, Bill Russell knew Sauldsberry, and remembered how well he had played against the Celtics during the 1959 Eastern Finals and the 1960 NBA Finals. Russell convinced Auerbach to pursue Sauldsberry, but when Auerbach tried to sign him, Kennedy blocked the move, claiming it was “in the best interests of pro basketball” to keep Sauldsberry out of the league. By mid-December, Sauldsberry won a court decision to override Kennedy’s ruling, and after a brief stint with the Eastern League’s New Haven Elms, joined the Celtics and played in thirty-nine games for Boston.

Even with the new arrivals, the Celtics were unable to win a tenth straight division title. Boston’s 54-26 record was easily good enough for the second-best mark in the league – a full eleven games ahead of the Royals and Lakers – but the Philadelphia 76ers won their final eleven games of the season, including back-to-back victories over the Celtics during the first weekend in March, to end the year at 55-25. The 76ers season had been overshadowed by the death of Ike Richman, who had worked hard to bring basketball back to Philadelphia two years earlier. On December 3, Richman was sitting in his customary position next to the bench when he suffered a fatal heart attack while his team was playing the Celtics at the Garden. Chamberlain and the rest of the team considered calling off the game, but instead honored a request from Richman’s widow, Clare, to win the game for Ike. The 76ers had never won a game in the Garden, but rallied in the second half for a 119-103 victory. Chamberlain was particularly shaken by the death of his friend. “It’s difficult for me to express how I feel,” Chamberlain

said later that season. He claimed that “[o]utside of my own family, Ike was closer to me than anyone,” and Chamberlain drew what he called “tremendous inspiration” from his memories of a man who encouraged him to ignore his critics in the press and let his accomplishments speak for themselves. Chamberlain did his best to take this advice to heart. After the 76ers lost their third straight game on February 6, a 100-99 contest against the Celtics which featured a bench-clearing brawl sparked by Sauldsberry and the 76ers Dave Gambee, Chamberlain was criticized by the press for taking just twelve shots. Although Chamberlain explained that he was trying to break the losing streak by getting his teammates more involved, he responded to his critics the next night by scoring sixty-five points in a 132-125 win over the Lakers, as Chamberlain exploited his advantage over Los Angeles’ weak centers.

Boston’s second-place finish also meant no first round bye. For the first time since Russell joined the team, the Celtics would need to win three rounds to claim the title. History was not on their side – the last team to reach the NBA Finals without the benefit of a bye were the 1959 Lakers. For the third time in four years, the Celtics faced off against the Cincinnati Royals. Coach Jack McMahon, who could yell at players and referees with as much passion as Auerbach – ripping his slacks back in January during one tirade – had shuffled his lineup during the season, reducing Jack Twyman’s minutes as the former star headed toward retirement. Tom Hawkins and Happy Hairston joined Wayne Embry and Jerry Lucas to form a formidable frontcourt. Lucas, Havlicek’s one-time college roommate, averaged twenty-one points and twenty-one rebounds a game splitting his time between center and forward, and moonlighted as a mail sorter for the Post Office during the Christmas season, taking advantage of his “20-10 vision and a photographic memory” to help move a mountain of cards, packages and letters to Santa Claus.

By February, the Royals were briefly in first place in the East, and Lucas’s pick-and-roll partner Oscar Robertson remained the unquestioned star of the team. Robertson led the league in assists for the fifth time in the last six seasons while continuing to average over thirty points a game. An imperfect teammate, Robertson could be difficult to play with at times.

“Oscar saw the whole floor at all times, and because he had that complete notion of what was supposed to be going on, he could be a little intolerant sometimes,” Hawkins recalled. “He wanted to get it done and if you weren’t doing it, he would tell the coach to ‘put someone in who can get the job done.’” But teammates and opponents alike, like Russell, grew to appreciate his intensity and incredible skills. “Of all the players in the NBA, I had the most fun playing against him and his teams,” Russell later wrote. “He had a joy and ferociousness that nobody else could match.” Robertson was also loyal to his teammates. When Adrian Smith, the former Kentucky star who moved into the starting backcourt alongside Robertson, was selected for the All-Star Game that year in Cincinnati, Robertson made it his personal mission to get his friend the MVP award. Smith, who as a rookie was colorfully described as a player “who plays the game with the reckless abandon of a drunk crossing a Los Angeles freeway and had the scars to prove it,” scored twenty-four points, capturing the award and a new Ford Mustang convertible that became his prized possession.

Robertson was just as determined to stand up for the financial rights of his fellow players off the court. After succeeding Tom Heinsohn as the leader of the Players Association in 1965, Robertson held out during training camp. As negotiations lingered on, Robertson eventually told a reporter he wanted to be traded, and did not sign his \$70,000 contract until five days before the start of the season.

The Celtics had split the season series with the Royals, with each team winning four out of five at home, including a 121-104 Boston victory at the Garden on the last day of the season. So when Lucas sank two free throws to give Cincinnati a 79-64 lead in the third quarter of the series opener, the 9,000-plus fans in attendance were shocked. The Celtics rallied behind twenty second-half points by Russell, including six straight at one point in the fourth quarter, and an unexpected scoring burst from Larry Siegfried, but the Royals held on for a 107-103 win. The Royals then began game two at the Cincinnati Gardens where they left off in Boston, building a 50-37 lead in the second quarter. Then Sam Jones, who was held to just fourteen points in the first game, scored sixteen of the Celtics final eighteen points

in the period as Boston closed the gap to 71-68 at the half. The Royals continued to hold a small lead until the fourth quarter, which featured four lead changes and five ties, but the decisive sequence occurred with just under four minutes remaining. With Cincinnati clinging to a 118-116 lead, Boston scored the next seven points, on a pair of baskets by Sanders, one by Sam Jones, and a free throw by Havlicek. The Celtics went on to win 132-125 to even the series, which was shaping up as a battle of shooting guards. Sam Jones had outscored Robertson 42 to 35, which mirrored Boston's seven point margin of victory.

Now the teams returned to Boston for the pivotal third game of the five game series. Midway through the first quarter, the Royals appeared to suffer a major blow when Lucas and Adrian Smith collided as they attempted to block a shot by Sam Jones and crashed to the floor. Smith was not hurt, but Lucas immediately screamed in pain, gingerly held his left knee, and needed to be helped to the bench. Despite obvious pain that limited his mobility, Lucas was back on the court by the end of the period, and finished the game with twenty-seven points and sixteen rebounds. Cincinnati needed all of those points. Robertson limited Sam Jones to eleven points in twenty-one minutes helped by the latter's four first half fouls, but John Havlicek broke out with thirty-six points to outscore Robertson (twenty-seven). Happy Hairston iced the 113-107 victory by making six free throws and coming up with a key steal in the final minute, and the Royals returned home with a 2-1 series lead. Boston was reeling, symbolized by K.C. Jones, who was spotted crying in the locker room after the game. The only dark cloud for Cincinnati were reports that Lucas had torn ligaments in his knee and might be limited for the rest of the series. "If we can get at least 80 percent out of Lucas," McMahon told the press, "we've got a good chance to close it out. Otherwise, we're in trouble." For his part, Lucas was determined to shake off the injury: "I'll play – you can count on that."

Auerbach, facing an inglorious end to his coaching career, juggled his starting lineup, replacing an ineffective Willie Naulls with Havlicek. His players were still confident. The afternoon of the game, many of the Celtics went to see the James Bond spoof "The Second Best Secret Agent in the Whole Wide

World” in an effort to relax. Bill Russell later recalled, “Sam [Jones] drew me aside before that first game [back in Cincinnati]. ‘You get this one, Russ,’ he said, ‘and you won’t have to worry about the one back in Boston. I’ll take care of that myself.’” Jones hardly rested in the fourth game, hitting twelve of nineteen shots and leading the Celtics with thirty-two points in a 120-103 win, the widest margin of the series. Lucas had twenty-two points and sixteen rebounds and played forty-five minutes, but struggled defensively due to his injury. Gordon White wrote in the *New York Times* that “Sanders shot over him time and again for baskets. Other Celtics ran around him.”

Boston Garden was sold out for the decisive game five, and the fans, which included Boston Mayor John Collins and Massachusetts Governor John Volpe, became restless as the Royals built an early lead. Then Sam Jones heated up again, hitting thirteen out of fourteen shots in one stretch that extended into the third period. After Jones made his first two shots of the second half, the Celtics led by eight, and Russell continued to take advantage of a hobbling Lucas, dominating inside and grabbing thirty-one rebounds to go with sixteen points. Jones finished with thirty-four, making good on his earlier promise, and Havlicek added twenty-three as part of the Celtics balanced attack. For the Royals, Oscar Robertson scored thirty-seven but received little help. Lucas was held to seventeen points, and backup center Connie Dierking scored as many points (nine) as starters Wayne Embry and Adrian Smith combined. Boston’s lead reached double-digits in the second half, and the Celtics closed out the Royals 112-103 as fans flooded the court in celebration of the unexpectedly difficult triumph.

The closeness of the series gave the 76ers hope of dethroning the Celtics, but the Eastern Finals were strangely anti-climatic. Boston raced to a 2-0 series lead, winning by convincing margins of nineteen and twenty-one points. The second game featured a rare screaming match between Russell and Chamberlain that was precipitated by an exchange of punches between Siegfried and Billy Cunningham. Auerbach had decided to focus on shutting down the 76ers rookie sensation, who found out that playing in the NBA playoffs was very different from his college days at North Carolina. Frank McGuire

had successfully recruited the former Brooklyn high school star in 1961, beating out dozens of other colleges and universities with some help from his niece, who was a friend of Susan Cunningham, Billy's sister. Cunningham averaged twenty points a game on the freshman team, then moved up to the varsity and earned All-ACC honors and an All-American honorable mention while posting twenty-two points and sixteen rebounds a night. He collected as many nicknames as awards, inspired by his boyish good looks and outstanding leaping ability, including "Spaceman," "Airplane," and most famously, the "Kangaroo Kid." Opposing college coaches could not believe his talent. "I knew Cunningham was a tremendous offensive player," Notre Dame coach Johnny Jordan said after losing to North Carolina during Cunningham's junior year, "[b]ut I didn't realize what he could do defensively. He's everywhere, blocking shots, getting a hand on a piece of the ball, ruining any offensive setup by the opposition. It's been a long time since I've seen a defensive player like him." After the 76ers drafted Cunningham in the first round of the 1965 draft, the only question was where to play him. Cunningham had excellent ball handling skills, so Coach Dolph Schayes experimented with him in the backcourt with mixed results. "I just didn't have the moves," Cunningham said, and Schayes decided that he was best suited as a forward in the NBA. "We realized that Billy would never be able to take advantage of his full potential, his driving and leaping, unless we moved him inside. We didn't want to make the same mistake with him that St. Louis did with Cliff Hagan at the start of his career." Cunningham responded by averaging fourteen points and seven rebounds a game as a rookie while playing in all eighty games.

However, with Siegfried and the rest of the Celtics now harassing him at every turn, Cunningham's confidence shrank. During the regular season, he shot forty-three percent from the floor, but against the Celtics in the Eastern Finals, Cunningham made just five shots *in the entire series*, shooting a woeful sixteen percent. Schayes, sensing what was happening, benched him for the third game, which ironically would be Philadelphia's only victory in the series. The Celtics closed out the 76ers in five games, and then waited for the Lakers to dispatch the Hawks in a

much tougher seven game affair in which the home team won every game.

THE LAKERS' MOVE TO THE WEST COAST had been very profitable, as the team made a reported \$500,000 during the 1964-65 season alone. Bob Short and Frank Ryan were looking to cash out, courting Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley about a possible merger before deciding to sell the team to Jack Kent Cooke for \$5.175 million in September 1965. Cooke had made himself into a millionaire media executive by parlaying a fledgling music career as a saxophonist and bandleader into a one-third stake in a financially unstable Canadian radio station in the 1930s. As his fortune grew, Cooke branched out into sports, buying the minor league Toronto Maple Leafs baseball team in 1951 and twenty-five percent of the Washington Redskins a decade later. Cooke was a micro-managing dictator who kept every one on edge. Pete Newell, who was one of Cooke's general managers with the Lakers, later said, "You were on call 24 hours a day, because Jack was on call 24 hours a day," and assistant coach Bill Bertka recalled that "[e]very conversation with Cooke was a chess match." Another example of his style was unfolding as the Finals began. Cooke wanted to own an NHL team to add to his holdings in Los Angeles, but Los Angeles Sports Arena owner Don Reeves already owned the minor league WHL Blades and made it clear that if an NHL expansion team was going to play in his building, he was going to own the team. But on February 9, 1966, Cooke was awarded the Los Angeles expansion franchise anyway, and when Cooke was unable to reach an agreement to play at the Sports Arena, he decided to build his own stadium. The "Fabulous" Forum was built in eighteen months on a twenty-nine-acre site next to Hollywood Park in Inglewood. Cooke's Roman-themed palace featured 80 fifty-seven-foot-tall columns on the outside and plush theater-style seats inside. With a price tag of \$16 million, it cost more than three times as much as the new Spectrum in Philadelphia. While Cooke's outward personality was comparable with Auerbach's, that's where the similarities ended. Cooke had no eye for basketball talent, and had never played or even followed

the game until his financial managers suggested that the Lakers would be a good investment.

On the court, the Lakers won their second straight division title despite Elgin Baylor's ongoing rehab from the career threatening knee injury he had suffered during the 1965 playoffs. "Something pulled. I didn't know what it was," Baylor later told Frank Deford of *Sports Illustrated*. "I forgot about the ball as soon as I felt it. But I could run. I went up and down the court a few times, but it hurt so much and I didn't know what it was, so I decided I better get out." As the season began, Baylor was struggling to deal with the pain and a corresponding loss of explosiveness. "It was very, very difficult. I would try to do a lot of things that I just couldn't do." But Baylor added, "The more I thought about it, the more determined I became to prove the doctors wrong." After months of physically and mentally favoring the leg, Dr. Robert Kerlan told Baylor in January that his knee was as structurally sound as medically possible. "I told him that he either had to go out and test it and find out, or otherwise he might as well come over and rest with me [on the bench]," Kerlan said. By the end of the month, Baylor was back playing at a high level, including a nineteen point, thirteen rebound performance in the first half against Detroit on the twenty-sixth, helping the Lakers to a 125-110 win that raised their record to 29-25. Fortunately for the Lakers, the Western Division was weak – as the month came to a close, Los Angeles was in first place with a three game lead.

The Lakers also had a healthy Jerry West who was continuing to blossom into a superstar, setting career highs in scoring and assists while keeping the team in the race as Baylor healed. West had many sources of motivation, including the memory of his older brother David, who was killed in action in Korea in June 1951, just days after Jerry's thirteenth birthday. A decade later, when Jerry and his wife Jane had their first child, a son, they named him David after the uncle he would never know. West was the ultimate competitor, playing through a seemingly endless series of injuries while serving as his own harshest critic, both on and off the court. "I saw Jerry get so mad at himself he walked right off the course in a celebrity golf tournament one year," said former teammate Jim Krebs. West had quickly turned

himself into a scratch golfer – he had never played golf until moving his family to Los Angeles during his second pro season – but for West, mistakes were intolerable. Sometimes even a small slump on the court would send him into a temporary depression. “It used to be a big problem for Jerry,” Fred Schaus recalled. “He’d miss two or three shots and he’d start to press. He’d get down on himself – never on anybody else, or even the officials – but his depressions would last as long as a week of 10 days.” Now West was gaining confidence, and was as comfortable with his life as he had ever been, ensconced in a three bedroom house in west Los Angeles with his young family, and earning over \$35,000 a year from the Lakers and a series of endorsement deals ranging from Wheaties and Wilson to Karl’s Shoes, a local retailer.

The Lakers tried to make West more comfortable on the court by building a stronger cast around him and Elgin Baylor. With the exception of the Dick Barnett-Bob Boozer trade, which opened up a spot for Walt Hazzard in the starting backcourt and provided additional depth behind Baylor, the other major acquisition for the Lakers was rookie guard Gail Goodrich. Hazzard and Goodrich had starred on John Wooden’s first two championship teams at UCLA. Hazzard won the NCAA tournament Most Outstanding Player award as a senior in 1964, while Goodrich led the Bruins in scoring for two years in a row, culminating in a forty-two point performance against Michigan in the 1965 title game. The 6’1”, 170-pound Goodrich earned the nickname “Twig” for his relentless style and small stature. The Lakers spent back-to-back territorial picks on the duo, bypassing center Willis Reed in 1964 despite their glaring need for a quality big man.

Instead, the Lakers picked up the well-traveled Darrall Imhoff, purchasing him from Detroit a month before that year’s draft. Los Angeles was Imhoff’s fourth NBA stop, as the Alhambra, California native had not replicated his amateur success. As a college player, Wooden had compared his rebounding and shot blocking prowess to Bill Russell, but Imhoff had been a bust in the NBA, never averaging more than six points and six rebounds a game in limited playing time, and becoming best known as the player who “guarded” Wilt

Chamberlain for twenty minutes during his 100 point game in 1962. Imhoff admitted his journeyman status affected his play on the court. "Every time I've been traded, it's as though a piece of my confidence has been chipped away. ... But I stayed with it by telling myself that some people take longer to succeed than others." Imhoff had been a late bloomer, and only made the University of California team as a walk-on after his aunt, a professor at Berkeley, called Pete Newell to lobby for her nephew. Newell's patience and sense of humor were essential to nurturing his career. "Son," Newell told him one day, "I never yet have had a player who didn't learn from his mistakes. And you are going to learn a lot." Imhoff did just that, earning a scholarship by his junior year, and averaged double-figures in points and rebounds in his final two seasons as the Bears won the 1959 NCAA title and lost to Ohio State in the 1960 championship game. Unfortunately, the trade to Los Angeles did not improve Imhoff's fortunes, and he was at best a serviceable part-time player, sharing time with Leroy Ellis at center.

The Celtics had rolled over the Lakers in five games the previous year, when the Lakers had been without Elgin Baylor, and the 1966 Finals began in similar fashion as the Celtics took a 10-0 lead in the opener and led by many as eighteen points in the first half. Then Los Angeles assembled a 21-3 run during a four minute stretch of the second quarter to erase the early deficit, and by halftime Boston was clinging to a one point lead, 62-61. With Sam Jones struggling, making just eight of twenty-nine shots from the floor, the Celtics were relying on Russell (twenty-eight points) and Havlicek (twenty-three) to carry much of the offense, and received an unexpected contribution off the bench as Mel Counts scored fifteen. The score was tied at 121 at the end of regulation when Sam Jones unsuccessfully tried to call a timeout in the waning seconds. In overtime, West and Baylor took over, with the former scoring nine of the Lakers twelve points as Los Angeles won 133-129. It was the first time the Celtics had dropped the opener of the Finals since Russell's rookie year, but by the next day the game had become an afterthought – Auerbach had officially named Russell as his successor as coach.

BACK IN OCTOBER, Russell had written an article in *Sports Illustrated* with Bob Ottum entitled, "The Psych...and My Other Tricks." Most of the piece centered around Russell's "laws" of basketball psychology, such as "You must make the other player do what you want him to do. How? You must start him thinking. If he is thinking instead of doing, he is yours." But Russell also addressed rumors that he might become the Celtics next head coach. "Well, maybe I could have the job if I wanted it when I'm through playing. But what have I got to gain from being a coach? I've got everything to lose. I'm like a gunfighter with a reputation." Still, rumors of Russell succeeding Auerbach persisted throughout the season, though much of the focus in the press was on former Celtics who one by one passed up the opportunity, including Cousy, Ramsey and Heinsohn, who turned down the job partly because he feared being unable to handle Russell. Heinsohn flatly told Auerbach, "Russell would never play for me. I couldn't motivate him. The only guy who can handle him is you or himself." In January, the *Christian Science Monitor's* Phil Elderkin wrote in *The Sporting News* that Auerbach felt Russell could do the job but that he wasn't interested, and as recently as March Auerbach was quoted as saying "A player-coach is not for me." Occasionally, a non-Celtic was mentioned, such as Paul Seymour or Alex Hannum, who was seriously considered by Auerbach until Russell shot down the idea, but most observers felt the new coach would come from inside the Celtics family.

On April 18, Auerbach announced the hiring of Russell at a press conference at the Hotel Lenox in Boston. Auerbach explained that the two of them had convinced each other that Russell should be the next coach. "You know when a pro athlete reaches his thirties, the way Russell has, he loses some of his motivating power," Auerbach said. "He has trouble getting himself up for games. But as coach he won't have that problem." Russell had actually accepted the job the day before the series began, and had a handshake agreement with Celtics owner Marvin Kratter. "I can't pinpoint the one thing that made me change my mind about coaching," Russell said. "My first consideration was the team. I had to ask myself if I could do the job and if I was the best man for that job."

The headlines the next day across the country naturally focused on the historic nature of the appointment – Russell would be the first black head coach of an integrated major professional basketball team, following in the footsteps of John McLendon’s brief coaching career in the short-lived ABL. While Sam Jones was quoted as saying that Russell’s hiring was as significant as Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in baseball, Russell did not see himself as a pioneer. “This doesn’t even come close to the Robinson case. At the time there were no Negroes in any big league sports. Now there are so many, you don’t even know who they are.” Robinson himself sent Russell a telegram congratulating him and the Celtics, calling his hiring “one of the best efforts in breaching the gap between races.” Russell consistently dismissed talk that race played a role in his hiring. “If I thought for one second that Red offered me a job for social breakthrough, I would have stopped talking to him.” Still, Russell could not avoid race altogether, and chose to respond calmly when he was asked by a reporter if he would judge white and black players differently. “No, the most important factor is respect. In basketball, we respect a man for his ability, period.” For the most part, the press recognized that Russell was qualified for the job. “Russell deserves to be coach of a pro team,” columnist Melvin Durslag wrote in the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*. “He is engaged in a game for which he has a keen mind.”

While it was unclear whether Russell would succeed behind the bench, the timing of the announcement was a coup for Auerbach, the master motivator, as it took the focus off the Celtics 1-0 deficit and fired up the team by resolving the uncertainty over the future of the coaching position. With a second straight capacity crowd at the Garden urging them on in game two, the Celtics built a twenty point lead by early in the second quarter and led by as many as twenty-six en route to a 129-109 romp. Russell contributed twenty-four rebounds and nineteen points as Boston tied the series. The series shifted to Los Angeles for the third game, and Schaus shook up his starting lineup, replacing Hazzard and forward Rudy LaRusso with Gail Goodrich and Jim King, a pair of guards. Schaus’s goal was to counter Havlicek, who had scored twenty-one points in each of

the first two games. “No one in the league his size is even close to Havlicek in quickness,” Schaus said, and he assigned the speedy Goodrich to cover him, despite having to give up several inches. The smaller lineup worked at first, producing a tight back-and-forth contest featuring fifteen ties and fourteen lead changes until Boston broke the game open with a 27-7 run in the third quarter. Despite Schaus’s lineup changes, Havlicek again scored exactly twenty-one points, and the Celtics won 120-106 to regain the home-court advantage.

Two days later, the Celtics took a commanding 3-1 lead in the series despite surrendering a series-high forty-five to Jerry West and watching as Leroy Ellis had “the best game of his career,” scoring twenty-one points and grabbing ten rebounds after deciding to shed his knee brace. The Celtics had six players in double-figures, including Siegfried and Nelson, who helped build a ten point Boston lead early in the second quarter. Los Angeles cut the deficit to one later in the period, but Boston rallied again, and led 66-56 by halftime, and won 122-117. Much of the focus after the game was on the officials. At halftime, Joe Gushoe had been physically assaulted by a Los Angeles fan on the way to the dressing room, and after the game Schaus used some choice words to express his displeasure with the referees. “They killed us in the first half and we were never to come back ... It was unbelievable, ridiculous.” Then Schaus directed his ire at his rival on the Celtics bench. “Red Auerbach blasted the officials up in Boston after we beat ‘em the first game and has had his way since.” Predictably, a less emotional Jerry West focused on the real problem – the Celtics were outplaying them. “You don’t win or lose through the referees. I don’t want to talk about them.”

No one on the Los Angeles bench was complaining about the referees after the fifth game, as Bill Russell was whistled for his third foul nine minutes after the opening tip, sending him to the bench and causing the Garden crowd to jeer officials Earl Strom and Norm Drucker. The Lakers took full advantage, building a seventeen point lead while Ellis exploited Counts, collecting most of his seventeen points and fifteen rebounds while Russell was on the bench. When Russell returned to the game the tide turned, and Boston took a 74-72 lead four minutes

into the third quarter. As the crowd roared, the Celtics extended the lead to nine points, and their locker room was covered in burlap to protect it from the expected postgame celebration. But in the fourth quarter, West and Baylor, whose forty-one points led all scorers, took over the game while the Celtics uncharacteristically stopped moving on offense, waiting for Russell to bail them out. The flow of the game was also affected when the 24-second clocks stopped working with 5:15 remaining. Timekeeper Joe Costanza was forced to use a stopwatch, and P.A. announcer Weldon Haire announced “ten seconds” and “five seconds” to keep the players and the crowd informed. Russell finished with a team-high thirty-two points, but when West hit a seventeen foot jumper from the corner in the final minute, the Lakers took the lead for good. After the game, it was time for the Boston fans to try to get a piece of the referees. Strom and Drucker found themselves surrounded in the lobby of the Garden, with Drucker claiming a fan spit on him and Strom “pushing and shoving” his way through the mob, as both officials stopped just short of exchanging punches with the crowd. Eventually, the police interceded, forming a ring around Strom and Drucker and pulling away the rowdiest participants. It was just another night at an NBA playoff game.

Auerbach decided to make the most of the team’s second trip west, accepting an offer from Chuck Panama, a member of the 20th Century Fox film studio publicity staff, to visit the set of the upcoming “Batman” movie. Auerbach ate lunch with the executives, watched a few scenes being filmed, then posed for pictures. A photo of Auerbach surrounded by the four villains from the show – the Riddler, Cat Woman, the Penguin, and the Joker – was featured prominently in the *Boston Globe*; from a Laker perspective, Auerbach fit the prospective role of a fifth cartoon villain perfectly.

The anticipation for game six was so high in Los Angeles that the game sold out in less than an hour after the fifth game, and the Lakers arranged for closed-circuit television coverage in three local theaters at three dollars a head to handle the overflow. Those fans would not be disappointed. Russell had another strong performance, collecting twenty-two points and twenty-three rebounds, but Los Angeles led most of the way and won

123-115, led by West's thirty-two and a remarkable performance by Goodrich, who scored twenty-eight points to go along with six assists and four rebounds. His two baskets early in the fourth quarter wiped out a one point Boston advantage and put the Lakers ahead to stay. Stunningly, the series was going back to Boston for a seventh game.

Auerbach now knew his coaching career would end on a Thursday night in Boston, either with his ninety-eighth career playoff victory, and the Celtics' ninth championship, or a bitter loss to the Lakers after blowing a 3-1 lead in the series. Obviously, there was only one acceptable option, but rather than asking his players to win for him, Auerbach characteristically focused his pregame pep talk on them. Did *they* want people to spend the offseason asking them why *they* lost? And, by the way, if you lose you'll also lose \$700 a man in playoff money.

His players got the message. The first half was a defensive clinic, as Satch Sanders held Baylor to two points on one-for-nine shooting while K.C. smothered West (he shot two-for-nine). Boston raced to a 10-0 lead at the start – a spurt that was missed by local television viewers due to Channel 5's decision to join the game in progress fifteen minutes late – and led 53-38 at halftime. Auerbach's future replacement was as dominant as ever, finishing with thirty-two rebounds and six blocks to go along with a team-high twenty-five points despite playing all forty-eight minutes with a broken bone in his foot. The Celtics ran their lead to as many as nineteen points early in the third quarter, but the Lakers rallied, aided when Sanders headed to the bench with five fouls, the price of his excellent defensive work. He was replaced by Nelson, and Baylor scored sixteen in the second half while West led all scorers with thirty-six. Still, when the third quarter ended, Boston had added a point to their lead.

The Garden crowd was thoroughly enjoying themselves, and the cheering surged as the minutes ticked away in the fourth. With four minutes left, Boston held a comfortable thirteen point lead, but Los Angeles had whittled their deficit down to six with twenty seconds to go. As Auerbach puffed on his cigar – lit by a beaming Governor Volpe – the Celtics, with an assist from the Boston fans, nearly handed the game to the Lakers. As the

spectators crowded around and, in many cases, onto the floor in anticipation of the traditional postgame celebration/joyful riot on the parquet, there was barely room along the sidelines for players to stand to inbound the ball. "The people were really a menace by now," Havlicek later wrote, and he was forced to call a timeout to buy time for the officials and a few policemen to hold back the crowd. The end result was four Boston turnovers in those final moments, including a poor inbounds pass from K.C. Jones that was deflected and stolen by the Lakers, and a pair of mishaps when Havlicek and Sam Jones lost their balance while skidding through drinks that had been spilled on the floor. When Leroy Ellis hit a jumper to make the score 95-93 Boston with four seconds left, the crowd was stunned and silenced for the first time that night. With Auerbach fuming, later writing that "I never came closer to disaster," Sam Jones inbounded the ball to K.C., who tossed it along the baseline to Havlicek to run out the clock. As the buzzer sounded, Havlicek and his teammates were inundated by their adoring fans.

In the locker room, Fred Schaus reflected on another loss to the Celtics. "We came awfully close to putting that damn thing [Red's cigar] out," Schaus told reporters, and described the loss as "the most disappointing thing that has happened to me in six years as a pro coach." He resisted the temptation to blame the referees, placing the burden for the loss directly on himself and the Lakers players. "We said before the game that we wouldn't let the Celtics' press bother us. We said we'd handle it just like we did in games five and six. But we didn't. We forced shots, we got careless and then we ran out of time." And now the NBA was out of time to defeat Auerbach as a coach. After Russell and his teammates threw Auerbach into the showers one last time, the next coach of the Boston Celtics paid his mentor, who valued clutch play over statistics and determination over athleticism, the ultimate compliment. "Of all the Celtic teams, this is the shortest on ability and the longest on heart."

Chapter 11

Soul Force

IN THE FALL OF 1966, BILL RUSSELL reported to the Babson Institute, about twelve miles west of Boston in Wellesley, for his first training camp as the Celtics head coach. It was the beginning of a rough transition from player to player-coach. His teammates were in the awkward position of taking orders from a fellow player, albeit the Celtics most talented and longest tenured player. Publicly, most of them made positive comments and shrugged off any controversy. “He’s handled us before in practice and in games,” Havlicek told a reporter during camp, “and all he wants to do is win.” But Sam Jones and Larry Siegfried questioned his ability to do both jobs, privately at first, and later publicly, and before long the players were going behind Russell’s back and complaining to Auerbach.

Part of the problem was that Russell had listened to Auerbach’s advice to treat the players equally – something that Auerbach had never done, particularly with Russell. “Bill got some of the guys a little bit down on him early in the season because of his bluntness,” Auerbach said later that year. “They’d make a mistake and Russ would call it to their attention right away. It kind of backfired at first because they weren’t used to it.” Russell also erred in the other direction. After years of watching Auerbach yell at his “whipping boys” such as Tom Heinsohn, Don Nelson and Satch Sanders for what Russell believed was “no reason at all,” Russell decided to stop doing it. However, when Nelson and Sanders started the season slowly, Russell discovered that yelling at them improved their play. “[I]t dawned on me that it didn’t matter so much *why* I yelled at Satch

and Nelson; I just had to do it regularly, at certain intervals, the way you take vitamin pills.”

From a basketball strategy standpoint, Russell continued to rely on Auerbach’s small set of plays with their myriad of options. Russell also continued his disinterest in practice, allowing K.C. Jones to run the team if he was absent. Jones had originally planned to retire after the 1966 season and had accepted the head coaching job at Brandeis University after Auerbach suggested him to the school’s athletic director. But Auerbach, mindful of the transition that Russell faced, convinced Jones to stay for one more year, and facilitated an arrangement with Brandeis that was similar to the one Bob Cousy and Boston College had agreed to four years earlier – Jones would help recruit for a year, and take the job full time in 1967.

Meanwhile, Auerbach was settling into his role as a full-time general manager, and made his first player trade since acquiring Russell in 1956. Willie Naulls had retired, leaving the Celtics with a hole at forward, and Auerbach needed to find a player with more scoring punch than Sanders or Nelson could provide. In Baltimore, Bailey Howell had clashed with his head coach Paul Seymour, who felt that the twenty-nine-year-old forward was “over the hill” and deserved a pay cut despite averaging seventeen points and nearly ten rebounds a game the previous season. Even though Seymour was fired at the end of the season by general manager Buddy Jeannette, replaced by St. Louis assistant coach Mike Farmer, Howell had worn out his welcome. On September 1, Baltimore traded Howell to the Celtics for Mel Counts.

The Middleton, Tennessee native was thrilled to be playing for a winning team and loved the Celtics emphasis on teamwork. “I’ve never played with Bill before, but the thing that impresses everybody is that he’s so unselfish out there ... he’s always giving himself up on offense to help somebody else.” For his part, Russell knew what kind of a player he was getting. “I’ve always admired the way Howell plays. He never takes anything from anybody. He’s been a Celtic-type player for a long time.” Howell did have to adjust to playing on a running team, which was a challenge, but his teammates and new coach appreciated his effort. “Joining the Celtics made him a happy player,” Russell

said that later that season. “He doesn’t care how much he scores. He just wants to win.”

Bailey Howell was a man of contradictions. He was entering his seventh season as the twenty-third leading scorer in NBA history, yet winning was more important to him. Off the court, he was an insurance salesman and dedicated family man who would often fly home immediately after road games – on his own dime – and frequently quoted the bible in a soft-spoken drawl. During the upcoming 1967 playoffs Howell would leave a game against Philadelphia early to race to his four-year old daughter’s side after learning that she had fallen out of a second-story window and broke her leg. But once the game started, no one played with more focus or reckless abandon. “I don’t have the ability of some of the players in this league,” Howell said earlier in his career, “so I can’t let up. I have to try as hard as I can all of the time.” Havlicek had seen that side of Howell as an opponent. “A couple of years before he joined the team, he was playing such a rough game against us one night in Providence that our broadcaster, Johnny Most, bellowed, ‘Bailey Howell’s got twelve elbows!’ He was one of the pushingest, shovingest guys I have ever seen. If someone got mad at him for that, he’d just laugh at him. He was a physical player who wouldn’t back down from anything, but I never saw him in a fight.”

Howell was also described by Havlicek a “southern gentleman” who had an enlightened attitude about race relations. Howell had honed his jump shooting skills while setting a Tennessee prep school scoring record with 31.2 points per game, and then developed into an All-American under coach Babe McCarthy at Mississippi State. In his senior year, the Bulldogs were 24-1 as their undersized 6’7” center averaged twenty-seven points and fifteen rebounds, but despite being ranked third in the AP poll, school officials refused to allow the team to play in the NCAA tournament because they did not want to play against blacks. Howell revealed his personal feelings on the matter later that year, when he had no objection to playing against blacks as a member of the Baton Rouge Teamsters in the 1959 AAU tournament.

As a pro, Howell found similar personal success, but had played on six consecutive losing teams before joining the Celtics.

The Pistons had selected him as the second overall pick in the draft, and Howell, now playing forward, lived up to expectations, regularly averaging double-figures in rebounds and twenty points a game in Detroit, punctuated by some phenomenal games, such as a twenty-eight point, thirty-two rebound performance against Chamberlain and the Warriors in 1961. Howell eventually broke the Pistons' career scoring record and was named team captain, but by 1964 he was stripped of his captaincy by head coach Charlie Wolf during a dispute between Wolf and a group of the other players. Publicly, Wolf refused to blame Howell, and framed his decision in noble terms. "I did it to avoid any pressure on him," Wolf told reporters. "It was done so he could concentrate on basketball." But as the Pistons hit rock bottom that season, finishing 23-57, the team cleaned house, and Howell was traded to Baltimore in an eight player deal that brought Terry Dischinger and two other Bullets back in return.

Now Howell had been traded again, and he was soon joined by another new arrival. That summer, Wayne Embry had decided to retire from basketball and take a position with Pepsi-Cola in Cincinnati. Embry had struggled during the 1966 season, failing to average double-figures in points or rebounds for the first time in his career, and was tired of being blamed for the Royals failure to win a title. "I had made five All-Star teams," Embry later explained, "but all I ever heard was that the reason the Royals never went anywhere in the playoffs was that they needed a center. This began to erode my confidence, and after a while I said the hell with it ..." Despite his decision to retire, Embry played in the annual Maurice Stokes Game at Kutsher's County Club, and Russell and Auerbach took the opportunity to try to change his mind. When Embry made his retirement "official" on September 2, Auerbach asked Royals general manager Pepper Wilson for official permission to negotiate with the burly center. Two weeks later they had a deal – Auerbach gave the Royals \$6,000 for his rights, and Embry walked away from his soda business plans.

Embry was the polar opposite of the man he was replacing, Mel Counts. Embry was four inches shorter than the slender Counts, yet played much bigger and tougher, setting "the meanest picks in the league," according to Darrall Imhoff.

Drafted by the St. Louis Hawks in the third round out of Miami of Ohio in 1958, Embry was traded to Cincinnati from St. Louis as part of the Clyde Lovellette deal before ever playing for the Hawks, and developed into a serviceable jump shooter who worked the pick-and-roll with teammates Oscar Robertson and Jack Twyman to perfection. In Boston, Embry could settle into a part-time role behind Russell, and the team spirit on the Celtics rejuvenated him. "Red gave me my confidence back. I might only get a couple of rebounds, but after the game he'd mention it and slap me on the back. That was important. I was a man again."

As the season began, the Celtics got off to a 15-5 start, despite Russell's growing pains as a coach, but the 76ers set an even more blistering pace. While Russell struggled with substitutions and strategy, the 76ers new coach was veteran Alex Hannum, who reunited with Chamberlain to create one of the best NBA teams in history, a squad labeled by Fred Schaus during the season as "a team so powerful it scares you just thinking about playing them." Chamberlain finally bought into the "team" concept, and his teammates benefited from his new-found passing ability, as Chamberlain collected nearly eight assists a game, good enough for third place in the NBA behind Guy Rodgers and Oscar Robertson. Chamberlain also led the league in rebounds again, and while he cut back on his shooting, attempting forty percent fewer shots than the year before, he made sixty-eight percent of them, smashing the NBA record of fifty-four percent that he had established the previous season. As a result, his scoring average dipped only slightly, from 33.5 to 24.1, still good enough for fifth best in the league. Using virtually the same players as the year before, Philadelphia started the season 15-1, won eighteen of their first twenty games, and held a 46-4 record as the calendar turned to January. Boston was eight games behind at that point, and despite winning five of nine games against Philadelphia during the regular season, the final margin was the same: the 76ers finished at 68-13, the Celtics 60-21. The Celtics reign appeared to be over, but their chances were buoyed by their season-series victory, the weakness of the rest of the NBA (besides Boston and Philadelphia, only Bill Sharman's San Francisco Warriors had finished above .500, at 44-37), and

the new playoff format, which eliminated first-round byes for division champions and deprived the 76ers of a few extra days of rest.

Boston and Philadelphia both won their opening-round series in four games, with the Celtics cruising past the Knicks while the 76ers were shocked by the Royals in game one of their series before rallying to win three in a row and advance. Then the 76ers exorcised some demons by toying with the Celtics. Philadelphia led by as many as twenty-five points in the opener, and won by fourteen as Russell was decked by an inadvertent Chet Walker hit to the stomach and missed part of the game. It was a sign of things to come. Sam Jones shot three-for-sixteen in game two back in Boston, and the Celtics lost again, 107-102. By the time the series returned to the Garden, Philadelphia was on the verge of a sweep, but Boston temporarily survived with a 121-117 win that Russell clinched with two late free throws. The victory was marred by a bench-clearing brawl, touched off by a hard foul by Matt Goukas on Sam Jones that included a Celtics fan nearly decking a 76ers player before being tackled by the police.

A surreal atmosphere greeted the players at Convention Hall in Philadelphia for the fifth game. 76ers fans, armed with eggs, oranges and coins to torment the Celtics from courtside and up in the balcony, instead fired upon their own players when Boston led by nine at the end of the first quarter and clung to a three point edge at halftime. But in the second half it was the 76ers who were playing like champions, outscoring Boston 75-46 after the break as Chamberlain led the way with twenty-nine points, thirty-six rebounds and a game-high thirteen assists while four of his teammates also scored twenty or more. As the minutes and seconds counted down on the 140-116 76ers romp, fans carried a banner through the stands that read "Boston is dead!" and the entire crowd picked up the chant. After eight consecutive titles, Boston had been dethroned. The 76ers then defeated the Warriors in six games, and Chamberlain finally had his championship.

THE CELTICS REACTION was a mixture of determination and renewed resolve in the face of an embarrassing loss. Russell and

Havlicek set the tone at the team's breakup dinner. "We're only dead until October," said Havlicek, and Russell was even more confident. "The Celtics are not dead. They aren't even mortally wounded. I expect us to have a better record next year than we did this season." While the press and most fans felt that the Celtics dynasty was over, their dismissive attitude only fueled the team's desire to get back on top. "Over and over that summer, people kept asking, 'What happened?' It became very stale after a while, and I got sick of hearing it," Havlicek recalled. Russell and many of the other players heard similar comments as they walked around town, and, as Havlicek described it, "we all came back determined that we weren't going to listen to that again the following summer."

Russell's first order of business was learning from his rookie coaching mistakes, which even his friend Wilt Chamberlain had mentioned after the playoffs, telling reporters that the Celtics had been "outcoached." Instead of worrying about asserting his new authority, Russell realized he needed to follow Auerbach's example of listening to his players instead of always dictating. When the Celtics traveled to Puerto Rico for an exhibition game, Russell made his intentions clear during a meeting with his veteran players in his hotel room: "There is a century of basketball experience in this room, and I expect you fellows to help me." Russell had already appointed Havlicek as team captain during the previous season, and now he actively solicited advice from his other core veterans. Havlicek later said, "This was the biggest thing to come out of camp. The year before ... we didn't want to interfere."

On the court, the team was largely unchanged, except for the retirement of K.C. Jones, whose minutes were redistributed between Siegfried and rookie Mal Graham. The Celtics roared to a 14-3 start, including a pair of satisfying victories over the 76ers, and held onto at least a share of first place for most of November and December before a three game losing streak at the end of the year. Injuries to Siegfried and Sam Jones then slowed the Celtics pace, and Boston posted a mediocre 29-21 record over the final fifty games of the season. Even when Boston played well, such as during a 12-5 run during February, there were signs of trouble. On February 11, the Celtics were blown

out by the Lakers at the Garden 141-104, prompting a postgame visit from their general manager. "You might say we had a little 'chat,'" Auerbach told reporters. "If they continue to play as they did against the Lakers, they might as well join the Boston schoolboy league." But a month later, Auerbach was praising Russell's coaching. "As far as I'm concerned, he's done the job. ... He forgets a few little things once in a while when he's coaching, like how many team fouls there are on the ball club. But in the real important areas, like knowing when to substitute, when to press, and when to slow things up, he's very capable."

Russell followed through on his preseason words to listen to his fellow players, although Wayne Embry recalled that it sometimes provided more humor than inspiration. "[W]e had lost a couple of games and Bill had a team meeting. Russell said, 'All right, we haven't been playing worth a damn, so what's wrong?'" After a long silence, and a second request from Russell to speak their minds, Larry Siegfried proceeded to rip into each of his teammates, critiquing their play on the court and their extra-curricular activities off of it. Siegfried concluded his rant by turning on his coach. "And you, Russell, you could use some more sleep, too." Embry and his teammates were stunned. "People were sitting there with their mouths open, including Russell," Embry remembered. When no else wanted to speak, Russell ended the meeting and walked out of the room. It was a typical "Siegfried moment," whose outspoken demeanor and tendency to, in the words of Tom Heinsohn, "accentuate the positive to emphasize the negative," such as complaining about being tired when he played too much and then complaining if he was benched, earned him the nickname "Flakey."

For the second straight season, the Celtics finished eight games behind the 76ers, despite Philadelphia slipping to a 62-20 mark. Boston began the postseason against the Detroit Pistons, who were back in the playoffs for the first time in five years. Donnie Butcher, who had taken over the coaching duties from then player-coach Dave DeBusschere late in the 1967 season, had led the Pistons to a 40-42 record, blending young scoring star Dave Bing with DeBusschere, former Royal Happy Hairston and Terry Dischinger, who was returning from military service. Boston held serve in the first game, but Detroit won two in a row

to take the home-court advantage away from the Celtics. Russell reacted quickly, replacing the still ailing Siegfried in the starting lineup with Havlicek, who responded by nearly posting three consecutive triple-doubles to spark Boston to a 4-2 series victory.

A different story was unfolding in Philadelphia, where the 76ers also posted a 4-2 series victory over the Knicks, but lost Billy Cunningham to a broken right wrist when he tangled with Phil Jackson in game four. It had already been a much tougher season for Alex Hannum than the year before. First, Chamberlain held out for more money, and when he returned with just one game left in the exhibition season, he decided he was going to lead the league in assists. Chamberlain technically achieved his goal because Oscar Robertson missed seventeen games with an injury (Robertson still edged Wilt on a per game basis) but the 76ers suffered as a team. Chamberlain would stop shooting for long stretches, including one game against San Francisco when he took no shots at all, and when he passed to a teammate Chamberlain expected them to shoot – so he could have a chance at an assist – and would seethe if they passed the ball along to someone else, subsequently ignoring them in favor of someone who would take the shot as soon as they received the ball. The result was a splintered locker room instead of a cohesive unit. Hannum was not pleased, and blasted the whole team for suffering from a title hangover. “It’s obvious that we’ve got some complacent players because we haven’t been winning like we did a year ago. And I’m not willing to accept the excuse that last year was an exceptional season and never would be repeated.” What Hannum left unsaid was that he might have been part of the problem. After all, Auerbach had helped motivate the Celtics to eight straight titles, while Hannum had yet to stay with the same team for more than three years in a row.

However, there was also a sense that a dark cloud was following the 76ers, and Cunningham’s injury was simply the latest incident. He later recalled how difficult the playoffs were for him. “Sitting and watching on the bench almost drove me crazy. Sometimes I was up yelling on every play. I’d see a referee miss a call and I’d want to rush out on the floor and grab him.” In addition to Cunningham, Philadelphia were also without guard Larry Costello, whose playing career had ended when he

tore an Achilles tendon in December, and even the 76ers new arena, the Spectrum, lost sections of its roof during a pair of wind storms in February and March, forcing the 76ers to move six regular season games and the entire series against the Knicks to Convention Hall and the Palestra. Then, the tumultuous events of 1968 in America intervened and cast a deeper pall on the 76ers repeat bid.

THE 1960'S HAD BEEN DEFINED by the struggle for civil rights, and increasingly, the war in Vietnam. The country was on edge after two summers of race and war protests, and news of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam at the end of January 1968 pushed many moderates to the breaking point. The Vietcong attacks had shattered the Johnson administration's claims of an impending victory, generating larger and more frequent anti-war demonstrations, and now the re-election hopes of the President were fading. Even before Tet began, Senator Eugene McCarthy had already chosen to step up his primary challenge of President Johnson that had begun back in November, arriving in New Hampshire on January 25 with \$400 and faint hopes of winning. McCarthy was polling in the low double-digits, and was still being confused with the infamous Republican Senator *Joseph McCarthy* of Wisconsin. With the help of a dedicated staff and the depressing news from Vietnam, McCarthy fell just 230 votes short of winning the primary on March 12. Four days later, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, sensing an opportunity to capitalize on Johnson's weakened condition, announced his own candidacy. By the end of the month, with polls showing McCarthy leading by forty points in the Wisconsin primary, Johnson withdrew from the race with a dramatic announcement at the conclusion of a televised speech on Vietnam.

Martin Luther King watched these events with deepening regret. Johnson had pushed through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and his War on Poverty was having positive effects among poor blacks and whites alike. But King knew that Johnson was risking all of his achievements by focusing on a different war in Southeast Asia. "There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I, and others have been waging

in America,” King had said during a speech at New York’s Riverside Church almost a year earlier, on April 4, 1967. Johnson’s Poverty Program had held “a real promise of hope for the poor – both black and white,” but “[t]hen came the build-up in Vietnam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war... So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.” By the beginning of April 1968, outgoing War on Poverty leader Sargent Shriver offered his tacit agreement for this argument. While the federal budget included \$1.8 billion for poverty programs, Shriver estimated that \$10 to \$15 billion a year would be needed if the program was to make a real difference.

For his part, King was continuing to focus on the troubles at home. On March 28, 1968, he led nearly 5,000 people on a march in Memphis, Tennessee in support of over 1,200 striking garbage collectors, who had been fighting for the right to unionize in order to bargain for safer working conditions and a living wage. When some of the protesters began breaking windows and looting stores, the police intervened, and the event became a public relations disaster for King. Over 300 people were arrested, 62 suffered injuries, and sixteen-year-old Larry Payne was shot to death by a Memphis patrolman who claimed the teenager was wielding a knife as part of a group of young men carrying television sets from a local Sears store. King understood the negative impact of the violence, but was undeterred in his support for the (mostly black) garbage collectors. On April 3 – two days after Payne’s funeral – King returned to Memphis and spoke at the Mason Temple, stressing that the best way to make progress was to leverage their economic power and boycott white businesses instead of smashing their windows. “We don’t have to argue with anybody. We don’t have to curse and go around acting bad with our words. We don’t need any bricks and bottles, we don’t need any Molotov cocktails, we just need to go around to these stores, and to these massive industries in our country, and say, ‘God sent us by here, to say to you that you’re not treating his children right.’” This was a familiar theme, one that King had spoken so eloquently about during his famous “I have a dream” speech in

Washington, D.C. in 1963: “We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.”

However, King’s voice was beginning to be drowned out by more militant leaders such as Malcolm X, who felt that it was time to use *physical* force to achieve racial equality. King was aware that despite his words of peace, he would be blamed by many whites for the violent rioting that had plagued American cities the past few summers, and that their anger would become focused on him. He ended his speech in Memphis that night by telling his audience about the bomb threat that had delayed his flight from Atlanta that morning, and mentioned the threats he had received since returning to Memphis. King told them that he refused to back down because the “struggle” had become more important than his personal safety. “Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will.” The next evening, April 4, King was shot by a sniper while he was standing on the balcony of his room at the Lorraine Motel. An hour later, he died at St. Joseph’s Hospital.

On April 5, Bill Russell and the Celtics were in Philadelphia, preparing for game one of the Eastern Division Finals against the 76ers. Russell later told reporters he “was in a state of shock all day,” and when Auerbach called a team meeting the team debated whether to play that night. Around 5pm, Russell called Chamberlain, who despite being less publicly vocal than Russell about racial issues was deeply moved by King’s death, and they reluctantly decided that it was better to play rather than leave the expectant crowd disappointed and possibly fuel an escalation of the violence of the night before. As word of King’s death spread across the country, tension filled black urban neighborhoods as rioting, or the threat of rioting, took hold and remained a threat for several days. While some cities, such as Washington, D.C., exploded into violence that required thousands of troops to restore order, there were milder outbreaks in Philadelphia and Boston. In Roxbury and North Dorchester, predominately black areas of Boston, hundreds of

windows were smashed by rock-wielding youths, who roamed the streets throughout the night stoning and overturning cars and looting dozens of stores while a persistent late-night drizzle added to the gloomy atmosphere. While there were some serious incidents reported, including the pelting of a group of firemen with rocks, and an attack on a 26-year-old man who happened to be sitting in his car with his girlfriend when a brick was thrown through his windshield, the police credited local volunteers with helping to contain the violence. Groups such as the Roxbury Youth Alliance and the United Citizens' Association coordinated their efforts through NEGRO (New England Grass Root Organizations), which dispatched volunteers such as James Jefferson and Duane Buchanan to flash points, armed only with loudspeakers, calming words, and mimeographed sheets of paper they distributed that read "Cool it and survive." Larger daytime demonstrations in downtown Boston, including a gathering of 15,000 people at Post Office Square and another on the Boston Common across from the State House, drew peaceful, racially mixed crowds, many of whom carried placards that displayed somber yet hopeful messages such as "Peace is what he died for. And Peace is what we'll remember him for in our hearts."

As dusk fell after the first full day after King's death there was still plenty of tension throughout the country. While 76ers general manager Jack Ramsay huddled with Auerbach and Celtics owner Marvin Kratter and agreed to postpone the second game of the series, Boston mayor Kevin White was reaching an agreement with public television station WGBH to carry James Brown's concert live from the Boston Garden. Fearful of what might happen if 19,000 mostly black fans gathered on Causeway Street, White, who had only been in office a few months, decided that televising the event would reduce the size of the crowd and provide a welcome distraction for the entire city, perhaps even convincing some would-be rioters to stay at home and watch. The concert itself nearly deteriorated into chaos when some black fans rushed the stage, but Brown skillfully defused the situation by telling the (mostly white) Boston policemen who were ready to come to his aid to stay back, and instead calmly urged the fans to get off the stage and respect each other and himself.

Meanwhile in Philadelphia, a group of players who really did not want to play managed to play a fairly entertaining game in front of a group of distracted and somewhat disinterested fans and a television audience back in Boston. The Celtics won 127-118, led by Havlicek's thirty-five points, Russell's twenty-two rebounds, and twenty-eight points from Sam Jones. Both teams were as beat up physically as they were emotionally, and the postponement of the second game provided a welcome three extra days off. Luke Jackson had a partially torn right hamstring, Chamberlain was getting daily cortisone shots for a left big toe injury, and Hal Greer was wearing a brace on a sore knee. On the Celtics side, Siegfried was still suffering from back trouble and was further hampered by a bad cold. More importantly, the delay allowed Russell and Chamberlain to attend King's funeral in Atlanta.

When the series resumed in a somewhat calmer Boston, the 76ers regrouped with 115-106 victory that allowed them to regain the home-court advantage, and pressed the Celtics to the edge of elimination with two consecutive victories. Russell did his best to keep the team loose. "Listen, we're down three to one. We're not supposed to win anything. We should stay loose and just go out there and play the way we can." The 76ers had been shooting forty-four percent from the floor, but the Celtics regained their defensive edge, holding Philadelphia to thirty-eight percent beginning in the second half of game five. Havlicek was brilliant again, collecting twenty-nine points and handing out ten assists, and Howell added twenty-two as Boston won decisively, 122-104. Now Philadelphia was feeling the pressure, and dropped game six in Boston despite forty points from Greer and the absence of Satch Sanders, who had pulled a lower back muscle during the previous game. The Boston fans, remembering the actions of their counterparts from the year before, joyously chanted "Philly is dead!" as the clock ran out.

The Celtics had come back to tie the series by playing their characteristic blend of smothering defense and precision offense, repeatedly running pick-and-roll plays to keep Chamberlain working on defense. When the team returned to Philadelphia for the seventh game, Havlicek and Nelson were not taking any chances. Prior to the Celtics victory in game five, they

had eaten hot sausage sandwiches and went to a movie, and now they retraced their steps, finding the same sausage stand before visiting a local theater. Russell spent the day considering strategy, and decided to try Embry on Chamberlain, in hopes of harassing his rival without having to worry about himself fouling out prematurely. As game time approached, the team was loose in the locker room, exchanging jokes as Russell dealt with his nerves by avoiding addressing the team directly. “You can’t get up and give a pep talk because it would make things more tense,” he said later. As the teams prepared to take the floor, a 76ers fan held out a banana in Embry’s direction and yelled out “Here, this is for apes.” The outburst was particularly distasteful in light of recent events, and Embry later said he would have punched the loudmouthed fan if Auerbach had not interceded and separated them.

Philadelphia’s shooting woes continued, making just sixteen of fifty-five shots in the first half, and fell behind 38-26 midway through the second quarter before rallying to within six at halftime. Wally Jones scored twelve of his eighteen points in the third, as the 76ers briefly held a pair of one-point leads, but their offense continued to struggle. Chamberlain, who grabbed thirty-four boards, took just two shots in the second half and finished with only fourteen points. Afterwards, there were ridiculous rumors that Chamberlain was deliberately trying to lose, but according to Bailey Howell, the real explanation was much simpler – “Any time he got the ball and was going to shoot, we just grabbed his arms and hacked him pretty good.”

In the fourth, Philadelphia took an 81-79 lead with 8:30 left on a ten foot jumper by Jackson, but a Russell hook shot and a pair of free throws by Havlicek put Boston back in front. The Celtics extended their advantage to 93-88 with under four minutes remaining, as Havlicek hit a pair of jumpers sandwiched around an assist on a Howell layup, but the 76ers trailed by just three, 98-95, when they called timeout with thirty-two seconds left. After a missed jumper by Wally Jones, Chamberlain and Nelson fought for the rebound and a jump ball was called. Chamberlain won the tip but after Walker grabbed the deflection and drove to the basket, Russell blocked his shot – his tenth of the game – then grabbed the rebound when Greer was unable to

convert a follow-up. The 76ers were forced to foul Sam Jones, whose two free throws with ten seconds left sealed Philadelphia's fate. Walker added a meaningless free throw, then Embry grabbed the game's final rebound, dribbled out the clock, and yelled "Tear down those signs!" as he shook his fist at the "Boston is dead!" banners that were scattered throughout the stands.

Afterwards, an obviously relieved Russell faced the media. "Yes, this is the most satisfying victory of my career – so far. But we haven't won anything until we win the championship." The 76ers were gracious after the game, blaming themselves for the loss, and Wally Jones felt they were too cautious. "I know I passed up shots I should have taken." It was obvious that Cunningham's absence had been a factor, and Hannum, who inexplicably compared his team's plight to Charlie Brown of *Peanuts* – portraying the Celtics in the role of Lucy always pulling away the football at the last moment, despite the fact that the 76ers had defeated the Celtics the year before – also gave Russell credit for improving as a coach. "Russell did a fine job of coaching this year. He is more aware of situations. Some things he did last year – well, I just had to scratch my head at them. There was none of that this season." When the Celtics returned home at 12:55 the next morning, 300 fans met them at Logan Airport, offering them encouragement as they prepared to face the Los Angeles Lakers in the NBA Finals.

Boston had won the season series four games to three, but that was a misleading statistic, as the Lakers had won the last three meetings, including that blowout victory in the Garden back in February. The 1967-68 season was a comeback year for Los Angeles, as the previous season had been a disaster. Los Angeles lost Bob Boozer and Jim King in the expansion draft, then the Lakers made two ill-advised trades, shipping Leroy Ellis to Baltimore for underachiever Jim Barnes, followed by a midseason three-way deal that sent veteran forward Rudy LaRusso to Detroit and brought former Celtic Mel Counts to Los Angeles from Baltimore. Team chemistry further suffered as Baylor missed eleven games and West sat out fifteen with injuries, and the Lakers collapsed to a 36-45 record. After being swept by the Warriors in the first round of the playoffs, coach

Fred Schaus was moved upstairs as general manager, replaced as coach by Butch van Breda Kolff, who had made a name for himself by coaching Bill Bradley at Princeton.

Van Breda Kolff's first order of business was to diversify the offense, stressing the need to get others involved besides just West and Baylor, which was a reasonable approach for two reasons. The team's lack of cohesion had played a major role in the team's collapse the year before, and his two stars were brittle, having missed a total of 54 regular season games over the past three seasons. Van Breda Kolff's worries were well-placed. West proceeded to break his left hand during a preseason exhibition game against Baltimore, broke his nose twice during the regular season, and suffered from a groin pull and a bruised hip that limited him to only fifty-one games. Still, the Lakers improved to 52-30 with essentially the same cast, as van Breda Kolff coaxed career years out of Counts (eleven points and nine rebounds a game) and second-year guard Archie Clark, who averaged nearly twenty points a night, nearly doubling his production as a rookie.

The Lakers finished four games behind the Hawks, but benefited from the bizarre playoff format the NBA had adopted the year before, when they expanded the field from six to eight teams. Instead of pitting the division champion against the fourth-place team in the first round, the league seeded them against the third-place club. In 1967, this had not made a difference, as only three games had separated the third and fourth-place teams in both divisions, and they were all defeated by the four higher seeded clubs in the opening round of the playoffs. 1968 was a different story. While the third-place Knicks had also finished three games ahead of the Pistons in the East, the introduction of two expansion teams, both in the West, combined with a balanced schedule, allowed the Chicago Bulls to capture the final playoff spot in the division with just a 29-53 record, 14 games behind third-place San Francisco. The second-place Lakers easily defeated the weak Bulls team in five games, while the Hawks, holders of the second-best record in the NBA, and were upset in six games by the Warriors, who were still a strong foe despite the absence of Nate Thurmond due to a knee injury. Los Angeles then swept San Francisco to return to the Finals.

The sweep gave the Lakers eight days off before taking on the Celtics, and van Breda Kolff, who worried that his team would have trouble shaking off the rust, was proven correct when West and Baylor got off to a cool start and the Lakers fell behind by eleven in the first quarter. The Lakers then regrouped, and built a fifteen point lead, but midway through the fourth quarter, West and Baylor went cold again, combining to make just three baskets in seventeen attempts, and Los Angeles's lead evaporated. Boston took advantage, holding on for 107-101 win that ended their three game losing streak against the Lakers. The teams then exchanged victories, and the turning point in the series came near the end of game four, as Jerry West sprained his left ankle while diving for a loose ball with the Lakers comfortably ahead. The series was tied at two games apiece, heading back to Boston, but West would be plagued by the injury.

The fifth game was a classic, with the Celtics building a lead of nineteen points in the first quarter, then withstanding a Lakers comeback and reconstructing an eighteen point edge by the third. The Lakers kept clawing back – with some help from Celtics turnovers – cutting the deficit to six midway through the fourth quarter, and then West sent the game to overtime with a layup in the final seconds of regulation. All of the Celtics knew they were on the verge of squandering the game and the series. “I felt terrible,” Havlicek said after the game. “The game was ours and we gave it back. We’d come so far [the comeback against Philadelphia] and now this. I told myself we had to win when I came back on the floor for the overtime.” Fittingly, Havlicek rose to the occasion. After West scored his thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth points of the night to tie the game at 117-117, Havlicek sunk a twenty foot jumper with thirty-eight seconds left. Then Russell blocked Baylor’s attempt at the equalizer, and Nelson sealed the game with a free throw.

Back in Los Angeles, Havlicek poured in forty points, Boston shot over fifty percent from the floor and were nearly perfect from the free throw line as they regained their title with a 124-109 victory. The Celtics led by twenty at halftime and had no intention of blowing another large lead. West, increasingly hampered by the ankle injury, was held to twenty-two points, and

Baylor scored twenty-eight, while being outplayed by two of the Celtics “role players.” Siegfried scored twenty-two unexpected points, and Bailey Howell had a terrific game with thirty points, eleven rebounds and three assists. After the game, the greatest praise was reserved for Russell. “I have never seen Bill play better than he did during this series,” said Elgin Baylor. “He was the difference.” Russell’s eleven points and nineteen rebounds in the deciding game understated his contributions, as described by Phil Elderkin of *The Christian Science Monitor*. “Russell was the enforcer again – blocking shots, intimidating people on the boards and substituting like the second-coming of Auerbach.” His mentor agreed, and took on the critics of his successor, telling reporters, “[i]n those last three games we had with Philly, and the last two with Los Angeles, he made all the right moves.”

In the middle of the boisterous postgame celebration, Russell cleared out the locker room, including owner Marvin Kratter, and turned to Howell, easily the team’s most religious member, to lead the team in prayer. It was a perfect way to end the season, which had been born in the aftermath of a disappointing loss over a year earlier in Philadelphia, and was recently overshadowed by a much deeper and profound loss for the entire country. Now a black man, the first black man to coach a team to a major pro championship, turned to a white Southerner to add a poignant postscript to the season.

Chapter 12

Pride

NO ONE CELEBRATED MORE THAT NIGHT in Los Angeles than Wayne Embry, who had finally won his first NBA championship after ten seasons in the league. Embry eventually succumbed to the alcohol he had consumed, passing out in a hallway of the team's hotel. The burly center later recalled that his teammates eventually got him into bed – in the room vacated by Auerbach, who had taken an early flight back East. “[T]he guys just got together and drank all night. Hey, we had a good time.” Embry had played a key role against Philadelphia, defending Wilt Chamberlain at times, but was used less often against the Lakers, scoring just fourteen points in the entire series. Those would be his last games as a Celtic. While Embry was sleeping off his hangover, the Milwaukee Bucks were selecting him in the 1968 NBA expansion draft.

The NBA was expanding for a third consecutive year, adding the Bucks and Phoenix Suns to raise the number of teams to fourteen. Four years earlier, the league's expansion plans suffered a setback when the Chicago Zephyrs, the first new team in the NBA in a decade, had relocated to Baltimore after what owner Dave Trager described as “two financially disastrous seasons” in Chicago. But by 1966, the NBA was back in Chicago with a new team, the Bulls, as Dick Klein and four other local businessmen eagerly paid \$1.6 million to join the circuit. Then the league expanded their Western presence by adding the San Diego Rockets and Seattle Supersonics a year later. Each of these teams were stocked through a combination of college draft picks and a special expansion draft of veteran players. While the

specific rules varied slightly each year, the process in 1968 was typical. Milwaukee and Phoenix, who had each paid a \$2 million franchise fee, selected sixth and seventh in the first round of the college draft in April, with the Bucks winning a coin flip to claim the higher pick, which they used to select 6'8" center Charlie Paulk of Northeastern Oklahoma ahead of Gary Gregor. The two new teams then drafted at the end of each subsequent round, with the Suns selecting ahead of the Bucks in even-numbered rounds, and the Bucks making the higher choice in the odd-numbered rounds. Later, in preparation for the expansion draft, the other teams each submitted the names of seven players as a "protected list." Milwaukee and Phoenix could then select any unprotected player, with each established team having the right to protect an additional player when one of their players was chosen.

The Celtics had been mostly unaffected in the past two expansion drafts, losing young role players Ron Bonham and John Thompson in 1966, and then guard Jim Barnett a year later. Since the new expansion teams valued youth over experience, the Celtics were able to retain the core of their team, despite having to leave some of their veterans unprotected. In 1968, the Celtics followed their usual formula, protecting Russell, Havlicek, Sam Jones, Howell, Sanders, Siegfried and Nelson, leaving Embry unprotected. However, the Bucks took Embry in spite of his age, knowing that they were likely to finish their inaugural season with a poor enough record to have a shot at drafting UCLA's superstar center Lew Alcindor. Embry would be an adequate stop gap until then.

While expansion was weakening the top teams in the NBA (in addition to Embry, the Lakers had lost Gail Goodrich), the growth of the league was symbolic of the rising popularity of pro basketball. The NBA had a new million-dollar national television contract with ABC, and attendance had increased seventeen percent for the 1967-68 season. Although half of that increase was due to the new expansion teams, the NBA felt secure enough to increase the minimum salaries for rookies and veterans to \$10,000 and \$12,000, respectively. In November 1968, NBA commissioner Walter Kennedy announced the formation of "NBA Properties," a marketing company that, in conjunction with the Licensing Corporation of America, would

officially affix an NBA trademark on basketballs and other related equipment in exchange for a cut of the profits. Licensing Corp. Chairman Jay Emmett cheerfully predicted \$150 million in annual sales, based on their experience with a similar arrangement with Major League Baseball. Commissioner Kennedy acknowledged the league's interest in generating extra revenue, but chose to emphasize the charitable possibilities of the venture. "Our game in the NBA has grown tremendously in popularity in the last five years and we would like to show, in some measure, our appreciation for this support on a community level. I can think of no better way of showing our gratitude than by donating basketball equipment where it is most needed by the young people in depressed areas of our cities." Left unsaid was that each of those kids would be dribbling a basketball with the NBA logo on it, a symbol of basketball excellence, a far cry from a decade and a half earlier, when even a budding college superstar like Bill Russell did not consider the NBA to be a viable career option.

Throughout the 1960's, the NBA had faced a series of challengers for basketball fans' pocketbooks. The ABL had faded nearly as quickly as it had arrived, and now the AAU, which during the 1950's had positioned itself as an alternative career path for talented players, was a shell of its former self, and had even surrendered its amateur dominance to the NCAA. From 1935 through 1956, an AAU coach had led every U.S. Olympic basketball team, and AAU players were regularly well represented. But in 1960, Pete Newell of California coached a team of NCAA All-Stars to victory at the Olympic trials – including a twenty-seven point blowout in the Finals against the Peoria Caterpillars – and stocked what was arguably the best U.S. team of all time with seven college players. That year, three AAU teams had been invited to the Olympic trials. Four years later, just two teams were included, and by 1968 only a single AAU all-star squad participated. The International Basketball Federation (IBF) made the AAU's fall official in 1972, when they stopped recognizing the AAU as the official organizing body for the U.S. Olympic Team.

AAU ball also suffered as the NBA and NCAA were featured more regularly on television, bringing basketball into

the homes of fans that never had the opportunity to see a pro or major college team in person. Soon, the large corporations that had financed the best AAU teams realized they could no longer compete with pro salaries. By 1965, Phil Elderkin wrote in *The Sporting News* that “Industrial basketball is dying so fast in the U.S. that the AAU may soon hire a coordinator to work with industry and government in trying to revive and improve the sport.” But it was already too late. The NIBL had disbanded after the 1961 season, and while a few of its former teams continued to barnstorm and play in the annual AAU tournament, even the once mighty Phillips 66ers succumbed to economic reality. On April 9, 1968, while the Celtics and 76ers were taking a break in their playoff series after Martin Luther King’s death, Phillips Petroleum announced they were ending their sponsorship of the 66ers. That year’s AAU tournament was the last in Denver, as attendance collapsed after the new American Basketball Association opened a pro franchise in the city.

The ABA was the latest threat to the NBA. While the NBA was growing, they were still a distant third behind Major League Baseball and the NFL, which each drew two to three times as many fans per game. Nationally, a Harris survey showed that baseball and football were both nearly three times more popular than basketball, mirroring the attendance figures, causing Bob Fowler of *The Sporting News* to ask if basketball was really a major sport. The ABA was now challenging that premise, and hired the NBA’s original superstar, George Mikan to serve as their commissioner to help draw the attention of the press. Entering their second season in 1968, the eleven team circuit was still shaky financially – four of the original members had changed cities after that inaugural season, including the Minnesota Muskies who moved to Miami, leaving their ferocious cartoon “muskie” logo behind – but the league with the red, white, and blue ball that revived the ABL’s three-point shot was competing with the NBA for college talent and veteran players and coaches to stock a combined total of twenty-five professional teams between the two leagues.

The Oakland Oaks were initially the most successful in raiding the NBA for talent. With backing from celebrity owner Pat Boone, Oaks general manager Ken Davidson hired Rick

Barry's former college coach and father-in-law Bruce Hale as coach, and then outbid the San Francisco Warriors to sign the NBA's defending scoring champion. Warriors owner Franklin Mieuli and their general manager Bob Feerick fought back in court, successfully arguing that they held Barry's basketball rights for the next year due to the NBA's reserve clause. Barry refused to report to the Warriors, and spent the season working on the Oaks television broadcasts, watching them finish with the worst record in the league at 22-56 while he played point guard for the KYA radio basketball team in a local recreation league. After the season, Hale was moved upstairs as team president, and Alex Hannum, restless as ever and tired of taking orders from Jack Ramsay with the 76ers, jumped to the Oaks as coach and general manager. Hannum promptly acquired Doug Moe and Larry Brown from New Orleans, and the Oaks won sixty games during the regular season and captured the 1969 ABA title despite losing Barry to a season-ending knee injury after just thirty-five games.

Increased competition for talent weakened benches across the NBA. The Celtics were particularly affected because Auerbach had been very skillful in picking up veterans to fill holes in the roster, which compensated for a spotty record in the college draft. After bypassing Willis Reed in 1964, Auerbach selected center Ollie Johnson from Russell's alma mater, but the number two rebounder and fifth-leading scorer in USF history failed to make the Celtics in 1965 and never played pro basketball. By taking Johnson, Auerbach left both of the Van Arsdale twins (Dick and Tom) on the draft board, who each had solid twelve year pro careers as 6'5" swingmen. In 1968, even if Auerbach had known that Embry would be lost to an expansion team, all of the quality big men were long gone by the time the Celtics had selected in the college draft – in the newly enlarged league, Boston selected twelfth – as Elvin Hayes, Wes Unseld and Tom Boerwinkle were three of the top four picks. The best Auerbach could do was take 6'9" Rich Johnson from Grambling with the forty-sixth selection, and hope he could bulk up his skinny 200 pound frame.

The result was that the Celtics were without a quality backup center for the first time since the 1961-62 season, and

Russell was now seven years older and had been gradually reducing his playing time over the past few years, down to thirty-eight minutes a game during the 1967-68 regular season, his lowest average in a decade. Auerbach was forced to scour the country looking for warm bodies to help give his player-coach some rest. There were rumors that he was pursuing the Pistons disgruntled center Joe Strawder, who the Celtics had originally drafted in the fourth round four years earlier. Strawder had assembled reasonable numbers in three years as a starter on a bad team in Detroit, but was coming off back surgery and had arthritis in his knees, making him a shaky candidate at best. Auerbach tried to require another former draft pick, Framingham, Massachusetts native Toby Kimball, but when the San Diego Rockets turned down his offer of guard Mal Graham, Auerbach settled on signing journeyman Enoch "Bud" Olsen, the former Louisville center. Olsen had played sparingly in Cincinnati, backing up Embry and Jerry Lucas, was eventually dealt to the Warriors, and was then selected in two consecutive expansion drafts by Seattle and Milwaukee. The Bucks were comfortable with Embry and rookie Dick Cunningham at center, so Olsen was waived and joined the Celtics just before the start of the season.

Boston also had depth problems in the backcourt. Tom Thacker had also been lost to Milwaukee in the expansion draft, promising rookie Mal Graham was coming off a six month stint in the Army and seemed to be out of shape and unable to score as he had in college at NYU, and Larry Siegfried had been inconsistent in an increased role as a playmaker after the retirement of K.C. Jones. Auerbach had selected Don Chaney as his first round pick, but the defensive specialist would be unavailable for the first four months of the season because of an Army Reserves commitment. So Auerbach reached for another reclamation project.

EMMETTE BRYANT HAD BEEN SELECTED by the Suns in the expansion draft, and he was not happy about it. "It would have been too much like starting all over," Bryant said. "I figured I had some good business contacts outside basketball and now was the time to pursue them. I made it very clear to Phoenix that

I planned to retire.” Auerbach had watched Bryant play that summer at Kutsher’s, and he knew that he could still be productive. Bryant had an unusual basketball resume. He grew up in Chicago, and began playing basketball for the first time in high school before dropping out and joining the Air Force. While stationed in Panama, Bryant played basketball nearly every day, grew over six inches to a respectable height of six feet, and completed his high school studies in order to be eligible to play college ball after he was eventually discharged. But his grades in Chicago had been poor, and his first choice, Michigan State, turned him down. “I had read where Johnny Green had done it, though he never played high school basketball,” Bryant later said. Our backgrounds were alike. He got his basketball training in the Air Force in Japan before he went to Michigan State.” Bryant continued to search out schools, and found a willing partner in Coach Ray Meyer of DePaul. Meyer recognized his potential, and sent him to a junior college for a year to prove that he could handle the academic side of university life.

Bryant made the DePaul varsity team as a sophomore, but his college career was derailed by a series of problems over the next three years, including a stint on the academically ineligible list, a case of hepatitis, and a broken ankle. He suffered the ankle injury as a senior in a game against Indiana. DePaul had raced to a 12-0 start that season, largely due to Bryant’s tenacious defense and impressive offensive numbers; he was averaging eighteen points, ten rebounds and eight assists a game and was drawing attention from NBA scouts. Bryant would not return to the lineup until the NIT, and the combination of the injury and his age – he would be a twenty-six-year-old NBA rookie – dramatically affected his draft position, as he was still available when the Knicks selected him at the top of the seventh round in 1964. New York was, as usual, a terrible team, and Bryant played seventeen minutes a game while fellow rookies Jim Barnes, Willis Reed and Howie Komives all started for Coach Eddie Donovan and then his replacement Harry Gallatin. Donovan, who was also the Knicks general manager, was impressed with Bryant. “[He] isn’t much of a scorer, but I really don’t care. Em’s future is in his ability to build a play and then finish it off – and in his flair for defense.” Bryant picked up the nickname “The Poet” from his

teammates, short for “poetry in motion,” and was regularly given the task to contain the league’s top guards, including Jerry West, Sam Jones and Oscar Robertson, who once said that Bryant “plays me as tough as anyone in the league.”

The Knicks were slowly showing signs of respectability, building around their core of young players, and with the additions of Dick Van Arsdale, Walt Bellamy and Dick Barnett, made a brief appearance in the 1967 playoffs against the Celtics after a seven year absence from the postseason. Bryant was hampered with a knee injury, and after his playing time decreased when flashy rookie point guard Walt Frazier joined the Knicks the following season, the Knicks left Bryant unprotected for the expansion draft. Now Auerbach offered the Suns a second-round pick for his rights, and Bryant leaped at the chance to resume his career on the East Coast.

Three weeks after Bryant was acquired, Larry Siegfried announced that he was holding out until a no-trade clause was included in his contract. Siegfried, as insecure as ever, was convinced the Celtics were going to trade him for another guard, such as Lenny Wilkens, who did not want to follow the Hawks to their new home in Atlanta and had a strained relationship with Coach Richie Guerin. While the Celtics had made a bid for Wilkens, those talks went nowhere, and Auerbach was incensed when Siegfried hired attorney Bob Woolf to represent him. The holdout lasted just eight days before Auerbach acquiesced and gave Siegfried the significant raise he sought rather than start the season with a further weakened backcourt. In hindsight, the extra money was well worth it, as Mal Graham was soon diagnosed with sarcoid, a glandular disease that was responsible for his persistent fatigue, and would limit him to just over 100 minutes of playing time the entire season. Then Sam Jones, who had announced his retirement effective at the end of the season, missed nine games in December with a groin injury suffered while dunking in practice. Boston ended the month with a 22-12 record, third place in the East behind Baltimore and Philadelphia. Not only was the backcourt thin, but their star center wasn’t quite playing up to his past standards.

While Siegfried was sitting out training camp, Russell had inked a two-year deal of his own at \$200,000 a year. But

author George Plimpton, who attended the Celtics' camp that year to research what he hoped would be another book in the same vein as his 1966 bestseller, *Paper Lion*, sensed that Russell's interest in the game was waning. At one workout at the Tobin Gym in Roxbury, "Russell arrived thirty minutes late ... [and] seemed immensely bored by the practice sessions. He didn't dress for play himself – slimly cut street clothes to fit his long shanks; he had a whistle as I recall, on a cord," Plimpton recalled. "To my surprise his drills included some amazingly basic exercises, as if he really couldn't think of anything else for us to do..." When the regular season began, Russell looked as dominant as ever, grabbing thirty-six rebounds in a 106-88 win in Detroit, but as the year dragged on he knew his skills were eroding. "The grades I gave myself consistently went down, and the spells of inspired basketball became less frequent," Russell wrote a decade later. "I knew that sometimes this happened because I was coaching as well as playing, so I couldn't allow myself to let go as much. But a lot of it was that I just couldn't keep up." Despite averaging nearly twenty rebounds a game, Russell was frustrated by his diminished skills, and his scoring average dipped slightly below double-figures for the first time in his career. "To want something that bad, something that's been precious and mysterious to you for so long, and then to have to acknowledge to yourself that you can no longer do your part to make it happen – well, it hurt so much that it undermined my motivation to play."

Auerbach sensed his star's temperament, and had already realized that Bud Olsen was not the answer as a backup center. After watching Olsen collect just fourteen points and fourteen rebounds – in forty-three minutes spread out over seven games – Auerbach jettisoned him and bought Jim "Bad News" Barnes from the Chicago Bulls on December 1, reuniting him with his former Knicks teammate Emmette Bryant. Barnes was a quick and rugged 6'8" power forward/center who had earned All-American honors at Texas Western as a senior while leading the Miners' to the 1964 NCAA tournament. After watching Barnes average twenty-nine points and nineteen rebounds a game, the Knicks drafted him in the first round as their center of the future. "We figured Bad News would give height away to Chamberlain

and Russell and Thurmond but would make it up with quickness.” Red Holzman later said. “There was no one in the league Barnes’s size who had his speed.” Barnes made the All-Rookie team, but during his second season he was shipped to Baltimore in a four-player deal that sent Walt Bellamy to New York. After the trade, Barnes was never the same player, failing to average double-figures in points or rebounds as he bounced from the Bullets to the Lakers to the Bulls, consistently complaining about his lack of playing time despite the fact that had not earned the right to more minutes. When Barnes first arrived in Boston, it looked like Auerbach had struck gold with another player that no one else wanted. Barnes played little in his first two games, but when Russell was forced to sit out the next two games with a case of the flu, Barnes scored fourteen against the Pistons and twenty at Cincinnati in a pair of Celtics victories. When Russell returned, Barnes’ scoring numbers steadily declined, and then he suffered a freak head injury on December 22 when he was thrown to the ground by a blast from a jetliner as the team changed planes at O’Hare Airport in Chicago. For the rest of the season, Barnes would complain of “crackles and pops” in his right ear, and claimed he was suffering after effects of a concussion and whiplash. His unwillingness to play earned him a place in Russell’s doghouse, and Barnes rarely played meaningful minutes. Instead, Russell would turn to Satch Sanders or Don Nelson to play the few minutes a night he rested on the bench.

As the calendar rolled over to January, the Celtics turned back the clock, and won nine of eleven games, including back-to-back wins over the Lakers and 76ers, to improve to 31-14 and move into a virtual second place tie with Philadelphia, just two and a half games behind Baltimore. In the midst of this streak, Russell confidently predicted that the Celtics would win the division, but Boston then dropped three in a row to slide back in the race. Then Russell suffered a right knee injury in the final seconds of a 95-94 loss to New York at the Garden. Russell had lost his balance while fighting with Willis Reed for a rebound, and crashed to the floor, landing directly on the knee. In shock from the intense pain and the suddenness of the fall, Russell lay face down on the court, unable to stand up on his own. He was

taken to the trainer's room on a stretcher and then driven to a local hospital, where he was diagnosed with severely strained ligaments and a case of severe exhaustion. "I've never seen him in pain like that, and he has a high tolerance for pain," Celtics trainer Joe DeLauri said afterward. The injury ended the Celtics hopes of winning the division. Boston lost the next three games without Russell, and the Celtics fell into fourth place at 34-23, seven and a half games behind the Bullets.

By the start of March, the Celtics were comfortably ahead of the Royals by eight games in the battle for the final playoff spot in the East, but Russell did not want to coast into the postseason. When the Knicks crushed the Celtics 115-96 on March 1, Russell pulled Sanders and Siegfried out of the starting lineup and replaced them with Havlicek and Bryant. "I thought it was time for change," Russell told reporters. Havlicek had frequently started earlier in the season, moving between forward and guard based on matchups and injuries to his teammates such as Jones, Siegfried and Howell, and Russell added that "Emmette had been playing exceptionally well for a month and a half." While Russell did take four games off over the final two weeks of the season, he had his teammates running like the Celtics of old, averaging 121 points (ten above their season average) while winning their last four games. Still, the 48-34 fourth place finish was by far the worst of Russell's Celtics career, and with Russell and Jones still feeling some effects of their injuries, the Celtics were written off as contenders. "Age, injuries and the rest of the National Basketball Association may have finally caught up with the Boston Celtics," Phil Elderkin wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor*, under the headline "Mighty Celtics Finally Yielding to Old Father Time." But Sam Jones disagreed. "It's just that we haven't had the same lineup all season because of all the injuries. But now everyone's healthy for the playoffs." Still, basketball fans were looking forward to a wide open playoff chase in the East.

The same could not be said for the Western Division, where the Los Angeles Lakers had been prohibitive favorites to return to the Finals since the previous July, when they acquired Wilt Chamberlain from the 76ers. Chamberlain's return to California, the second time he had been traded in three and a half

years, followed a familiar script. 76ers owner Irv Kosloff was tired of Wilt's increasing salary demands, while Jack Ramsay, who replaced Hannum as coach while remaining general manager, preferred a wide-open running game, and felt the team could win just as well with Luke Jackson moving over to center and Billy Cunningham as a full-time starter. Although the 76ers shopped Chamberlain around the league, Los Angeles was the most logical landing spot for the temperamental superstar. Lakers owner Jack Kent Cooke had been trying to pry Chamberlain away since his 1967 holdout, and Chamberlain had ties to the city; earlier in the decade, he had constructed an apartment complex in Los Angeles named "Villa Chamberlain," and his parents lived there, including his ailing father, who was suffering from cancer. Cooke and Chamberlain also had matching eccentric personalities and a taste for the finer things of life. When the two met in Cooke's Bel-Air mansion, they talked little basketball, preferring to discuss antique furniture and art, and compared notes on their 1962 Bentley Continentals. The trade became official on July 9, with the Lakers sending Archie Clark, Darrall Imhoff, Jerry Chambers and cash to the 76ers.

In Philadelphia, Chamberlain's former teammates embraced Ramsay's style. "You move on this Philadelphia club or you don't get the ball," Chet Walker told a reporter that October. "That's the way we play – to the hot hand. Sometimes it's to Jackson, sometimes to Greer and sometimes to me. But you have to get open. You just can't stand around." Clark quickly adjusted to his new role, sharing time with Wally Jones in the backcourt alongside veteran Hal Greer, and the 76ers roared to a 23-7 record by late December, the second-best mark in the league, just a few percentage points behind the Bullets and their star rookie center Wes Unseld. But Philadelphia then lost Luke Jackson for the season to an Achilles tendon injury, forcing Imhoff into the starting lineup and upsetting Ramsay's plans. By mid-January, the 76ers had sagged into third place at 30-14, but then Ramsay rallied the team, taking advantage when the Bullets lost Gus Johnson for the year with a knee injury, and by the end of the season Philadelphia had fifty-five wins, finishing two games behind Baltimore in second place. Philadelphia fans

responded to the team, setting a home attendance record at the Spectrum a year after wind storms twice shut down the arena.

However, just 8,000 fans turned out for the opening game of Philadelphia's playoff series against Boston, and the small crowd saw the 76ers shoot thirty-five percent from the floor, including a woeful three-for-twenty-three effort by Greer, while Havlicek scored thirty-five and Russell added fifteen rebounds and twelve blocks in a relatively easy 114-100 Celtics victory. Philadelphia's fate was sealed two nights later in Boston, when, despite losing Sam Jones with two technical fouls 3:37 into the first quarter, and Russell playing just eight minutes due to foul trouble, the Celtics won in a rout, 134-103. Howell, Havlicek, Siegfried, and Nelson all scored twenty or more points to provide the offense, while Emmette Bryant harassed Greer into another poor shooting game and Sanders held his own at center – which would have been next to impossible if Chamberlain had still been with the 76ers. Nelson was the hero in game three, scoring twelve points in the fourth quarter of a 125-118 win, and Boston closed out the series in five games, prompting Frank Deford of *Sports Illustrated* to compare the Celtics veterans' perseverance and tenacity to the apparently limitless persistence of the Viet Cong.

Meanwhile, the young New York Knicks swept past the Bullets, as the injury to Gus Johnson proved too much for Baltimore to overcome. Walt Frazier averaged twenty-five points and thirteen assists over the first three games of the series, but it was the Knicks defense and dominance inside that proved decisive, which could be traced to a major trade New York made four months earlier. Red Holzman's squad had begun the regular season slowly, losing ten of their first fifteen games and hovering around .500 in mid-December. The Knicks then decided it was time to dump center Walt Bellamy, whose tantalizing talent was becoming overshadowed by his clashes with teammate Willis Reed and his tendency to lose focus when he played against the weaker centers in the league. New York found a willing trade partner in the Detroit Pistons, who had recently lost eight straight and would have been the worst team in the league if not for the recent wave of expansion. In exchange for Bellamy and backup guard Howard Komives, the Knicks acquired Dave DeBusschere,

the former player-coach who was described as “thoroughly professional” by Gerald Eskenazi in the *New York Times*. The move allowed the Knicks to move Reed back to center full-time, while DeBusschere joined Bill Bradley up front, scoring and rebounding at a clip just ahead of Bellamy’s pace. New York, who had lost their last two games before the trade, proceeded to win eight in a row to move up into fourth place, then later won eleven straight from late January through mid-February to catapult into second.

However, injuries had weakened the team. Cazzie Russell broke his ankle and would play just thirty-five minutes in the playoffs, while Phil Jackson’s back injury would keep him out altogether. The Knicks had only one starter over twenty-eight years old (guard Dick Barnett) but with all five of them averaging over forty minutes a game by playoff time, fatigue was a serious threat to their chances. As they prepared to face Boston, the Knicks hopes were buoyed by their 6-1 record against the Celtics that season, including four consecutive wins since acquiring DeBusschere. However, Bill Russell had looked a little deeper at those results and thought he had an answer – he needed to shoot the ball more. “I noticed that in each of the regular-season games against them, I had taken no more than five or six shots,” Russell later wrote, and added that that had empowered Reed to cheat on defense and double-team the other Celtics. “He had been able to leave me safe in the assumption that I wasn’t likely to get the ball and shoot.”

As the series started, the Celtics fast break emerged as the key factor. Emmette Bryant, thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to eliminate his former teammates, came within two assists of a triple-double in game one as Boston built a fifteen point lead midway through the third quarter, then survived a late New York rally, fueled by Frazier’s career high thirty-four points, to win 108-100. “We ran with them today and maybe we outran them too,” Bailey Howell said afterwards. The Celtics returned home to take a 2-0 series lead with a 112-97 victory, as DeBusschere missed all nine shots he attempted and the Knicks were unable to score during the opening five minutes of the second half. For the rest of the series, the home team would win every game, and the turning point occurred late in the next game, when Boston, after

blowing a nine point lead, was clinging to a 95-94 advantage with twenty-five seconds left as New York prepared to inbound the ball. Frazier received the inbounds pass, but was blanketed by John Havlicek, forcing him to pass to Reed to the left of the basket with eight seconds remaining. Reed, being loosely guarded by Russell, missed the shot, and the Knicks knocked the ball out of bounds in the scramble for the rebound. Barnett then quickly fouled Bryant, who made both free throws to seal the 97-96 win that gave the Celtics a 3-1 edge.

The Knicks won game five to stay alive, but in the final minute Frazier suffered a groin pull that rendered him a non-factor when the series returned to Boston. "I saw him holding his groin," Sam Jones said later, after scoring twenty-nine points in the Celtics 106-105 series clinching win in game six. "When I saw that, that was the key. I started to call my play ... We saw a weakness and just took advantage of it." Frazier still contributed seventeen points, and the Knicks outscored the Celtics 17-10 during a six minute stretch of the fourth quarter to cut a nine point deficit to two. The outcome was still in doubt until Jones made one of two free throws to give the Celtics a three point lead with three seconds left.

The victory gave the Celtics twelve Eastern titles in thirteen years, and for the seventh time they would meet the Lakers in the Finals. It was also the sixth consecutive year that Russell and Chamberlain met in the playoffs, and their eighth postseason encounter overall. The Lakers had survived a scare of their own in the first round, dropping the first two games at home to the San Francisco Warriors before roaring back to win four in a row to take the series, and followed that up by dispatching the Atlanta Hawks in five games. Acquiring Chamberlain had been the highlight of a tumultuous offseason in Los Angeles, as the Lakers depth had been weakened by the losses of Walt Hazzard and Gail Goodrich in successive expansion drafts. Combined with the inclusion of Archie Clark in the Chamberlain deal, there was a glaring hole in the backcourt for general manager Fred Schaus and coach Butch van Breda Kolff to fill.

Willem Hendrik van Breda Kolff brought an Eastern pedigree to the Fabulous Forum. Born in Glen Ridge, New Jersey in 1922, van Breda Kolff had spent nearly his entire life in the

area, with the exception of a tour of duty with the Marines during World War II. He attended Princeton before and after the war (failing to graduate), and played for the Knicks during their first four seasons of existence. Van Breda Kolff spent the next eleven years coaching at Lafayette and Hofstra before being hired by Princeton, where he had the good fortune to coach All-American Bill Bradley, and built a national reputation for himself by winning three consecutive Ivy League titles and reaching the NCAA national semifinals in 1965. When Jack Kent Cooke was looking to move Fred Schaus upstairs two years later, van Breda Kolff was a logical choice to succeed him.

But van Breda Kolff was not a fan of the pro game, which he felt too often lacked the “beauty” and “flow” that he believed defined good basketball. Early in his first season with the Lakers, he was fined \$250 by the NBA for “detrimental” comments against the league. Van Breda Kolff’s defense was that he was trying to improve the quality of the game. “I did not say the NBA was boring and the officiating ridiculous. I did say that when four players stand around while one man controls the ball, you have a boring situation. I did say it was ridiculous to let the bigger players push the smaller ones around.” So when the Lakers acquired Wilt Chamberlain less than a year later, it was not surprising that van Breda Kolff was upset. Chamberlain could have been the poster child for the game that van Breda Kolff detested, and the coach freely said as much to the press while Wilt was still playing for the 76ers. Van Breda Kolff had spent the 1967-68 season convincing the Lakers to play as a team and not stand around watching Jerry West and Elgin Baylor, and now he had one more superstar to handle. “He made it clear what he wanted at the outset,” Tommy Hawkins said while the Lakers were playing in the 1968 Finals. “I remember that he said, ‘Gentlemen, we have one basketball here and everyone likes to put it in the hoop. Every one will get his chance, but NOT to the exclusion of any one player.’ He didn’t want anyone standing around.”

Van Breda Kolff’s relationship with Chamberlain was strained from the beginning because of his earlier public comments, and quickly worsened as van Breda Kolff insisted that Chamberlain play the high post to free up the lane for Baylor to

drive to the hoop, and made the mistake of asking Chamberlain to block shots like Russell did, directing the ball to teammates instead of more dramatic swipes at the ball that resulted in it going out of bounds and back to the other team. When Chamberlain claimed that the Celtics were “coached to come up with Russell’s blocks,” an incredulous van Breda Kolff responded, “What do you want me to do, put guys halfway up in the stands?” Their disagreements quickly became public, as both sought to pour out their frustrations to reporters. Chamberlain, whose moody personality was darkened by the death of his father that fall, wondered why an inexperienced pro coach would not listen to veteran superstars such as himself, West and Baylor, while van Breda Kolff, who normally did not allow disagreements on the court to carry over after games, grew increasingly disenchanted. “Sure, we were winning, but I didn’t enjoy it. The college atmosphere we had the year before the Wilt deal was gone. I didn’t like how we were playing and around midseason I knew in my own mind that I wasn’t coming back to coach the Lakers.” general manager Fred Schaus repeatedly had to step in to mediate, telling Chamberlain and van Breda Kolff to stop screaming at each other in public and airing their problems to the press. Eventually, a tense *détente* took hold in the locker room as the season dragged on.

Meanwhile, West and Baylor had their own adjustments to make. As soon as the trade was made, many opposing players, coaches and executives around the NBA, including Red Auerbach, were eager to sow seeds of discontent between the superstars. West and Baylor had always gotten along very well and complimented each other’s game. Now Baylor was forced to adjust and take more outside shots as Chamberlain clogged the lane, and he resented Chamberlain’s desire to take over the locker room with his smothering personality. On the other hand, both West and Baylor knew that the Lakers would benefit as a team, and in February Baylor admitted to reporters, “I felt the deal gave us our best chance ever to win the championship.” West appreciated how Chamberlain drew attention away from him on the court. “He prolonged my career from a mental standpoint because I’d grown tired of having to be so involved in all phases of the game with this team. I put so much pressure on

myself that if we didn't win every night it was a traumatic experience when we lost. ... So Wilt gave me a little different mental outlook on the game."

Schaus and van Breda Kolff had their three superstars, but still needed to fill out the roster. In roughly a two-week span that fall, the Lakers acquired swingman Keith Erickson from Chicago for Erwin Mueller, and then picked up guard Johnny Egan from Milwaukee; the Bucks had grabbed Egan in the expansion draft from Baltimore before deciding that Guy Rodgers was a better fit as a veteran presence in their backcourt. Egan moved into the starting lineup along with Tom Hawkins, but by the time the Finals started, Hawkins had lost his starting job to rookie Bill Hewitt, and former Celtic Mel Counts was increasingly replacing Chamberlain. Counts helped the Lakers make up large deficits and win two late-season games, and sometimes played alongside Chamberlain in crunch time to create a towering presence inside the paint.

As the NBA Finals were set to begin, the Lakers were confident. They had won eight of their last nine playoff games, and while Baylor had struggled until the deciding game against Atlanta, their other two superstars were in midseason form. West was averaging twenty-seven points and eight assists, and Chamberlain was playing so effectively that Hawks coach Richie Guerin had commented, "I've seen Wilt play as well in his career, but never better." During the regular season, the Lakers had won four out of six games against the Celtics, and one of those losses occurred while Jerry West was out of the lineup with a pulled hamstring. Their last meeting, which occurred two days after the Celtics had clinched the final playoff spot, was a 108-73 romp by the Lakers that prompted Russell to unleash a twenty minute profanity-laced tirade on his team after the game ended. Now the Lakers were looking forward to exorcising some old leprechauns. "If we can win the championship, I'd rather it be over Boston," Fred Schaus admitted before the series. "It'd be much, much more satisfying." West was more serious, his emotions tempered by having several promising seasons "dissolve" with a loss to Boston. "If we don't beat the Celtics this time, it will be a crime for the game of basketball." The odds makers agreed, installing Los Angeles as two-to-one favorites.

The series began at the Forum in front of a record crowd of 17,554, who were treated to one of the best games in the rivalry's history. West torched the Celtics for fifty-three points, as Emmette Bryant was forced to the bench with three quick fouls in the first quarter and was ineffective defensively throughout the rest of the game. Russell grabbed twenty-seven rebounds and scored sixteen points, but Boston was led by John Havlicek's thirty-seven, who was "fired up a little more than usual" after the Los Angeles press proclaimed that Bill Hewitt was going to contain him. (In his defense, Hewitt was a little distracted – his wife gave birth during the game.) Despite West's hot shooting, the game was close throughout, with fifteen ties and twenty-one lead changes, and was not decided until the final seconds, when the Lakers used a Chamberlain dunk and a pair of free throws by West to build a 119-116 advantage. Sam Jones hit a bank shot to draw the Celtics within one, but Boston was unable to foul quickly enough to get the ball back. Baylor added a meaningless free throw with no time remaining to finish off a 120-118 Lakers victory.

Over the next three games, both teams experienced their share of frustration. Boston blew a pair of ten point leads in the third quarter of game two, losing 118-112 to fall behind 0-2 in the Finals for the first time in Russell's career. When the series shifted to Boston, the Celtics changed strategy and began double-teaming West, who had scored ninety-four points in the two games in Los Angeles. The Celtics grabbed an early 11-2 lead, then inexplicably blew a seventeen point halftime cushion and fell behind by three in the third quarter. Havlicek and Siegfried then rallied Boston, combining for fifteen points during a decisive 24-10 run in the fourth, and despite a late Lakers run fueled by seven consecutive baskets by Egan, the Celtics held on for a 111-105 win that kept their title hopes alive.

Boston evened the series two nights later, escaping with an 89-88 win in a sloppy game featuring fifty turnovers and a controversial ending. With fifteen seconds left, the Lakers led 88-87, and Elgin Baylor was preparing to inbound the ball. All Los Angeles had to do was to hang onto the basketball and make their foul shots, since Boston had no chance to win unless they attacked the ball aggressively. Baylor passed to Egan, who had

the ball stolen from him by Bryant. The Celtics point guard immediately threw the ball ahead to Sam Jones, who missed a fifteen-footer off the front of the rim. Chamberlain was unable to control the rebound, and deflected it toward Baylor, who then stepped out of bounds while juggling the ball. Boston called timeout, and Russell and his teammates decided to use a play that Havlicek and Siegfried had used at Ohio State and had introduced to the rest of the team during the playoffs for just this type of situation. The Celtics would set up a triple pick at the free throw line for Sam Jones while Havlicek fed him the inbounds pass. But referee Mendy Rudolph nearly gave away the play when he mistakenly handed the ball to one of the Lakers to inbound. "Sam Jones had already started his move and by doing so he clearly gave away our play," Havlicek later wrote. "Now I was worried, because if they overplayed Sam, there was no alternative. I don't know what I would have done with the ball." Havlicek's fears were misplaced. The triple pick worked perfectly, but Jones stumbled as he planted his right foot and forced up an off balance shot that bounced around the rim for several seconds before falling in. The Lakers were seething after the game, with van Breda Kolff disgusted that they "let it get away," while Egan correctly claimed that Bryant had slapped him on the arm and should have been whistled for a foul. "It was the key play in the game and [the officials] didn't call it."

The series had been physical from the start, and both sides were nursing injuries. Nelson and Chamberlain had collided awkwardly during a scramble in the second game, bumping heads, resulting in a gash in Nelson's scalp that required six stitches, and a corresponding jaw ache for the towering center. In the next game, Havlicek scored thirty-four despite being poked in his left eye by Erickson, while Siegfried was slowed by a hip pointer and a hamstring injury throughout the Finals. But the key injury of the series would occur in the final minutes of game five, a 117-104 Los Angeles victory in which Chamberlain (thirteen points, thirty-one rebounds and seven blocks) thoroughly outplayed Russell (seven points and thirteen rebounds) despite getting poked in the eye by Emmette Bryant in the third quarter. The Lakers' Keith Erickson was the deciding factor that evening; with Hewitt unable to control

Havlicek, Erickson replaced him in the starting lineup, scored sixteen points, grabbed ten rebounds, and more importantly, limited Havlicek to six-for-twenty-one shooting from the floor. Jerry West scored thirty-nine, but with three minutes remaining, and the Lakers safely in front, West collided with Bryant during a scramble for a loose ball, and West pulled his left hamstring. It was a typical hustle play by West, who always played the game hard from start to finish, no matter the score, but even he knew that fighting for the ball in this situation had been a mistake. The Lakers were on the brink of finally defeating the Celtics, and now their leading scorer was hobbling due to a self-induced wound that was reminiscent of the ankle injury he suffered in game four of the 1968 Finals. West was unable to finish the game, and needed a shot of Novocain in order to play two days later back in Boston.

The Lakers were greeted by a raucous Garden crowd, which gave the retiring Sam Jones a standing ovation during the pregame introductions and kept up the loud cheering throughout the game. Van Breda Kolff shifted strategy again, urging his players to get the ball to Chamberlain to take some pressure off West. “When the game started I didn’t know what I could do. I had to find out how much movement and drive I had,” West said afterwards. While Russell disputed the impact of the injury, telling reporters after the game that “I still drew my two fouls on him as usual,” West was limited to twenty-six points, and when Chamberlain, distracted by his sore eye, shot just one-for-five from the floor, the Lakers were doomed. Boston won 99-90 to send the series back West.

At seven o’clock on Monday morning, May 5, John Havlicek woke up in Los Angeles. The Celtics had flown in the day before, and despite usually being a late sleeper, Havlicek was too keyed up to rest, later writing that he “was the most nervous I had ever been.” Although West was still feeling the effects of his injury, and Baylor had been shooting poorly in the series, the Celtics knew they had their hands full. Both teams were publicly confident, but the Lakers comments to reporters had more of an edge, as if they could will themselves to a victory with a positive attitude. Chamberlain proclaimed they would win because “[w]e definitely deserve to. We’ve proved across 82 games that we are

a better team, and now we have to do so again in one game.” Odds makers were not as sure – they installed the Lakers as just three point favorites.

The carnival-like atmosphere at the Forum that evening has become legendary, with Jack Kent Cooke so eager to stage a Hollywood-style victory party that he forced team employees to spend hours blowing up thousands of balloons that were packed into the rafters, ready to descend while the USC marching band played beneath them. Even Lakers partisans knew Cooke was tugging on Superman’s cape by printing every detail of the postgame party in a “victory program” that was distributed throughout the arena. When Celtics broadcaster Johnny Most read the program to his Lakers counterpart Chick Hearn, Hearn was incredulous. “It’s dumb, that’s what it is. I can imagine what Russell is going to say to his team about this nonsense.” For his part, Celtics owner Marvin Kratter was engaged in his own eccentric quest before the game. Kratter always carried a “lucky stone” in his pocket that he had brought back from the Wailing Wall in Israel, and he would regularly ask the Celtics players to rub it during pre-game warm-ups. “Most of the guys just went along with it,” Havlicek later wrote. “[H]e owned the team and if he wanted you to rub his stone, it was easier just to rub it.” But on this evening, Kratter felt compelled to ask referees Norm Drucker and Earl Strom to rub the stone. Drucker and Strom wisely refused.

The game lived up to the hype. *New York Times* writer Leonard Koppett would later describe it as “a game whose complexion shifted more wildly than a schizophrenic chameleon,” and that was not an overstatement. Boston controlled the start of the game, making eight of their first ten shots, and rode ten early points from Havlicek to a 24-12 lead. Their advantage nearly evaporated as the Lakers closed the quarter on a 13-4 run, and the teams matched each other shot for shot in the second stanza, with the Lakers using a deliberate half-court attack to slow down the Celtics fast break. Boston led 59-56 at halftime, but in the locker room Havlicek urged his fatigued teammates to keep running. “I knew some of them were tired. Sam was tired. Russ was tired. I told them to get me the ball. If they gave it to me, I would run, and therefore make everyone else

run.” The strategy worked. Chamberlain picked up his fourth foul early in the third quarter, and Boston went on an 11-0 run, holding Los Angeles scoreless for over five minutes. Nelson scored thirteen during the period, and when Chamberlain got whistled again with 3:39 remaining, Russell finished off a three point play that gave the Celtics a 79-66 lead.

West was still hobbling, but with the Celtics no longer double-teaming him, he was able to drive more effectively despite the pain. As a result, West took eighteen free throws, making fourteen, and shot nearly fifty percent from the floor. The Lakers desperately needed his offense, as both Chamberlain and Counts were in foul trouble (four each), and Baylor was struggling again. As the fourth quarter began, the tiring Celtics were milking their lead, with Bryant walking the ball up the court at a slower pace than earlier in the game. During the first four minutes of the period, both Russell and Jones picked up their fifth fouls, briefly sending the latter to the bench in favor of Siegfried. Still, with 7:58 remaining, the Celtics held a comfortable 100-88 lead. Russell put Jones back in the game, joining Bryant in the backcourt, and substituted Nelson for Howell, with Havlicek and himself rounding out the lineup. The Lakers had all five of their starters in the game – Baylor, Chamberlain, Erickson, Hawkins and West.

Russell and Chamberlain had each committed five fouls, and both sides worked hard to protect their centers from fouling out. On one play, Havlicek quickly picked up his fifth foul when he grabbed Chamberlain to prevent a dunk, or worse, a foul by Russell. Then West drove on Jones again, using a head-and-shoulder fake at the free throw line to draw Jones’s sixth foul, the final play of Jones’s NBA career. After a series of jumpers by Baylor, Havlicek and West made the score 103-94 Boston, Havlicek missed a shot, and Chamberlain lost his balance after grabbing the rebound. Chamberlain crashed to the floor, landing on his right knee, and stayed near the Boston basket as his teammates transitioned to the other end of the floor, where Baylor missed a jumper. On the ensuing Celtics possession, Havlicek missed again, and then Chamberlain grabbed the rebound and called a twenty second time out with 5:24 left. During the time out, the Lakers trainer sprayed some Freon on

the knee, and Chamberlain returned for the next play. West then drew another foul, this time on Siegfried, and Chamberlain asked to be taken out of the game. While West made both free throws to cut the Lakers deficit to seven, Counts and Egan replaced Chamberlain and Hawkins. Russell couldn't believe Chamberlain would take himself out of the game. "I didn't think he'd been hurt that badly, and even if he was, I wanted him in there... Wilt's leaving was like finding a misspelled word at the end of a cherished book."

The Lakers continued their rally with Chamberlain on the bench. West made a jumper and drew yet another foul and sank both free throws. With just under four minutes left, Counts hit a foul line jumper that would have brought the Lakers within one, but he was called for traveling and the basket was waved off. Counts made up for the mistake by blocking a shot by Bryant, drew a charging call on Siegfried, and then made a jumper to cut the Celtics lead to 103-102. The two teams then traded a series of missed shots, fouls and turnovers, but the real action was on the Lakers bench, as Chamberlain was now practically begging van Breda Kolff to put him back in the game. For van Breda Kolff, it was as if an entire season of conflict with his temperamental center was being encapsulated in the last few minutes of this final game. The Lakers were running and moving the ball, and Chamberlain's replacement was in the middle of the action, as Counts was contributing both offensively and defensively. When van Breda Kolff answered Chamberlain's pleadings by telling him, "We're doing well enough without you" he was essentially describing how he felt when the trade was first announced the previous summer.

By this point, the Celtics had changed strategy and were using Bryant to double West to try to force the ball out of his hands. Boston had the ball back with a minute and half to play, still leading by the same 103-102 score, when Havlicek had the ball poked out of his hands by Erickson, sending the ball toward Nelson at the free throw line. Nelson had to shoot quickly to beat the shot clock, and his shot hit the rim, bounced up in nearly a straight line, and then fell back through the hoop with 1:17 left. "I was just hoping it'd hit the rim in time so we'd have a chance at the rebound," Nelson said later. Instead, his rafter-scraping

shot had burst the Lakers chances. After Nelson's shot dropped through the net, the Celtics general manager, who was sitting in the stands, lit up his cigar.

The Lakers fate was sealed when West, guarded by both Bryant and Siegfried, missed a jumper, and then Counts had his shot blocked by Russell with thirty-four seconds left. It was the final block of Russell's career, one that had Lakers fans wondering what could have happened if Chamberlain had not been on the bench. Siegfried then added two free throws to extend the Boston lead to five, and he sent Laker fans streaming towards the exits when he stole the ball and passed to Havlicek, who was fouled by Egan with fifteen seconds left. Havlicek's free throw made it 108-102, and after the Lakers added two meaningless baskets, the game was over. The Celtics were champions again.

Auerbach bounded onto the court to embrace his players, particularly Sam Jones, as yet another Celtic ended his career with a championship. As Jack Twyman attempted to interview Jones, Auerbach couldn't resist interrupting, exclaiming, "They can eat those balloons!" Auerbach's boyish enthusiasm for the team – and game – he loved was undiminished, and he was savoring this championship over the Lakers as much as any other. Twyman eventually gave in and turned his attention to Auerbach, who was particularly gracious towards Jerry West. West was named the series MVP after scoring forty-two points and adding thirteen rebounds and twelve assists in a losing effort, and Auerbach told Twyman, "That was one of the greatest exhibitions I've ever seen in my life." Back in the locker room, Russell was characteristically emotional, nearly breaking down as he repeated what he had told the team before the game. "I wouldn't trade you for anyone in the world."

Russell's mood was also influenced by the secret he was carrying with him – he had played his final game.

Epilogue

A New Ballgame

WHILE RUSSELL AND HIS TEAMMATES spoke of the power of “comradeship, friendship, and teamwork” after the game, the atmosphere in the Lakers locker room at the Forum was poisonous. “Let’s face it: We’re not exactly 11 jolly men,” Tom Hawkins told reporters, and his comments were underscored by what was unfolding in front of him. The players were forced to physically separate Chamberlain and van Breda Kolff as their argument continued after the game ended. Van Breda Kolff was uncharacteristically curt with the press; when asked whether Chamberlain could have made a difference at the end of the game, he replied “If I thought he would, I would have put him back in.” Chamberlain’s comments were much more pointed. “We lacked the proper direction ... When they started on their third quarter spree, we weren’t doing anything correctly. This was when someone should have called time out and made the proper moves.” Jerry West, who had been leading the Lakers into battle against the Celtics for nearly a decade, was more subdued. “In other years I could rationalize our setbacks, but this time I can’t. It’s as if we aren’t supposed to win. You try so hard and you think you’ve got them, and they still win.”

The improbable victory even inspired a rare burst of affection from the Boston fans, who were still so fickle that they had returned hundreds of tickets for the games at the Garden after the Celtics lost the first two games in Los Angeles. Nearly 2,000 fans, many carrying hand made signs, greeted the team at Logan Airport, as opposed to less than a hundred the year before. The team appreciated the support, though some of the players,

particularly Havlicek and Siegfried, had arrived with celebratory hangovers and might have preferred a quieter arrival. Two days later, the city held a parade, and 30,000 people lined the route that ran from the edge of the Public Garden and the Common to City Hall Plaza. The entire team took part – except for their star center.

Bill Russell never followed along for the sake of fitting in. He had dominated basketball over the past sixteen years, collecting fourteen championships while always speaking his mind, as confident in his ability to control his own destiny off the court as he did on it. Russell played a cerebral game, and his intelligence was as important to his success as his raw athletic talent. In Boston, he originally arrived as the last piece of the puzzle, adding rebounding and defense to a first-rate offense, but developed into the unchallenged leader of the team, even before adding “head coach” to his resume. “Before he came to Boston, there was no Celtic tradition,” Frank Ramsey said that summer. “Hell, he is the Celtic tradition.”

Now Russell knew it was time to walk away from basketball. He had told almost no one, with the exception of a brief exchange with Oscar Robertson during the last week of the regular season, after a 145-119 Celtics victory over the Royals in Cleveland that Russell knew would be their last meeting. Russell told Robertson he was going to retire after the season, adding that “I want to tell you how much fun it’s been playing against you all these years.” By late June the rumors had gone public, and when the *Boston Herald* ran a front-page story that left little doubt about Russell’s intentions to retire, and perhaps pursue a Hollywood career, Auerbach was forced to make a statement. “This is nothing new ... Bill was in Hollywood last year, too. But, believe me, when Russell decides to retire, I’ll be the first to know. And it won’t be done through some newspaper, but through my office.”

Auerbach was only half right. Russell announced his retirement two months later in *Sports Illustrated*, accepting an offer from the magazine’s senior editor Jerry Tax, who had befriended him during an interview eleven years earlier. Russell wanted to leave basketball on his own terms – there would be no “Bill Russell Day” or tributes on the road that brought back

uncomfortable memories of Bob Cousy's whirlwind tour six years earlier. Most importantly, Russell wanted to explain why he was walking away from a six-figure guaranteed contract for the 1969-70 season. Russell told Tax, "I suppose if I want it said right, I ought to say it myself," and proceeded to articulate his decision in an article entitled "I'm Not Involved Anymore."

Believe me, I wouldn't mind having all that money. But I'm not going to play basketball for money. I've been paid to play, of course, but I played for a lot of other reasons, too.

I played because I enjoyed it—but there's more to it than that. I played because I was dedicated to being the best. I was part of a team, and I dedicated myself to making that team the best. To me, one of the most beautiful things to see is a group of men coordinating their efforts toward a common goal—alternately subordinating and asserting themselves to achieve real teamwork in action. I tried to do that—we all tried to do that—on the Celtics.

While Russell left little doubt his retirement was official, Auerbach continued to try to talk him out of it. "I have not given up hope he'll be back," Red told columnist Phil Elderkin soon after the *Sports Illustrated* article appeared. "I will not consider him retired until he does not show up for the first day of practice." However, Russell did not change his mind, and the Celtics proceeded to suffer through a 34-48 season, as neither journeyman center Henry Finkel nor new coach Tom Heinsohn could replace Russell's talent and leadership. Not only was the dynasty over, but the Celtics failed to make the playoffs for the first time since Auerbach arrived in Boston in 1950.

The rest of the NBA, having prematurely written off the Celtics for three years, now rejoiced at the prospect of a clear field. Over the next few seasons, Boston's former rivals claimed their own championships. Willis Reed, Walt Frazier and Bill Bradley finally brought an NBA title to New York in 1970. A year later, Oscar Robertson was traded to Milwaukee – at the urging of Royals head coach Bob Cousy – and joined forces with

Lew Alcindor and coach Larry Costello to win sixty-six games and cruise through the playoffs with a 12-2 record, capturing the Bucks first championship in just their third year of existence. Then in 1972, Jerry West finally won his NBA title. Baylor's knees had given out, forcing him to retire after playing just nine regular season games, but with Gail Goodrich back in Los Angeles and edging West for the team lead in scoring, the Lakers rode a thirty-three game winning streak to an NBA record sixty-nine wins, and then dispatched the Knicks in five games in the Finals. In an ironic twist, the Lakers new head coach that season was former Celtic Bill Sharman, who, along with his assistant K.C. Jones, added another championship ring to their personal collections.

The Celtics malaise did not last long, and by 1973, they were back as contenders. The 1972-73 squad set a team record with sixty-eight wins, but fell victim to the Knicks in the playoffs when Havlicek hurt his shoulder. Auerbach had constructed Boston's new nucleus using an old formula, mixing draft picks (Don Chaney, Jo Jo White, Dave Cowens) and outside-the-box strategy (selecting ABA-bound Charlie Scott in the draft and then exchanging his rights for Paul Silas), and in 1974 and 1976 the Celtics won their twelfth and thirteenth championships.

While the Celtics climbed back to the top, the war between the NBA and ABA continued, salted by a lawsuit brought by the NBA Players Association under the leadership of Oscar Robertson in April 1970. The Players Association viewed the ABA as an imperfect, but important, source of leverage in the absence of free agency rights. Even superstars like Wilt Chamberlain tested the ABA waters, as he finished his career in 1974 as head coach of the San Diego Conquistadors while waiting for his Lakers contract to expire. The "Robertson Suit," as the case came to be called, sought to block any merger between the two leagues until the NBA's reserve clause was revoked, and exposed several tactics used by the NBA to fight their insurgent competitor – and control salaries. These strategies included a rough form of revenue sharing in which richer clubs pooled over \$1.5 million over several years to help lure top rookies to spurn the upstart league and sign with the NBA. When the case was settled in 1976, the players won limited free agency

rights in which teams maintained the “right of first refusal” but players were able to openly negotiate with other clubs, and the NBA agreed to pay \$4.3 million to nearly 500 players as compensation for past collusionary practices. More importantly, the settlement paved the way for a merger with the ABA. The NBA accepted four teams from the financially hemorrhaging junior circuit in exchange for \$12 million in entrance fees. The result was a twenty-two team NBA for the 1976-77 season, and while the league’s financial troubles continued into the next decade, the arrival of a new generation of stars, particularly Larry Bird and Magic Johnson in Boston and Los Angeles, respectively, would launch the NBA into an unprecedented period of prosperity.

THE FOUNDATION OF THAT PROSPERITY was Bill Russell and the brand of basketball he played. Russell played a major role in transforming the sport from a slow-paced game into an exciting athletic spectacle that was followed by fans across the country. He led the way for a generation of players, including Chamberlain, Baylor, West, Robertson and Havlicek, who revolutionized the game and allowed the NCAA and NBA to become the preeminent amateur and pro basketball organizations in the country, relegating the AAU, the Harlem Globetrotters, and rival leagues to the sidelines. Pro basketball was now fully integrated, and when Wes Unseld won both the NBA Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player awards in 1969, he became the NBA’s tenth consecutive black MVP. While Major League Baseball still did not have a black manager, other NBA teams soon followed the Celtics lead, and both Lenny Wilkens (Supersonics) and Al Attles (Warriors) were named player-coaches by the end of the 1969-70 season. Five years later, Attles was coaching full-time, and his Warriors swept the Bullets in four games to win the championship. The Bullets were coached by K.C. Jones, marking the first time in NBA history that both coaches in the Finals were black.

Bill Russell’s achievements on the court have become so legendary over the years that it can be difficult to put them in perspective. During one of the most turbulent periods of American history, the Celtics were a symbol of consistent

excellence. But those championships did not always come easily. The Celtics were pushed to the brink of elimination thirteen times, losing to the Hawks in 1958 and the 76ers in 1967 but winning all eleven “winner take all games” they played during Russell’s career. An errant bounce here or there could have easily cost the Celtics a title or two. They won because they had a coach and a collection of players who got the most out of each other, finding motivation and inspiration wherever they could. Looking back, John Havlicek put it simply: “We felt it was a mistake when we lost.” Bill Russell always did his best to make sure that rarely happened.

Appendix

Bill Russell in “winner take all” games

USF 89 West Texas State 66	Boston 125 St. Louis 123 (2ot)
USF 78 Utah 59	Boston 130 Syracuse 125
USF 57 Oregon State 56	Boston 122 St. Louis 103
USF 62 Colorado 50	Boston 109 Philadelphia 107
USF 77 LaSalle 63	Boston 110 Los Angeles 107 (ot)
USF 72 UCLA 61	Boston 142 Cincinnati 131
USF 92 Utah 77	Boston 110 Philadelphia 109
USF 86 SMU 68	Boston 112 Cincinnati 103
USF 83 Iowa 71	Boston 95 Los Angeles 93
	Boston 100 Philadelphia 96
USA 89 USSR 55	Boston 108 Los Angeles 106

1955 NCAA Tournament
 March 8, 1955
 Cow Palace, San Francisco, California

USF	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Jerry Mullen	9	2-6	2	20
Stan Buchanan	4	5-5	2	13
Bill Russell	14	1-6	2	29
K.C. Jones	6	0-0	1	12
Hal Perry	1	2-2	0	4
Steve Balchios	0	0-0	0	0
Rudy Zannini	1	0-0	0	2
Warren Baxter	1	0-0	1	2
Bob Wiebusch	0	0-1	1	0
Bill Bush	1	0-0	0	2
Dick Lawless	0	1-2	0	1
Jack King	1	0-0	0	2
Gordon Kirby	1	0-0	0	2
	39	11-22	9	89

West Texas State	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Lawrence Overcast	0	0-0	1	0
Bill Clifton	2	6-7	5	10
Ray Burrus	6	0-0	4	12
James Scott	9	6-8	2	24
James Robinson	7	0-0	2	14
John McClure	1	0-0	0	2
Don Rogers	0	0-0	0	0
Lee Roy Knott	0	0-0	0	0
Johnny George	1	2-2	0	4
Phillip Nichol	0	0-0	0	0
	26	14-17	14	66

USF	46	43	--	89
West Texas State	33	33	--	66

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), Gus Miller (West Texas State)

Notes: First ever NCAA Tournament game for USF, and first postseason action since their 65-46 loss to eventual NIT champion CCNY in 1950... Russell led the Dons in scoring with a 21.4 average for the season... Mullen joined Russell and Jones as first team All-WCC All-Stars.

1955 NCAA Tournament
 March 11, 1955
 Gill Coliseum, Corvallis, Oregon

USF	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Jerry Mullen	7	10-14	3	24
Stan Buchanan	1	0-0	1	2
Bill Russell	5	3-5	3	13
K.C. Jones	4	5-13	2	13
Hal Perry	6	2-3	1	14
Rudy Zannini	0	0-0	1	0
Warren Baxter	1	2-2	1	4
Bob Wiebusch	2	0-1	2	4
Bill Bush	0	0-0	0	0
Dick Lawless	0	4-4	1	4
Jack King	0	0-0	0	0
Gordon Kirby	0	0-0	0	0
	26	26-42	15	78

Utah	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Morris Buckwalter	1	6-6	5	8
Gary Bergen	5	2-2	5	12
Art Bunte	4	4-5	1	12
John Crowe	1	0-0	4	2
Curt Jenson	3	0-2	2	6
Eddie Pepple	0	0-0	1	0
Ted Berner	3	0-0	2	6
Roger Tonnesen	0	2-2	2	2
Delyle Condie	1	0-0	2	2
Jerry McCleary	1	4-5	1	6
Alden Lewis	1	1-2	1	3
	20	19-24	26	59

USF	41	37	--	78
Utah	20	39	--	59

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), Jack Gardner (Utah)

Notes: Utah claimed their first Skyline Conference title since 1945... Closed to within eight points of USF in the second half... Ranked #7 by AP and #4 in final UPI poll.

1955 NCAA Tournament West Regional Final
 March 12, 1955
 Gill Coliseum, Corvallis, Oregon

USF	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Jerry Mullen	0	2-6	3	2
Stan Buchanan	2	0-0	3	4
Bill Russell	11	7-11	2	29
K.C. Jones	2	7-10	3	11
Hal Perry	2	0-0	1	4
Rudy Zannini	0	0-0	0	0
Warren Baxter	0	1-2	0	1
Bob Wiebusch	1	4-5	0	6
	18	21-34	12	57

Oregon State	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Tony Vlastelica	6	0-1	3	12
Tex Whiteman	2	7-8	2	11
Swede Halbrook	7	4-6	4	18
Reggie Halligan	2	1-2	3	5
Johnny Jarboe	0	0-0	2	0
Bill Toole	2	2-6	2	6
Ron Robins	2	0-0	3	4
Phil Shadoin	0	0-0	0	0
	21	14-23	19	56

USF	30	27	--	57
Oregon State	27	29	--	56

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), Slats Gill (Oregon State)

Notes: Gill Coliseum was the homecourt of the Oregon State Beavers... The 7'3" Halbrook, who was kept in check by Russell, left after his junior year and played five seasons for the AAU's Wichita Vickers and then two with the Syracuse Nationals. Halbrook's Oregon State single-season rebounding record was broken by future Celtic Mel Counts in 1962... USF's Gordon Kirby missed the game because of the flu, which had affected many of the players as the tournament began.

1955 NCAA Tournament National Semifinals
 March 18, 1955
 Municipal Auditorium, Kansas City, Missouri

USF	FGM-A	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Bob Wiebusch	1-2	0-0	2	2
Stan Buchanan	0-4	6-6	2	6
Bill Russell	10-14	4-10	4	24
K.C. Jones	3-9	2-3	3	8
Hal Perry	5-8	0-0	1	10
Warren Baxter	2-2	3-5	0	7
Bill Bush	0-0	1-2	0	1
Jack King	1-1	2-2	0	4
Gordon Kirby	0-0	0-0	1	0
Jerry Mullen	0-2	0-0	0	0
Rudy Zannini	0-1	0-0	1	0
	22-43	18-28	14	62

Colorado	FGM-A	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Bob Jeangerard	1-12	2-3	0	4
Jim Ranglos	1-3	2-2	1	4
Burdette Haldorson	3-11	3-4	5	9
Charley Mock	2-6	0-0	5	4
Mick Mansfield	0-3	4-6	1	4
Bob Yardley	1-2	2-4	0	4
Bill Peterson	2-3	2-2	1	6
George Hannah	2-6	5-7	2	9
Mel Coffman	1-1	2-2	2	4
Jamie Grant	1-2	0-0	0	2
Tom Harrold	0-0	0-0	0	0
	14-49	22-30	17	50

USF	25	37	--	62
Colorado	19	31	--	50

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), Bebe Lee (Colorado)
 Attendance: 10,500

Notes: Wiebusch replaced the injured Mullen in the starting lineup... Colorado had won eight in a row heading into this game... Haldorson and Jeangerard would join Russell and Jones on the 1956 U.S. Olympic Team, but Ranglos was the only Buffalo named to the 1955 all-tournament team... Bob Yardley's older brother George was the first NBA player to score 2,000 points in a season.

1955 NCAA Tournament Championship
 March 19, 1955
 Municipal Auditorium, Kansas City, Missouri

USF	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Jerry Mullen	4	2-5	5	10
Stan Buchanan	3	2-2	1	8
Bill Russell	9	5-7	1	23
K.C. Jones	10	4-4	2	24
Hal Perry	1	2-2	4	4
Rudy Zannini	1	0-0	0	2
Bob Wiebusch	2	0-0	0	4
Dick Lawless	1	0-0	0	2
Gordon Kirby	0	0-0	1	0
	31	15-20	14	77

LaSalle	FGM-A	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Fran O'Malley	4	2-3	1	10
Charles Singley	8	4-4	1	20
Tom Gola	6	4-5	4	16
Alonzo Lewis	1	4-9	1	6
Charles Greenberg	1	1-2	4	3
Walt Fredricks	0	0-0	0	0
Frank Blatcher	4	0-0	1	8
Bob Maples	0	0-0	0	0
	24	15-23	12	63

USF	35	42	--	77
LaSalle	24	39	--	63

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), Ken Loeffler (LaSalle)

Notes: Russell added 25 rebounds to go along with 24 points, and earned Most Outstanding Player honors... Consensus All-American Gola, who averaged 24 points per game for the season, joined Russell on the all-tournament team, and later played ten seasons for the Philadelphia-San Francisco Warriors and New York Knicks.

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1956 NCAA Tournament March 16, 1956 Gill Coliseum, Corvallis, Oregon

USF	FGM-A	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Carl Boldt	0-4	0-0	4	0
Mike Farmer	4-13	7-8	2	15
Bill Russell	9-15	3-4	4	21
Hal Perry	4-17	2-2	2	10
Gene Brown	9-16	5-11	3	23
Warren Baxter	0-0	0-0	1	0
Mike Preaseau	1-6	1-4	5	3
	27-71	18-29	21	72

UCLA	FGM-A	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Al Herring	2-5	3-6	4	7
Connie Burke	0-5	2-2	1	2
Willie Naulls	6-18	4-4	4	16
Morris Taft	6-23	4-8	2	16
Dick Banton	3-10	7-7	2	13
Carroll Adams	0-0	0-0	1	0
Jack Arnold	0-1	0-0	0	0
Jim Halsten	1-3	4-6	1	6
Nolan Johnson	0-1	1-2	1	1
Art Hutchins	0-0	0-0	0	0
	18-66	25-35	16	61

USF	39	33	--	72
UCLA	21	40	--	61

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), John Wooden (UCLA)

Notes: Gene Brown stepped in for K.C. Jones and led all scorers... USF outscored their opponents by an average of 20 points per game during the regular season... Naulls and Taft were both All-PCC first team selections and were drafted by the St. Louis Hawks... UCLA went undefeated in conference play for the first time in their history; Wooden's teams would repeat the feat seven more times from 1964 through 1973, a stretch that included nine of Wooden's ten NCAA championships at the university.

1956 NCAA Tournament
 March 17, 1956
 Gill Coliseum, Corvallis, Oregon

USF	FG	FT	PF	PTS
Carl Boldt	6	1	3	13
Mike Farmer	5	4	3	14
Bill Russell	12	3	4	27
Hal Perry	2	0	0	4
Gene Brown	7	4	3	18
Mike Preaseau	3	8	3	14
Steve Balchios	0	0	0	0
Harold Payne	0	0	0	0
Warren Baxter	1	0	2	2
Tom Nelson	0	0	1	0
Bill Bush	0	0	1	0
Jack King	0	0	0	0
	36	20	20	92

Utah	FG	FT	PF	PTS
Morris Buckwalter	2	7	4	11
Gary Bergen	2	2	3	6
Art Bunte	8	7	2	23
Gary Hale	1	6	3	8
Curt Jenson	9	3	3	21
John Crowe	1	0	2	2
Jerry McCleary	2	0	3	4
Darrell Pastrell	0	0	0	0
Edward Gaythwaite	1	0	1	2
Dick Eiler	0	0	0	0
Mirhna	0	0	0	0
	26	25	21	77

USF	44	48	--	92
Utah	41	36	--	77

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), Jack Gardner (Utah)

Notes: Farmer would lead the 1957 Dons back to the Final Four and was named to the AP (third team) and UPI (second team) All-American teams... Bunte and Bergin were drafted by the NBA's New York Knicks... Jack Gardner remained at Utah for 18 seasons (1953-1971) posting a 339-154 record with two final four appearances in 1961 and 1966.

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1956 NCAA Tournament National Semifinal March 22, 1956 McGaw Hall, Evanston, Illinois

USF	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Carl Boldt	3	1-2	3	7
Mike Farmer	11	4-6	4	26
Bill Russell	8	1-2	3	17
Hal Perry	6	2-3	1	14
Gene Brown	5	2-5	1	12
Mike Preaseau	1	0-0	2	2
Warren Baxter	4	0-0	2	8
Bill Bush	0	0-0	0	0
Jack King	0	0-0	0	0
	38	10-18	16	86

SMU	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Larry Showalter	4	0-0	1	8
Joel Krog	3	0-1	3	6
Jim Krebs	10	4-7	1	24
Bobby Mills	1	9-12	0	11
Ronnie Morris	4	2-3	4	10
Bob McGregor	1	1-2	0	3
Rick Herrscher	1	2-3	1	4
Tom Miller	1	0-0	2	2
	25	18-28	12	68

USF	44	42	--	86
SMU	32	36	--	68

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), Doc Hayes (SMU)

Notes: Krebs averaged 19 points and 10 rebounds per game as a junior, and was named a second-team All-American in 1957 as a senior... USF team captain Hal Perry became a lawyer and represented the Black Panthers at the Supreme Court... Herrscher later played seven seasons of professional baseball, including 35 games for the New York Mets in 1962, hitting .220 as a utility player.

1956 NCAA Tournament Championship
 March 23, 1956
 McGaw Hall, Evanston, Illinois

USF	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Carl Boldt	7	2-2	4	16
Mike Farmer	0	0-0	2	0
Bill Russell	11	4-5	2	26
Hal Perry	6	2-2	2	14
Gene Brown	6	4-4	0	16
Mike Preaseau	3	1-2	3	7
Warren Baxter	2	0-0	0	4
Tom Nelson	0	0-0	0	0
	35	13-15	13	83

Iowa	FG	FTM-A	PF	PTS
Carl Cain	7	3-4	1	17
Bill Schoof	5	4-4	3	14
Bill Logan	5	2-2	3	12
Bill Seaberg	5	7-10	1	17
Milton Scheuerman	4	3-4	2	11
Augustine Martel	0	0-0	0	0
Jim McConnell	0	0-0	0	0
Robert George	0	0-0	0	0
	26	19-24	10	71

USF	38	45	--	83
Iowa	33	38	--	71

Head Coaches: Phil Woolpert (USF), Bucky O'Connor (Iowa)

Notes: Russell had 26 points and 27 rebounds, but Hal Lear was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player after scoring 160 points in five games to set a new record... Cain, Logan, and Perry joined Russell and Lear on the all-tournament team... Both Woolpert and O'Connor turned down chances to coach at the Olympics.

1956 Summer Olympics Gold Medal Game
December 1, 1956
Melbourne, Australia

USA	FG	FT	PF	PTS
Carl Cain	0	1	0	1
Bill Houglan	1	0	1	2
K.C. Jones	5	5	1	15
Bill Russell	3	7	3	13
Jim Walsh	4	6	3	14
Billy Evans	0	1	1	1
Burdette Halderson	4	1	4	9
Ron Tomsic	1	2	3	4
Dick Boushka	3	3	1	9
Gib Ford	2	1	0	5
Bob Jeangerard	8	0	1	16
	31	27	18	89

USSR	FG	FT	PF	PTS
Maigonis Valdmanis	1	2	5	4
Vladimir Torban	1	2	2	4
Kazimieras Petkevicius	0	3	0	3
Arkady Bochkarev	2	4	2	8
Janis Krumins	0	4	2	4
Mikhail Semenov	7	1	4	15
Algirdas Lauritenas	2	0	1	4
Juri Ozerov	1	2	4	4
Viktor Zoubkov	1	2	4	4
Mikhail Studenetsky	2	1	2	5
	17	21	26	55

USA	56	33	--	89
USSR	27	28	--	55

Head Coaches: Gerald Tucker (USA), Stepan Spandarian (USSR)
A: 3,116

Notes: United States won their eight games by an average margin of 53.5 points, with the Soviet Union providing the stiffest competition in their two games (average margin 32 points)... The 360-pound Krumins was an international sensation, playing 15 years for the Soviet national team.

1957 NBA Finals Game 7
 April 13, 1957
 Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

St. Louis Hawks	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Ed Macauley	21	2-3	5-8	8	1	6	9
Jack Coleman	36	4-12	2-5	5	7	6	10
Bob Pettit	56	14-34	11-13	19	3	4	39
Jack McMahon	37	3-10	0-0	5	5	6	6
Slater Martin	56	6-16	11-12	8	7	3	23
Cliff Hagan	40	7-15	10-14	16	0	6	24
Charlie Share	21	0-6	5-8	6	0	4	5
Med Park	21	3-5	1-2	4	1	1	7
Alex Hannum	2	0-1	0-0	0	0	1	0
		39-102	45-62	71	23	37	123

Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Jim Loscutt	18	0-4	3-3	2	0	5	3
Tom Heinsohn	45	17-33	3-11	23	2	6	37
Bill Russell	54	7-17	5-10	32	2	5	19
Bill Sharman	48	3-20	3-3	1	3	3	9
Bob Cousy	58	2-20	8-10	3	11	4	12
Frank Ramsey	28	6-13	4-7	8	1	2	16
Arnie Risen	20	6-12	4-8	10	0	6	16
Andy Phillip	10	2-2	1-2	1	3	3	5
Jack Nichols	9	4-7	0-0	1	0	3	8
		47-128	31-54	81	22	37	125

St. Louis	28	25	24	26	10	10	--	123
Boston	26	25	32	20	10	12	--	125

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Alex Hannum (St. Louis)
 Referees: Sid Borgia, Mendy Rudolph
 Attendance: 13,909

Notes: First NBA Finals appearance for both teams...Heinsohn and Ramsey combined to score 15 of the Celtics 22 points in overtime... Cousy and Russell led the league in assists and rebounds, respectively, and would repeat their combined feat over the next two seasons... Pettit (1956) and Cousy (1957) had captured the last two league MVP awards.

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1959 NBA Eastern Division Finals Game 7

April 1, 1959

Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Syracuse Nationals	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Dolph Schayes	48	11-29	13-15	16	9	5	35
George Yardley	45	12-30	8-10	10	2	3	32
Johnny Kerr	42	10-23	3-3	17	2	2	23
Hal Greer	27	2-6	0-0	4	2	4	4
Larry Costello	48	6-18	8-8	9	9	5	20
Al Bianchi	21	4-8	2-3	2	1	3	10
Bob Hopkins	9	0-1	1-1	4	0	2	1
		45-115	35-40	62	25	24	125

Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Jim Loscutt	21	4-9	2-2	11	1	6	10
Tom Heinssohn	37	9-24	2-6	13	5	4	20
Bill Russell	46	8-23	2-3	32	2	6	18
Bill Sharman	24	3-14	4-4	5	3	1	10
Bob Cousy	46	9-28	7-8	7	10	3	25
Frank Ramsey	33	11-24	6-7	11	0	6	28
Sam Jones	24	6-12	7-9	8	3	2	19
Gene Conley	9	0-1	0-0	2	2	1	0
		50-135	30-39	89	26	29	130

Syracuse 32 36 26 31 -- 125

Boston 26 34 35 35 -- 130

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Paul Seymour (Syracuse)

Referees: Arnie Heft, Mendy Rudolph

Attendance: 13,909

Notes: Ramsey scored 20 points in the second half to lead Celtics back from an 8 point halftime deficit... Seymour served as player-coach, but did not play during the 1959 playoffs and retired as a player after four games the next season... Nine of the fifteen players who appeared in this game are now enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame.

1960 NBA Finals Game 7
 April 9, 1960
 Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

St. Louis Hawks	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Cliff Hagan	39	7-17	5-5	5	0	4	19
Bob Pettit	43	8-18	6-13	14	4	4	22
Clyde Lovellette	41	8-19	2-3	7	4	4	18
Sihugo Green	45	7-14	3-6	5	5	4	17
Johnny McCarthy	40	7-11	2-2	1	2	4	16
Dave Piontek	19	3-7	5-6	6	2	2	11
Al Ferrari	10	0-1	0-0	1	1	0	0
Bob Ferry	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
		40-87	23-35	39	18	23	103

Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Frank Ramsey	43	11-20	2-3	13	0	5	24
Tom Heinsohn	28	10-17	2-2	8	2	5	22
Bill Russell	47	7-15	8-10	35	4	2	22
Bill Sharman	22	4-15	3-3	4	2	1	11
Bob Cousy	47	8-25	3-4	6	14	1	19
Sam Jones	25	8-14	2-2	4	2	1	18
Gene Conley	17	2-6	1-2	7	1	6	5
John Richter	9	0-0	0-1	0	0	4	0
K.C. Jones	1	0-0	1-2	0	1	0	1
Gene Guarilia	1	0-2	0-0	1	1	0	0
		50-114	22-29	78	27	25	122

St. Louis	30	23	25	25	--	103
Boston	29	41	26	26	--	122

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Ed Macauley (St. Louis)
 Referees: Mendy Rudolph, Jim Duffy
 Attendance: 13,909

Notes: 14-2 run at the start of the second quarter propelled Celtics to their first repeat championship... At the team breakup dinner, Celtics voted ailing publicist Howie McHugh a partial playoff share... McCarthy's 16 points were twice his season's average.

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1962 NBA Eastern Division Finals Game 7

April 5, 1962

Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Philadelphia Warriors	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Paul Arizin	38	4-22	11-11	4	1	4	19
Tom Meschery	48	10-19	12-13	11	2	3	32
Wilt Chamberlain	48	7-15	8-9	22	3	3	22
Tom Gola	38	7-14	2-2	8	2	2	16
Guy Rodgers	43	6-15	6-8	5	6	6	18
Al Attles	23	0-4	0-0	3	1	4	0
Ed Conlin	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
		34-89	39-43	53	15	23	107

Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Satch Sanders	29	2-8	2-3	8	1	6	6
Tom Heinsohn	39	9-22	7-7	10	2	5	25
Bill Russell	48	7-14	5-5	22	3	3	19
Sam Jones	43	12-29	4-4	7	2	2	28
Bob Cousy	40	8-21	5-5	6	8	4	21
K.C. Jones	29	1-4	2-3	3	10	4	4
Jim Loscutoff	9	1-5	0-1	2	1	6	2
Frank Ramsey	3	1-2	2-2	0	0	0	4
		41-105	27-30	58	27	30	109

Philadelphia	23	33	25	26	--	107
Boston	34	18	28	29	--	109

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Frank McGuire (Philadelphia)

Referees: Sid Borgia, Mendy Rudolph

Attendance: 13,909

Notes: Rookie Tom Meschery was a surprise offensive star but was held to just one field goal in the last six minutes by K.C. Jones... Ramsey and Loscutoff were both hobbled with injuries... Paul Arizin ended his Hall of Fame career after ten seasons and 16,266 regular season points.

1962 NBA Finals Game 7
 April 18, 1962
 Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Los Angeles Lakers	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Rudy LaRusso	36	3-10	1-3	11	0	6	7
Elgin Baylor	51	13-40	15-21	22	4	6	41
Jim Krebs	41	4-11	0-0	13	0	6	8
Jerry West	53	14-30	7-8	6	0	4	35
Frank Selvy	49	2-10	6-8	8	4	3	10
Ray Felix	12	0-2	2-4	1	3	3	2
Tom Hawkins	10	2-3	0-0	2	4	4	4
Howie Joliff	9	0-2	0-0	2	0	2	0
Rod Hundley	4	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0
		38-108	31-44	65	16	34	107

Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Satch Sanders	27	3-11	0-0	7	0	6	6
Tom Heinsohn	22	3-13	2-3	3	2	6	8
Bill Russell	53	8-18	14-17	40	4	2	30
Sam Jones	47	12-31	3-4	8	3	2	27
Bob Cousy	44	3-13	2-10	7	9	4	8
Frank Ramsey	33	4-11	15-16	5	2	6	23
K.C. Jones	20	1-4	0-0	3	0	2	2
Jim Loscutoff	11	3-8	0-0	8	0	6	6
Carl Braun	4	0-3	0-0	0	0	1	0
Gene Guarilia	4	0-1	0-0	1	1	1	0
		37-113	36-50	82	21	36	110

Los Angeles	22	25	28	25	7	--	107
Boston	22	31	22	25	10	--	110

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Fred Schaus (Los Angeles)
 Referees: Sid Borgia, Richie Powers
 Attendance: 13,909

Notes: First Finals meeting between the Celtics and the relocated Lakers...
 Sam Jones scored 25 of his points after halftime... Baylor averaged
 38.6 points per game in the playoffs.

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1963 NBA Eastern Division Finals Game 7 April 10, 1963 Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Cincinnati Royals	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Jack Twyman	34	5-12	7-9	6	1	5	17
Bob Boozer	31	2-7	3-5	5	2	5	7
Wayne Embry	33	7-16	4-6	7	0	5	18
Oscar Robertson	48	11-24	21-22	6	6	4	43
Arlen Bockhorn	32	3-9	3-3	3	1	4	9
Tom Hawkins	17	2-4	2-2	7	0	6	6
Adrian Smith	22	9-17	1-2	1	0	2	19
Hub Reed	15	3-4	0-0	2	1	3	6
Dave Pointek	10	1-2	0-0	1	0	1	2
Bud Olsen	8	2-4	0-1	5	0	3	4
		45-99	41-50	43	11	38	131
Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Satch Sanders	18	0-3	5-5	6	0	6	5
Tom Heinsohn	35	11-20	9-11	5	0	4	31
Bill Russell	48	8-14	4-6	24	4	4	20
Sam Jones	41	18-27	11-12	7	1	4	47
Bob Cousy	34	9-18	3-4	3	16	3	21
John Havlicek	24	3-8	2-4	6	3	6	8
K.C. Jones	19	1-3	5-5	6	3	4	7
Frank Ramsey	17	1-5	1-2	3	0	4	3
Jim Loscutoff	4	0-0	0-1	1	0	1	0
		51-98	40-50	61	27	36	142
Cincinnati	30	34	29	38	--		131
Boston	35	33	40	34	--		142

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Charlie Wolf (Cincinnati)
 Referees: Earl Strom, Mendy Rudolph
 Attendance: 13,909

Notes: Robertson played all but 15 seconds of the game, but Sam Jones's career-high 47 points led Celtics... Heinsohn continued his hot postseason, far exceeding regular season average of 18.9 points... Cousy closed out his career as a champion again when Celtics went on to defeat the Lakers in six games.

1965 NBA Eastern Division Finals Game 7
 April 15, 1965
 Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Philadelphia 76ers	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Chet Walker	48	10-19	4-5	5	1	4	24
Luke Jackson	17	3-10	2-4	2	0	2	8
Wilt Chamberlain	48	12-15	6-13	32	2	1	30
Hal Greer	48	5-12	2-2	8	9	4	12
Larry Costello	24	1-7	1-1	3	0	5	3
Dave Gambee	29	6-15	13-14	6	0	6	25
Al Bianchi	24	3-11	1-1	0	0	4	7
Johnny Kerr	2	0-1	0-2	0	0	0	0
		40-90	29-42	56	12	26	109

Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Satch Sanders	34	8-17	2-2	10	2	5	18
John Havlicek	42	10-30	6-7	11	1	5	26
Bill Russell	48	7-16	1-2	29	8	3	15
Sam Jones	48	15-31	7-9	2	1	3	37
K.C. Jones	36	2-9	2-3	4	10	5	6
Tom Heinsohn	16	1-5	0-0	7	2	5	2
Larry Siegfried	12	2-4	2-3	3	0	1	6
Willie Naulls	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
		45-112	20-26	66	24	28	110

Philadelphia	26	36	20	27	--	109
Boston	35	26	29	20	--	110

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Dolph Schayes (Philadelphia)
 Referees: Richie Powers, Earl Strom
 Attendance: 13,909

Notes: Havlicek stole the ball, but Dave Gambee nearly stole the show in the first half, unexpectedly scoring 19 points before halftime... Havlicek scored 15 in the third quarter... Russell won his fifth (and last) Most Valuable Player award in 1965 for his regular-season performance.

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1966 NBA Eastern Division Semifinals Game 5

April 1, 1966

Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Cincinnati Royals	FG	FTM-A	PTS
Happy Hairston	4	4-6	12
Jerry Lucas	8	1-1	17
Wayne Embry	2	1-2	5
Adrian Smith	1	2-2	4
Oscar Robertson	13	11-14	37
Connie Dierking	3	3-4	9
Tom Hawkins	2	1-2	5
Jon McGlocklin	3	1-1	7
Tom Thacker	2	0-0	4
Jack Twyman	1	1-1	3
	39	25-33	103

Boston Celtics	FG	FTM-A	PTS
John Havlicek	11	1-2	23
Satch Sanders	5	0-0	10
Bill Russell	7	2-6	16
Sam Jones	15	4-7	34
K.C. Jones	3	0-0	6
Larry Siegfried	5	4-4	14
Don Nelson	3	3-5	9
	49	14-24	112

Cincinnati	31	25	23	24	--	103
Boston	26	35	28	23	--	112

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Jack McMahon (Cincinnati)

Attendance: 13,909

Notes: Lucas struggled with a knee injury, but Robertson's 37 kept the Royals in the game... Naulls continued to fade from the Celtics' lineup, posting another DNP.

1966 NBA Finals Game 7
 April 28, 1966
 Boston Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Los Angeles Lakers	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Elgin Baylor	45	6-22	6-6	14	1	1	18
Rudy LaRusso	25	2-7	3-4	6	0	5	7
Leroy Ellis	34	5-11	2-3	11	0	2	12
Jerry West	48	12-27	12-16	10	3	3	36
Walt Hazzard	24	5-7	2-5	2	3	2	12
Gail Goodrich	30	2-9	2-3	4	1	4	6
Jim King	16	1-4	0-1	2	0	1	2
Darrall Imhoff	14	0-1	0-0	3	0	3	0
Bob Boozer	4	0-0	0-0	2	1	1	0
		33-88	27-38	54	9	22	93

Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
John Havlicek	48	6-21	4-6	16	2	3	16
Satch Sanders	31	3-9	1-1	4	3	5	7
Bill Russell	48	10-22	5-5	32	1	5	25
Sam Jones	29	10-21	2-2	5	0	5	22
K.C. Jones	31	2-9	1-1	2	3	5	5
Don Nelson	28	2-9	4-4	8	2	3	8
Larry Siegfried	22	4-13	4-5	2	2	4	12
Willie Naulls	3	0-1	0-0	1	0	3	0
		37-105	21-24	70	13	33	95

Los Angeles	20	18	22	33	--	93
Boston	27	26	23	19	--	95

Head Coaches: Red Auerbach (Boston), Fred Schaus (Los Angeles)
 Referees: Mendy Rudolph, Earl Strom
 Attendance: 13,909

Notes: Final game of Red Auerbach's coaching career; finished with lifetime regular season record of 938-479, 99-69 in the playoffs and eight championships... Schaus also made his last appearance in the Finals as a head coach... West and Baylor combined to shoot 3 for 18 in the first half.

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1968 NBA Eastern Division Finals Game 7 April 19, 1968 The Spectrum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Boston Celtics	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
John Havlicek	48	7-20	7-7	12	8	4	21
Bailey Howell	28	8-12	1-3	10	0	6	17
Bill Russell	48	4-6	4-10	26	5	5	12
Sam Jones	41	9-22	4-4	2	3	4	22
Larry Siegfried	44	7-15	4-4	3	2	4	18
Don Nelson	17	5-9	0-0	7	3	0	10
Wayne Embry	10	0-0	0-3	1	0	1	0
Tom Thacker	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	4	0
		40-84	20-31	61	21	28	100

Philadelphia 76ers	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Chet Walker	40	8-22	3-6	6	0	3	19
Luke Jackson	31	7-17	1-1	8	0	5	15
Wilt Chamberlain	48	4-9	6-15	34	5	2	14
Hal Greer	44	8-25	6-6	11	5	2	22
Wally Jones	34	8-22	2-2	3	1	6	18
Matt Guokas	24	2-10	0-0	3	3	2	4
Johnny Green	15	1-2	2-6	3	0	1	4
Bill Melchionni	4	0-1	0-0	0	2	2	0
		38-108	20-36	68	16	23	96

Boston	26	20	27	27	--	100
Philadelphia	21	19	29	27	--	96

Head Coaches: Bill Russell (Boston), Alex Hannum (Philadelphia)
 Referees: Norm Drucker, Mendy Rudolph
 Attendance: 15,202

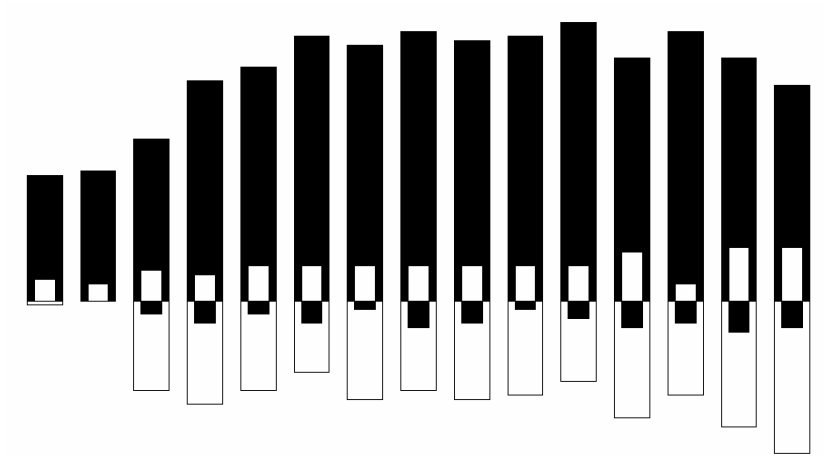
Notes: A year after ending the Celtics run, the 76ers blew a 3-1 series lead and lost in seven games... Billy Cunningham missed the series with an injury... Series was interrupted by a period of mourning after Martin Luther King's death... Wally Jones scored 12 in the fourth quarter... Celtics edge at the free throw line helped seal win.

1969 NBA Finals Game 7
 May 5, 1969
 The Forum, Inglewood, California

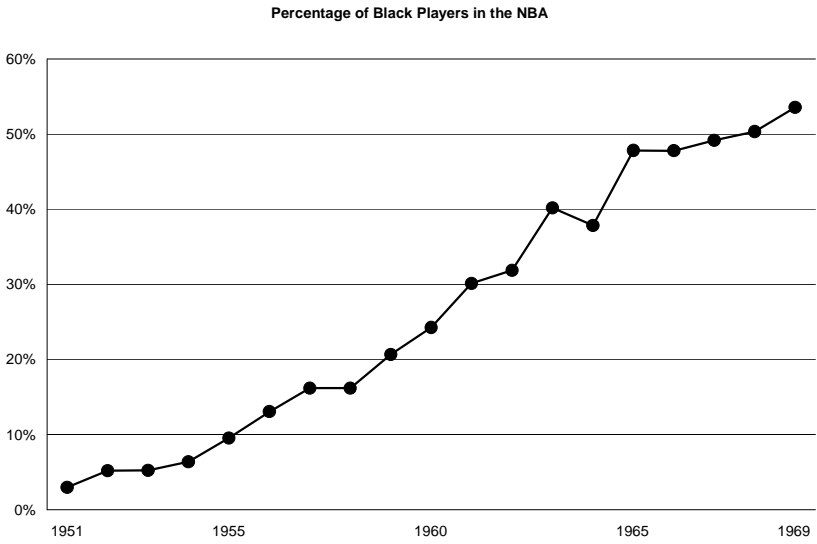
	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Boston Celtics							
John Havlicek	48	11-19	4-7	9	5	5	26
Bailey Howell	23	4-11	1-2	4	0	4	9
Bill Russell	48	2-7	2-4	21	6	5	6
Sam Jones	32	10-16	4-4	7	2	6	24
Em Bryant	42	9-21	2-3	5	3	4	20
Don Nelson	25	6-12	4-7	6	2	5	16
Larry Siegfried	22	2-9	3-4	2	2	5	7
		44-95	20-31	54	20	34	108
Los Angeles Lakers	Min	FGM-A	FTM-A	R	A	PF	PTS
Elgin Baylor	43	8-22	4-5	15	7	4	20
Mel Counts	21	4-13	1-2	7	1	4	9
Wilt Chamberlain	43	7-8	4-13	27	3	5	18
Jerry West	48	14-29	14-18	13	12	2	42
John Egan	27	3-10	3-6	3	4	4	9
Keith Erickson	39	2-11	2-3	7	3	6	6
Tom Hawkins	19	1-4	0-0	2	0	4	2
		39-97	28-47	74	30	29	106
Boston	28	31	32	17	--	108	
Los Angeles	25	31	20	30	--	106	

Head Coaches: Bill Russell (Boston), Butch van Breda Kolff (Los Angeles)
 Referees: Mendy Rudolph, Earl Strom
 Attendance: 17,568

Notes: Russell (11) and Jones (10) ended their careers as unparalleled champions... West captured the first-ever Finals MVP award, the only time the award has ever been given to a player from the losing team... After meeting in the NBA Finals seven times in eleven years, the two teams did not meet again in the Finals until 1984.



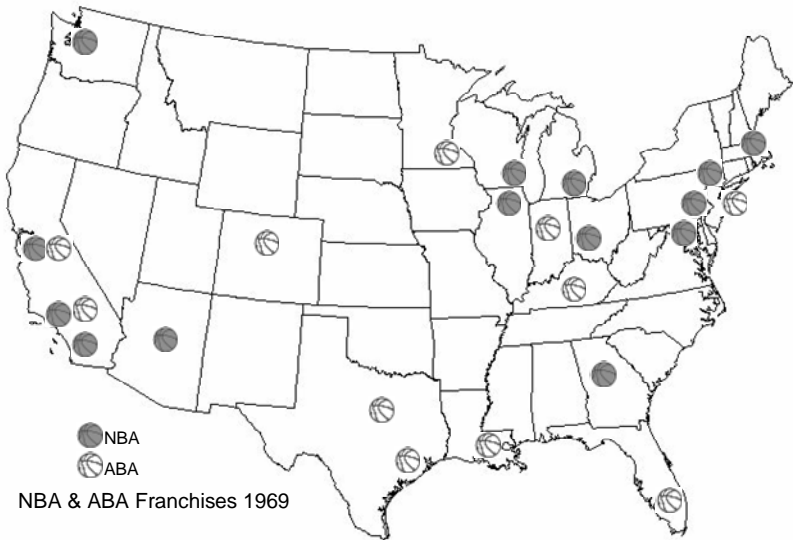
This is a graphical view of Bill Russell's career, showing his team's win-loss records starting with the 1954-55 season on the left, through the 1968-69 campaign at the far right. The wide bars represent regular-season wins (shaded) stacked above losses (white outlined), while the narrow bars represent NCAA Tournament and NBA playoff wins (white outlined) and losses (shaded). For example, in the 1968-69 season, the Celtics posted a 48-34 regular season record and then a 12-6 mark in the playoffs.



This chart shows the increase in the number of black players in the NBA, and does not include blacks who played on ABA or ABL teams during this era.



NBA Franchises 1954



NBA & ABA Franchises 1969

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Comparison of Major League Sports Television Contracts

Figures in \$1,000

Year	NBA	MLB	NFL/AFL
1954	NBC \$100	NBC \$925 World Series	Dumont Sat night games and championship game
1955	NBC	NBC \$925 WS	NBC \$100 for title game; ABC selected regular season games
1956	NBC	NBC \$925 WS	CBS \$1,000 regular season; NBC \$200 for title game
1957	NBC	NBC \$3,000 WS, \$250 All- Star Game	CBS / NBC
1958	NBC	NBC \$3,000 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS / NBC
1959	NBC Sat afternoons, second half of All-Star Game	NBC \$3,000 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS / NBC
1960	NBC \$500 Sat & Sun afternoons, Finals	NBC \$3,000 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS / NBC AFL: ABC
1961	NBC \$500 Sat & Sun afternoons, Finals	NBC \$3,000 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS regular season; NBC \$615 title game AFL: ABC
1962	NBC \$500 Sun afternoons, Finals	NBC \$3,500 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS \$4,650 regular season; NBC \$615 title game AFL: ABC
1963	No regular season national TV contract	NBC \$3,500 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS \$4,650 regular season AFL: ABC; NBC title game
1964	Sports Network Inc. 11 Thursday night games	NBC \$3,500 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS \$14,100 regular season + \$1,800 for title game

			AFL: ABC
1965	ABC \$650 17 games on Sunday afternoons beginning in January, ASG, and selected playoff games.	ABC \$5,700 GOW NBC \$3,500 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS \$14,100 regular season + \$1,800 for title game AFL: NBC \$7,200
1966	ABC \$650	NBC \$6,000 GOW, \$3,500 WS, \$250 ASG	CBS \$18,800 regular season + \$2,000 for title game AFL: NBC \$7,200
1967	ABC \$650	NBC \$6,000 GOW, \$6,100 WS, ASG	CBS \$18,800 regular season + \$2,000 for title game; Super Bowl CBS/NBC \$2,375 AFL: NBC \$7,200
1968	ABC \$1,000	NBC \$6,000 GOW, \$6,500 WS, ASG	CBS \$18,800 regular season + \$2,000 for title game; Super Bowl \$2,375 AFL: NBC \$7,200
1969	ABC \$1,000	NBC \$16,500 GOW, LCS, WS, ASG	CBS Super Bowl \$2,375 AFL: NBC \$7,200

Note: "1955" refers to the 1954-55 basketball season.

ASG All-Star Game
 GOW Game of the Week
 LCS League Championship Series
 WS World Series

Acknowledgments

Every author needs a lot of help – and sometimes luck – while writing a book. I was fortunate to have several public libraries nearby that allowed me to find materials just minutes away. Thanks to the librarians and staff at the Marlborough Public Library, Milford Public Library, Southborough Public Library, and Westborough Public Library. The librarians in the microtext department at the Boston Public Library acquiesced to my repeated requests for microfilm. This book also could not have been written without a number of resources available on the internet. Online archives of *The Sporting News* (sadly no longer available), *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, and the *New York Times* were invaluable, and the advent of online sports encyclopedias has simplified statistical research.

In some cases I found sources by sifting through bibliographies in other books; thanks to all of those authors who took the time to provide detailed notes and lists of their sources. One particular case stands out. In David Maraniss's excellent book on the 1960 Summer Olympics, *Rome 1960*, he listed *The Games of the XVII Olympiad, Rome 1960, the Official Report of the Organizing Committee* as a source. A quick Google search allowed me to find the 1956 version – and an online archive where I could download it for free (see Bibliography). The meticulously detailed 700-plus page report was indispensable for the chapter on the Olympics.

Finally, this book is built upon the work of decades of other authors and sportswriters, particularly those who covered the Celtics for the *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald*. Thanks to all of you. I hope that this work is worthy of a place alongside your efforts.

Notes

Introduction – A Way of Life

- 10 My memory of the Sullivan book was greatly refreshed when I was fortunate enough to find a copy in a local library. I then found a copy at a used bookstore that now has a proud place on my bookshelves. Sullivan, *The Picture History of the Boston Celtics*.
- 11 “*The Celtics aren’t a team...*” Sullivan, *Picture History*, cover page.
- 12 *Cost of \$650,000* “Naismith Failed to Sense the Impact of Basketball,” *The Sporting News*, 10/19/1968, pg 48,46 by Phil Elderkin in *The Christian Science Monitor*.
- 13 *Mémère and Pépère* are French-Canadian terms that stand for “grandmother” and “grandfather,” respectively (at least in my family).
- 14 “*winner take all games*” Mike and the Mad Dog show, WFAN 660AM New York, 6/23/1999, 7:00pm half-hour. This is a rough paraphrase and not an exact quote, but I wrote this down a few minutes after I heard Ryan say it, so it is close.
- 14 “*officially licensed products*” “New Company to Promote Sale of NBA-Backed Items,” *The Sporting News*, 11/16/1968, p27.

Chapter 1 – A Whole New World

- 17 *Bill Russell did not have an easy childhood*. Quotes taken from Russell and Branch, *Second Wind: The Memoirs of an Opinionated Man*, p3-10.
- 17 *Bancroft Bag Factory* Russell with Steinberg, *Red and Me: My Coach, My Lifelong Friend*, p6-8.
- 18 “*logs, farm equipment...*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p5-6.
- 18 *driving off the Klan* Russell, *Second Wind*, p18-19.
- 18 “*A man has to draw a line inside himself...*” Russell, *Red and Me*, p6.
- 18 “*You are going to meet people...*”, “*You’re no better than anybody else...*” Bill Russell quoted in “The Ring Leaders,” *Sports Illustrated*, 5/10/1999 by Frank Deford.
- 18-19 “*dressing like a white woman*”, “*take full possession of me...*” Russell and McSweeney, *Go Up For Glory*, p14.
- 19 “*prejudice is like fear...*” *The Sporting News*, 3/7/1964 sidebar story by Jack Barry.
- 19 *shell-shocked World War I veteran* Russell, *Second Wind*, p27.
- 19 *It was a different war* U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Special Reports, Series CENSR-4, Demographic Trends in the 20th Century*, p83; Veronico, *World War II Shipyards by the Bay*, p7; Fourteen ship yards in the Bay Area built vessels for WWII, including the Bethlehem ship yards in Alameda and San Francisco.

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- 19 *importance of education* Russell, *Second Wind*, p27-31.
- 19 *decided to move again* Russell, *Second Wind*, p27.
- 20 *send for Katie and his two boys* Russell, *Red and Me*, p11.
- 20 *independant trucker who hauled fruit and laborers* Taylor, *The Rivalry: Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain and the Golden Age of Basketball*, p52.
- 20 *“we could sit anywhere”* Russell, *Second Wind*, p27-28.
- 20 *“a different world”* Russell, *Second Wind*, p31.
- 20 *“a rotten, filthy hole”* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p17.
- 20 *“niggers”* Russell, *Second Wind*, p52.
- 20 *Blacks were still a small minority in California* U.S. Census Bureau, *Demographic Trends*, Appendix A, Tables 1 and 8.
- 20 *It was there that Bill began playing basketball* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p17.
- 21 *Christophe Russell*, *Second Wind*, p39; African-American Registry <http://www.aaregistry.com/detail.php?id=1192>.
- 21 *After Katie’s funeral* For more details, see Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p52; Russell, *Second Wind*, p34, and Russell, *Red and Me*, p12-13, in which Russell states the name of the foundry.
- 21 *McClymonds High School* Oakland Museum of California website, <http://collections.museumca.org/index.jsp>; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p53.
- 22 *“bum of the family”* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p26.
- 22 *George Powles* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p23-26; Russell, *Second Wind*, p60; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p53.
- 22 *“He couldn’t even put the ball in the basket when he dunked”* Whalen, *Dynasty’s End: Bill Russell and the 1968-69 World Champion Boston Celtics*, p40.
- 22 *“hot dog” basketball* Russell, *Second Wind*, p63-64.
- 22 *Powles and sportsmanship* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p54; Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p28-29; Greenfield, *The World’s Greatest Team: A Portrait of the Boston Celtics, 1957-69*, p85-86; Russell, *Second Wind*, p61-62.
- 22 *“taught me a lot of other things”* “The Big Surprise Of 1955 – Basketball Gets New Champ,” *Sports Illustrated*, 3/28/1955.
- 23 *California high school tour* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p54-55; Russell, *Second Wind*, p62-70; Johnson, *The Dandy Dons: Bill Russell, K.C. Jones, Phil Woolpert, and One of College Basketball’s Greatest and Most Innovative Teams*, p9.
- 24 *“I could feel the magnetism of the kid”* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p8. For more on the “recruitment process” that brought Russell to USF, see Russell, *Second Wind*, p74; “The house that Russell built: Bill Russell, the University of San Francisco, and the winning streak that changed college basketball,” *California History*, 84.4 (Fall 2007): 4(22), by Aram Goudsouzian. Obtained from General Reference Center Gold. Gale. Boston Public Library. 27 Mar. 2008; Shaughnessy, *Ever Green: The Boston Celtics, A History In The Words of Their Players, Coaches, Fans & Foes, From 1946 to the Present*, p75; and Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p50-51,58.
- 24 *just 100 athletic scholarships* “Colleges Concede Evils In Athletics,” *New York Times*, 3/23/1951.
- 24 *NCAA allowed freshmen to play varsity basketball* This rule was changed in 1956, when freshman were ruled ineligible to play on varsity teams.
- 24 *Ross Guidice* Basketball resume, see *2006-07 University of San Francisco Basketball Media Guide*, p56; furniture store Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p194.
- 25 *“Guidice taught me quickly but gently...”* Russell, *Second Wind*, p82.
- 25 *The sessions paid off* “The house that Russell built”; *USF Media Guide*, p72.
- 25 *magazine articles* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p58-59.
- 25 *opener against California* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p64.

- 25 “he never said anything to me...”; “I decided that I was going to be a great basketball player” Russell, *Second Wind*, p119-120.
- 26 selfish underachievers Jones with Warner, *Rebound: The Autobiography of K.C. Jones and an Inside Look at the Champion Boston Celtics*, p53.
- 26 “wall-to-wall jerks” Russell, *Second Wind*, p121.
- 26 Woolpert later told a story McCallum, *College Basketball, U.S.A.*, p16.
- 26 school record See *USF Media Guide*, p72.
- 26 Information on Russell’s teammates taken from Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p47, 68, 84-85.
- 26 Russell could touch a point Russell, *Second Wind*, p77.
- 27 USF defeated the Bruins “The house that Russell built”; “1955-1956: The Repeat,” by Bernie Schneider, <http://www.usfdons.com>.
- 27 Oklahoma City tournament Jones, *Rebound*, p55-56; “The house that Russell built”; *USF Media Guide*, p72.
- 27 Bush had worked to rehab Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p200.
- 27 “That Bill Russell of theirs is the finest player I’ve ever seen...” “Deadly Scoring Duo Again Clicking Off Points for Colonials,” *The Sporting News*, 1/26/1955 p4.
- 28 “Red, you’ve got two years...” Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p35. Auerbach called Woolpert repeatedly during the next two years to check on Russell. see Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p64.
- 28 “plays at seven-foot-ten” Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p97. Stanford changed their nickname to “Cardinal” in 1981.
- 28 top spot in the national polls McCallum, *College Basketball, U.S.A.*, p116-117.
- 28 Santa Clara See 2006-2007 *Santa Clara Basketball Media Guide*.
- 28 eventual NIT champion CCNY The 1950 CCNY (Community College of New York) team, coached by Nat Holman, also won the NCAA tournament that year, a feat that had never been done before and soon became impossible when the NIT stopped inviting teams that were selected for the NCAA tournament.
- 28 “This is a hungry team” “Dons on Defense,” *Time*, 2/14/1955.
- 28 West Texas State See *West Texas A&M Men’s Basketball 2006-2007 Media Guide*; “1955-1956: The Repeat”; *New York Times* 3/9/1955; West Texas State never appeared in the NCAA tournament again, and eventually dropped down to Division II. The university is now called West Texas A&M.
- 29 Utah “Tournament Time Approaches,” *Sports Illustrated*, 2/21/1955; “1955-1956: The Repeat”; “The house that Russell built”; raw steak explanation in Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p107.
- 30 Slats Gill McCallum, *College Basketball, U.S.A.*, p166. “Last May Be Best for Oregon State Coach,” *The Sporting News* 3/14/1964. Gill had also played for Reinhart, see *The Sporting News* 12/5/64.
- 30 Oregon State Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p61; “The house that Russell built”; “1955-1956: The Repeat.”
- 30 “I don’t see how he can cope” “1955-1956: The Repeat”.
- 31 “I didn’t have a chance to win the jump” “K.C. Jones’ Most Memorable Game,” *Basketball Digest*, December 2000.
- 31 “50-50” Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p111.
- 31 Colorado “The house that Russell built”; “1955-1956: The Repeat”; 2006-07 *Colorado Men’s Basketball Media Guide*; *New York Times* 3/19/1955.
- 32 Ken Loeffler “Sports Parade,” *The Sporting News*, 1/1/1956 by Hugh Brown. Loeffler left LaSalle after the game against USF because he felt underappreciated, and moved on to coach Texas A&M for two disastrous seasons.
- 33 “Entering the game” “K.C. Jones’ Most Memorable Game,” *Basketball Digest*, December 2000.

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- 33 “*His blocks*” “1955-1956: The Repeat”.
- 33 For list of USF fans and details of arrival back in San Francisco, see Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p114-121.
- 33 *estimated \$700,000* “The Big Surprise Of 1955 – Basketball Gets New Champ,” *Sports Illustrated*, 3/28/1955.

Chapter 2 – Unstoppable Force

- 34 “*Parts of South America shocked me.*” Jones, *Rebound*, p57.
- 34 *St. Ignatius Church* Dedicated in 1914 as the fifth incarnation of the church, the current building was far more elegant than the original wooden church that had been built for \$4,000 fifty-nine years earlier when the college had been founded. See http://www.usfca.edu/150years/vignette/vign_6.html, http://usfca.edu/usfnews/news_stories/2004/stignatius90.html.
- 34 *ninety-eight percent white males* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p15.
- 34 *Kezar Pavilion, San Jose Auditorium, or the Cow Palace* “The house that Russell built”; Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane: The NBA’s Black Pioneers*, p92-93; *USF Media Guide*; “Colorful Cow Palace New Cage Capital,” *The Sporting News*, 3/16/1960 Sec 2, p1.
- 35 *USF was unable to secure an invitation* The Rose Bowl, held in Pasadena, California, was reserved for the Big Ten champion against the Pac-10 champion (#4 Illinois vs. #7 Stanford). San Francisco was one of seven undefeated teams in the college in 1951, and was ranked 14th in the final AP poll that was taken before the bowl games were played. The other three major bowl games in 1951 were: the Sugar Bowl, held in New Orleans (#3 Maryland vs. #1 Tennessee), the Orange Bowl in Miami (#5 Georgia Tech vs. #9 Baylor), and the Cotton Bowl in Dallas (#15 Kentucky vs. #11 TCU). AP Poll Archive <http://www.appollarchive.com/football/ap/seasons.cfm?appollid=140>.
- 35 1951 USF Football “Honoring integrity: USF’s last football team refused to compromise,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5/20/2006, by Carl Nolte; ‘51 Dons: Pride, Honor & Friendship. ©2008 FSN Production (television special).
- 36 *Newell left for a larger salary at Michigan State* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p73. Newell doubled his salary by moving to Lansing, Michigan. Woolpert made \$3,600 his first season as head coach at USF.
- 36 “*a slow break*” *The Sporting News*, 1/19/1955.
- 36 “*make coffee nervous*” “The house that Russell built”.
- 36 *willingness to recruit black players* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p57; “The house that Russell built”.
- 37 “*scarcely representative of the school*” Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p60.
- 37 *only one black player* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p24.
- 37 *1952 USF freshman class* “The house that Russell built”.
- 37 “*He went through hell*” Cunningham, Carson. “The Russell Model: Melbourne 1956 and Bill Russell’s New Basketball Standard.” *Olympika: The International Journal of Sports Studies*, Volume XV – 2006, Pages 59-85 (p66).
- 37 “*Snowball*” Russell, *Red and Me*, p21-23. Russell also wrote, “I must have heard a hundred times during my freshman year, ‘Why can’t you be more like K.C.!’”
- 37 “*the team came first*” Jones, *Rebound*, p56.
- 37 *Biographical sketches of teammates* 1954 San Francisco City Directory; 1958 San Francisco City Directory; “1955-1956: The Repeat”; Program for USF Commencement, June 1956, obtained from <http://www.sfgenealogy.com>; Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p63, 132, 200.

- 38 *The camaraderie extended off the court* “The house that Russell built”.
- 38 “*We figure to have the ball only about half the time*” Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p50.
- 38 “*We would practice*” Jones, *Rebound*, p121.
- 38 “*I was not fond of Woolpert*” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p41.
- 38 *The Sporting News* picked the Dons to repeat “Dons Picked to Repeat as Cage Champs,” *The Sporting News*, 12/7/1955, Sec 2, p1,4.
- 38 *Woolpert thought the change was “absurd”* “Dashing Dons Set to Defend NCAA Title,” *The Sporting News*, 12/14/1955, Sec 2 p3; Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p124. Woolpert claimed that the NCAA was trying to make college ball like the pros, which in his words were “dying on the vine.”
- 39 “*They didn’t get the tall ones*” “‘I’ve Been Helped by 12-Foot Lane’ Declares Russell,” *The Sporting News*, 1/18/1956 Sec 2 p3. Similar quotes in “College Sports Notes,” *New York Times*, 12/2/1955.
- 39 *All-American at Glendale College* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p130.
- 39 “*I’m afraid we could run into trouble*” “Dashing Dons Set to Defend NCAA Title,” *The Sporting News*, 12/14/1955, Sec 2 p3.
- 39 *USF was the only college to actively recruit Brown* “Dons’ Defensive Didoes Put New ‘Quake in Cage,” *The Sporting News*, 1/18/1956, Sec 2 p1.
- 39 *starred in four sports while in high school* In addition to basketball, Hal Perry also played baseball and football, and was a key member of the school’s track team. “The house that Russell built”; “He’ll watch the game tonight, but mostly he’ll remember,” *Oakland Tribune*, April 2, 2007, by Dave Newhouse.
- 39 *His illness had been* Most of this section is based on Jones, *Rebound*, p42-50.
- 40 “*Jones, you can’t play defense worth a damn.*” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p120.
- 41 Woolpert recruits K.C. Jones. This account is drawn from several sources that mostly overlap but also provide some unique insights: Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p228; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p120; Jones, *Rebound*, p46; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p117; Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p25.
- 41 *K.C.’s transition to USF was rocky* Jones, *Rebound*, p49-51, 64.
- 42 *In the 1955 USF Yearbook* Quoted in Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p86.
- 42 *Eisenhower was still only willing to gently “prod” the South into compliance* See “Eisenhower Prods South To Proceed With Integration,” *New York Times*, 3/22/1956 p1. “[Eisenhower] repeated the appeal he made a week ago for moderation on the racial issue, and understanding of the South’s emotions. But he emphasized the need for compliance with the Supreme Court decision barring school segregation.”
- 42 *634 Cleveland Avenue* Parks’s address was given in “5,000 At Meeting Outline Boycott; Bullet Clips Bus,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, 12/6/1955, by Joe Azbell p1. <http://www.montgomeryboycott.com>
- 42 *Montgomery’s buses were segregated* Halberstam, *The Fifties*, p540.
- 43 *the arrest of fifteen-year-old Claudette Colvin* “A Forgotten Contribution,” *Newsweek*, 3/2/2009, by Eliza Gray.
- 43 “*We must stick together*” “5,000 At Meeting Outline Boycott; Bullet Clips Bus,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, 12/6/1955, p1 by Joe Azbell. Obtained from: <http://www.montgomeryboycott.com>
- 43 “*We are determined*” Halberstam, *The Fifties*, p548.
- 43 “*until the bus transportation situation is cleared up*” “5,000 At Meeting Outline Boycott; Bullet Clips Bus,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, 12/6/1955, by Joe Azbell p1. <http://www.montgomeryboycott.com>; Halberstam, *The Fifties*, p539-556; Branch, *Parting the Waters, America in the King years 1954-63*, p128-140.

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- 43 *fare increase* Branch, *Parting the Waters*, p146-150.
- 44 “*speeding*” charge Halberstam, *The Fifties*, p557 – King was arrested for driving 30mph in a 25mph zone. Also see Branch, *Parting the Waters*, p184; “FBI Secures Boycott List,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, 2/24/1956 p1.
- 44 *King’s family was also targeted*. “Blast Rocks Residence Of Bus Boycott Leader,” *The Montgomery Advertiser*, 1/13/1956 p1 by Joe Azbell. Corretta was sitting in the front of the house along with the wife of local electrician Roscoe Williams, and the two of them both ran to Yolanda’s room. Officials estimated that the bomb was either a hand grenade or a half stick of dynamite.
- 44 WSFA-TV began broadcasting on Christmas Day 1954.
- 44 *Frank McGee* Halberstam, *The Fifties*, p555-560; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, p168, 184. McGee built such a good reputation from his coverage that he was hired by NBC as a national correspondent in 1957. Television was the “new media” of its day, and McGee can be thought of as the 1950s equivalent of a 2000s blogger who brings a fresh approach to covering news.
- 44 *continued to increase Martin Luther King’s profile* Branch, *Parting the Waters*, p163-164; Halberstam, *The Fifties*, p561.
- 45 “*Suggestions for Integrating Buses*” Clayborne, Garrow, Gill, Harding, Hine, ed. *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p58-60.
- 45 *USF Dons began their season in dominating fashion* “Basketball Bounces In,” *Sports Illustrated*, 12/12/1955, by Roy Terrell; “Dashing Dons Set to Defend NCAA Title,” *The Sporting News*, 12/14/1955; “The house that Russell built”; Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p134; *USF Media Guide*.
- 45 *The white and black players were forced to room in different facilities* Russell, *Red and Me*, p76-77. Russell and the other blacks were told of the separate arrangements during the flight to the game. Russell was angry they were not asked beforehand, and later found out from his father that the school had asked their parents before the trip if the arrangements would be okay.
- 45 *gracious speech* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p141. Baxter had starred at Booker T. Washington High School. Russell began his speech by saying, “The greatest place to be from in America is New Orleans.”
- 46 *Woolpert deliberately used an all-black lineup* “The house that Russell built”.
- 46 *ECAC Holiday Festival* This account is drawn from several sources, including: “11 College Bills Set For Garden’s Court,” *New York Times*, 9/7/1955, p37; “Duquesne, San Francisco, Holy Cross and U.C.L.A. Gain in Garden Basketball,” *New York Times*, 12/27/1955, p33; “‘Most Valuable’ Candidates Abound on Court,” *New York Times*, 12/29/1955, p18; “San Francisco and U.C.L.A. Reach Final of Holiday Festival Basketball,” *New York Times*, 12/29/1955, p18; and “The tournaments,” *Sports Illustrated*, 1/9/1956 by Roy Terrell.
- 47 “*I let the team down*” “Dons’ Defensive Didoes Put New ‘Quake in Cage,” *The Sporting News*, 1/18/1956.
- 47 “*The duel*” “Two Twin Bills In Garden Today,” *New York Times*, 12/28/1955, p29.
- 48 *Crusaders had crushed NYU* “Holy Cross Sinks N.Y.U. Five, 85-50, for Fifth In Row,” *New York Times*, 12/18/1955, by Louis Effrat p51.
- 48 “*That Russell had great reflexes*” Heinsohn with Lewin, *Heinsohn, Don’t You Ever Smile?: The Life and Times of Tommy Heinsohn and the Boston Celtics*, p77.
- 49 *UCLA and USF had to wait* “San Francisco Easily Beats U.C.L.A. in Garden Basketball Festival Final,” *New York Times*, 1/31/1955, p8. USF and UCLA had to wait to take the court until Holy Cross had defeated Duquesne 61-57 as Heinsohn outscored Dukes star Si Green 17-14.
- 49 “*their defense is attributable to Russell*” “Dons’ Defensive Didoes Put New ‘Quake in Cage,” *The Sporting News*, 1/18/1956, Sec 2 p1.

- 49 “the best college basketball team I ever have seen” “San Francisco Easily Beats U.C.L.A. in Garden Basketball Festival Final,” *New York Times*, 1/31/1955, p8.
- 49 *NCAA record of thirty-nine wins* “Seton Hall and Long Island Share Win Mark at 39 Each,” *The Sporting News*, 1/18/1956, Sec 2 p2; “Don Quintet Ties Mark With No. 39,” *New York Times*, 1/14/1956.
- 49 *Mallen... left the team* “Notes On College Sports,” *New York Times*, 1/11/1956, p39 (pre-law story); Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p150 for description of clash over playing time. Mallen did eventually earn a law degree, served in San Francisco district attorney’s office, and in 1982 he became a San Francisco municipal court judge. See Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p201. He died on January 31, 1992, suffering a heart attack while hearing motions in a civil case. See <http://archive.deseretnews.com/archive/207710/NURSE-SHOWS-QUICK-RESPONSE-AS-JUDGE-COLLAPSES-ON-BENCH.html>
- 50 *public television station KQED* “1955-1956: The Repeat”.
- 50 “I thought we might be able to rest up” Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p153-154.
- 50 *streak of fifty-five games* “San Francisco Gains 40th in Row, 33-24,” *New York Times*, 1/29/1956, p177
- 50 “We’ll merely be changing spokes” “1955-1956: The Repeat”.
- 51 *Gene Brown Johnson, The Dandy Dons*, p156
- 51 *now received a first round bye* “Dashing Dons Set to Defend NCAA Title,” *The Sporting News*, 12/14/1955.
- 51 *Willie Naulls See 2006-07 UCLA Basketball Media Guide*. On March 2, Naulls had set a school record with thirty-nine points against California (which exceeded the number of points scored by either team in the USF-California game in January).
- 51 John Wooden biographical sketch “Winning: With nice guys and a pyramid of principles,” *New York Times*, 12/2/1973 by Arnold Nano; McCallum, *College Basketball, U.S.A.*, p84-85.
- 52 *As the Dons and Bruins took the court* This section was drawn from the following sources: Goodwin, *Remembering America: A Voice From The Sixties*, p93; Halberstam, *The Fifties*, p268, 305, 504-505; <http://www.hungryi.net>; Gilliam and Palmer, *The Face of San Francisco*, p200-205. Presley had been releasing singles on Sun Records and later on RCA since 1954, but the release of his first album in March 1956, coupled with a series of TV appearances on variety shows hosted by Jackie Gleason, Milton Berle, and later Ed Sullivan, caused his popularity to explode. See Halberstam, *The Fifties*, p473-478. Estimates showed that the 13 million teenagers in America in 1956 had an average income of \$10.55 per week, and the post-war boom had led to cheaper prices for radios (as low as \$25) and, most importantly for the music industry, records and record players. By April, Elvis was “selling \$75,000 of records a day” and you could buy an Elvis model record player for \$47.95.
- 52 *UCLA Johnson, The Dandy Dons*, p164-165 for dunk story; *New York Times*, 3/17/1956, p14; “1955-1956: The Repeat”. Naulls shot just 6-18 from the floor, Taft 6-23, and UCLA shot just 18-66 (28%) overall.
- 53 *Morris Buckwalter* Buckwalter would later coach in the NBA and eventually served as an executive with the Portland Trail Blazers.
- 53 *Utah* “NCAA Semifinals,” *Sports Illustrated*, 3/26/1956, by Roy Terrell; *New York Times* 3/18/1956, pS6; *2007-08 Utah Men’s Basketball Media Guide*; Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p165; “The house that Russell built”; “1955-1956: The Repeat.”
- 53 *Jim Krebs* “Big Jim And The Texas Boom,” *Sports Illustrated*, 2/18/1957 by Tex Maule
- 54 “I don’t think Jim” “6-8 Krebs Pacing SMU to Third Straight Crown,” *The Sporting News*, 1/23/1957, Sec 2 p6.

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- 54 *SMU early-round games* See *New York Times*, 3/14/1956, p40; *New York Times*, 3/17/1956, p14; *New York Times*, 3/18/1956, pS6.
- 54 *Russell had a sprained finger* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p168.
- 54 “wildly cheered” See *New York Times*, 3/23/1956, p31.
- 55 “I was really surprised” “Big Jim And The Texas Boom,” *Sports Illustrated*, 2/18/1957 by Tex Maule.
- 55 “San Francisco can beat the Russians” “Victory No. 55: End Of An Era,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/2/1956 by Roy Terrell.
- 55 *preseason poll* “Dons Picked to Repeat as Cage Champs,” *The Sporting News*, 12/7/1955, Sec 2, p1.
- 55 *Chuck Darling’s school record* See *2007-08 Iowa Basketball History and Record Book*, and *2006-07 Iowa Basketball Media Guide*. Logan finished with 1,188 points. Cain fell just 40 points shy of Darling’s mark.
- 56 Iowa’s early round games described in *New York Times* 3/18/1956, pS6; *New York Times* 3/23/1956 p31.
- 57 *USF had rolled to another title* See *New York Times* 3/24/1956 p25. Russell, K.C., and Woolpert did not travel back to San Francisco with the team. They flew directly to Kansas City for the Shrine East-West Game. They returned to San Francisco in time for a combination celebration/fundraiser at the Sheraton-Palace hotel nine days later. Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p174.
- 57 *Mike Farmer* Farmer went on to play and coach in the NBA.

Chapter 3 – Sneakers and Snapshots

- 58 *The NIT* Douchant, *Encyclopedia of College Basketball*, p287.
- 58 “a sport played for its own sake” Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball: The AAU Tournament, 1921-1968*, pxiii.
- 58 *to pursue a medical degree* Naismith, *Basketball: Its Origin and Development*, pxv.
- 58 *Gulick formally assumed “ownership”* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, pxiv, Naismith, *Basketball*, p24; <http://www.aausports.org>. Gulick would serve in that post until 1905. Naismith would complete his medical degree, and then began a four decade career at the University of Kansas, where he mentored legendary Jayhawk basketball coach Phog Allen.
- 59 *became an annual event in 1913* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p5-18, 245-246; “A.A.U. Controls Basket Ball,” *New York Times*, 11/13/1907. The AAU tournament was not held in 1918 due to World War I.
- 59 “attired in uniforms” Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p18.
- 59 *support of private businesses* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, pxv.
- 60 *AAU was annually earning a respectable profit* Douchant, *College Basketball*, p16; Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p41 For example, the 1936 AAU tournament made an estimated \$4,700 profit. Also see Naismith, *Basketball*, pvi for a discussion of the initial NIT and NCAA tournaments.
- 60 *Kansas City Athletic Club Blue Diamonds* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p15. The two players were Gale Gordon and Al Peterson. Peterson was the leading scorer on the 1927 Jayhawks, and both Peterson and Gordon had earned All-Missouri Valley first team honors. In 2003, the University of Kansas officially retired their jersey numbers (36 and 26, respectively). See *2005-2006 University of Kansas Media Guide*.

- 60 *City Auditorium* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p30-32. The City Auditorium had opened in 1908 by hosting the Democratic Convention as its first event.
- 60 “*a combination of state fair*” Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p35.
- 60 “*the smoke was so thick*” Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p30.
- 60 *AAU assumed a dominant role* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p34, 42-44.
- 60 *AAU had deep ties* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p5.
- 60 *Avery Brundage Maraniss, Rome 1960: The Olympics That Changed The World*, p53; Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p44.
- 61 *unofficial program in 1904* Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots: Pro Basketball’s Early Years*, p58.
- 61 *By World War I* “Basket Ball In Far East,” *New York Times*, 10/31/1915 states that leagues were established in China by 1908, and in South America by 1915.
- 61 *chose football instead* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p42-44.
- 61-62 *1936 team* This section is drawn from Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p43-48.
- 62 “*Quadrennial Oceanic Hitch-hikers*” Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p48
- 62 *mud pit* The trouble with the “clay and sand” court was just one of Brundage’s problems. After the team arrived in Berlin, FIBA announced that only 7 players would be allowed to dress for each game, which left Brundage seething over the extra expense of sending five unnecessary players to Europe.
- 63 *Phillips 66ers* Early history of the team is described in Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p20, 57-58, 73-82.
- 63 “*the teamwork of the Phillips squad*” Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p80. Also see, “Bartlesville’s Dream Team No Amateur,” by Dave Sittler 5/17/2007, and “Glory of Their Era: 66ers Reunite in Bartleville,” by Mike Tupa 5/28/2007, both posted at <http://www.apbr.org> in the forum “The Early Years and 1960s”; Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p83; Cunningham, “The Russell Model”, p63 for the “sixty days” figure.
- 64 *AAU tournament was held in Bartlesville* The change in venue coincided with the end of the 66ers championship run. They lost to the Oakland Bittners in the 1949 championship game.
- 64 *Discrimination* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p26.
- 64 *Chicago Collegians* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p60-61.
- 64 *Don Barksdale integrated* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p111.
- 64 *1948 Olympic Team* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p114, 118.
- 65 *cruised to the gold medal* “U.S. Basketball Squad Scores Easy Victory Over France for Olympic Title,” *New York Times*, 8/14/1948.
- 65 *Four years later* In 1952 the YMCA was no longer included in the Olympic qualifying tournament, replaced by yet another AAU team, so the entire AAU tournament “Final Four” was represented in the trials. The American Basketball League had collapsed, but the surviving National Industrial Basketball League (NIBL) contained the most dominant AAU teams in the country, including three of the AAU’s representatives in the Olympic trials – the AAU champion Peoria Caterpillars, the Phillips 66ers, and the Fibber McGee & Molly team from Los Angeles, named after the radio personas of their owners, John and Marian Jordan, who sometimes doubled as the halftime entertainment. Peoria won the

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- tournament by defeating the University of Kansas, so for the third consecutive Olympics the head coach and most of the roster was stocked with AAU personnel, and the United States maintained their undefeated record by capturing another Gold Medal. Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p135; www.abpr.org; www.usabasketball.com/history lists the hometowns of the fourteen players in the following states: Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas.
- 65 *chose Phillips in 1949 for that reason* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p100-101.
- 66 *Woolpert turned down a chance to coach "O'Connor to Coach Quintet,"* *New York Times*, 3/25/1956, pS7; "U.S. Olympic Five Beats Dons, 83-52," *New York Times*, 12/16/1956, pS5. Woolpert's only connection to the Olympic Team was as the losing coach in an exhibition game between USF and the triumphant Olympians (including Russell and K.C. Jones) when they returned from Melbourne in December.
- 66 *Lockett-Nix Clippers* Five other Colorado seniors also played on the Clippers.
- 66 *Darling had no intention of turning pro* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p151.
- 66 *"Burdie's" reputation* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p159, 214.
- 67 *Phillips' roster* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p159-160.
- 67 *Phillips hung on to win* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p167. Bud Adams later founded the AFL's Houston Oilers.
- 67 *Buchan Bakers* Their run to the AAU title is described on a very good website, <http://www.buchanbakers.com> and in Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p168-170. Baylor was sitting out a year of college ball after transferring from Idaho to the University of Seattle.
- 67 *Dick Boushka* Profiled in *The Sporting News*, 1/19/1955, Sec 2 p4; additional details in Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p172, 181.
- 68 *The roster for the College All-Stars* The following *New York Times* articles were used as sources for this section: "U.S. Picks 5 Collegians For Basketball Trials" 3/4/1956, pS3; "Trials Are Listed For Olympic Five" 3/9/1956, p27; "Uhl and Rolles Names To All-Star Quintet" 3/11/1956, p207; "College Basketball Players Open Drills for East-West Game Here" 3/28/1956, p37; "McCarthy on Squad" 3/29/1956, p36; also Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p171-172. The rejection of Baylor and the Big Seven conference's refusal to allow Wilt Chamberlain to play in that year's AAU tournament forced the United States to leave two future NBA superstars at home for the Olympics.
- 68 *"I wanted to represent my country"* Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p36.
- 68 *Johnny Mathis* Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p177.
- 68 *Brundage even tried* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p60 Then, on the eve of the Games, IOC president Avery Brundage created a controversy when he tried to push through a resolution that would have demanded that every athlete promise to never turn professional, even after the Olympics, by adding the phrase "intend to remain" to the Olympic oath that all participants recited before competing. This draconian resolution was defeated the day before the Opening Ceremonies. It was typical of Brundage's unique moral sense of amateurism.
- 68 *"over the years"* "West Crushes East In Garden, 103 to 72," *New York Times*, 4/1/1956, p161.
- 68 *annual East-West Game* "West Crushes East In Garden, 103 to 72," *New York Times*, 4/1/1956, p161.

- 68 *the Olympic Trials began* Sources for this section on the 1956 Olympic Trials include "Trials Are Listed For Olympic Five," *New York Times*, 3/9/1956 p27; "Oilers Capture Olympic Trial on Point Formula," *New York Times*, 4/5/1956, p39; Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p172-181 and the <http://www.buchanbakers.com> website which features box scores of all of the games.
- 70 *game-high twenty-two points* "Holy Cross Downs Oklahoma Quintet for N.C.A.A. Title at Garden," *New York Times*, 3/26/1947.
- 70 *Tucker was also the leading scorer* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p133, 154.
- 70 *"a wonderful, laid-back Southwesterner"* Jones, *Rebound*, p67. While contemporary stories in American newspapers would report anecdotes that showed that Tucker and Russell also got along reasonably well, Russell painted a different portrait of their relationship in 2009, writing that "the Olympic basketball coach did not treat me with respect. In fact, I can't recall ever having had a conversation with him the whole time we were together." See Russell, *Red and Me*, p28
- 70 *Bruce Drake* "Olympic Post is Rejected," *New York Times*, 6/15/1956, p21; "Drake Named Olympic Aide," *New York Times*, 7/31/1956 p16; Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p191; "Colleges Blamed in 'Fix'," *New York Times*, 3/28/1951.
- 70 *The OBC's player selections* "Russell Among 12 On Olympic Team; Coach Tucker Feels His U.S. Basketball Squad is Equal to Others in Past Years," *New York Times*, 4/6/1956 p21; Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p154-155; Cunningham, "The Russell Model," p70.
- 71 *The official workouts* This discussion of the pre-Olympic tour is drawn from several sources, including: "Trials Are Listed For Olympic Five," *New York Times*, 3/9/1956, p27; "U.S. Olympic Five Wins," *New York Times*, 11/5/1956 p44; "Olympic Quintet On Top," *New York Times*, 11/6/1956 p52; "Olympic Five Ends Tour With an 88-59 Triumph," *New York Times*, 11/11/1956 p233; "Australia Readies Big Welcome for Olympians," *New York Times*, 9/2/1956 pS5. The Pan American airliners used for the trip stopped over on Hawaii on the way to Australia, and the plane Russell was on had an engine catch fire after departing the islands, forcing the pilot to return there for eight hours of repairs. See Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p60-61.
- 72 *"intimate knowledge of boxcars and deportations"* "Anti-Soviet View is Gaining in U.N.," *New York Times*, 11/21/1956, p1.
- 72 *Now they intended* Maraniss, *Rome 1960*, p14.
- 72 *"they were going to be pals"* "The Barber Shop," *The Sporting News*, by Carmichael, 12/26/1956.
- 72 *"not to make any statements which might be embarrassing"* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p57.
- 73 *"Chuck Taylor" sneakers* Cunningham, "The Russell Model," p71.
- 73 *After narrowly winning the rights* Doyle, Edward A. Ed. *The Official Report of the Organizing Committee for the Games of the XVI Olympiad, Melbourne 1956*, p30 IOC selected Melbourne over Buenos Aires by a single vote.
- 73 *pace of preparations* Sources for this account of the activity in Melbourne before the Games include: "Melbourne Prepares For The Olympic Games," *New York Times*, 3/4/1956; "Australia Readies Big Welcome for Olympians," *New York Times*, 9/2/1956, pS5; "Russians to Face Canada's Quintet When Competition Starts Tonight," *New York Times*, 11/22/1956, p52; "Melbourne Preens For The Olympic Festivities," *New York Times*, 11/4/1956, p371; "Olympic Preparations

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- Answer Critics of Australian Planning,” *New York Times* 11/19/1956, p56; Berlin, London, and Helsinki had also housed visitors in private homes when the Olympics were held in those cities.
- 74 “two- and three-storied flats” Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p121.
- 74 \$4.5 million Most money amounts were originally stated in contemporary articles in Australian pounds (two million pounds in this case). I have converted those values to dollars using the average 1956 exchange rate of 1 dollar = 0.4490 Australian pound as provided by the Measuring Wealth website (<http://www.measuringwealth.org>). This figure matches the rate used by some of the original articles which gave values in both pounds and American dollars.
- 74 *Housing assignments* Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p131 The United States shared its block with seven athletes from Liberia, while the USSR block was larger, and also included athletes from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Peru, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and part of the Iranian team. In an interesting decision, given the recent history of World War II, the Polish team was housed in an area adjacent to the German team.
- 74 *The Olympic Village* Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p121-124. The plans of the committee were not without flaws. An unexpected cold snap before the start of competition sent officials scurrying to replace fans with portable heaters, and the Swedish team built their own sauna when the facilities provided in the Village proved insufficient for their needs.
- 74 *increasing traffic congestion* Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p180, 184.
- 74 *new “skyhook” swimming pool* Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p41 The design for the pool was the result of a competition won by three recent University of Melbourne graduates.
- 75 *arts festival* “Melbourne Preens For The Olympic Festivities,” *New York Times*, 11/4/1956, p371; “Melbourne Prepares For The Olympic Games,” *New York Times*, 3/4/1956.
- 75 *basketball venue* See *New York Times* “Olympic Court Shift Planned” 8/1/1956 p27, which specifically mentions the rental fee of 20,000 pounds (\$45,000). The new arena is described in “Russians to Face Canada’s Quintet When Competition Starts Tonight,” *New York Times*, 11/22/1956, p52; “Basketball Site Is Changed,” *New York Times*, 8/9/1956, p18; “Basketball Stadium Begun,” *New York Times*, 8/11/1956 p18; “Melbourne Preens For The Olympic Festivities,” *New York Times*, 11/4/1956, p371; Cunningham, “The Russell Model,” p73.
- 75 *unseasonably cool and wet weather* “Olympic Preparations Answer Critics of Australian Planning,” *New York Times* 11/19/1956, p56.
- 75 *Duke of Edinburgh* Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p96 When the Duke arrived in Melbourne, 700 policemen lined the ten mile route from Essendon to his temporary residence at Government House.
- 75 *march of nations* Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p229; Findling and Pelle, ed. *History Dictionary of the Modern Olympic Movement*, p122; Maraniss, *Rome 1960*, p56.
- 76 *After marching around the track* Much of this section is drawn from images in two photo archives: Public Record Office Victoria archives, available at <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/olympics>, and the *Life* magazine archive on Google. The ceremonies were also described in *New York Times* “Crowd of 102,000 Sees Opening Ceremonies of Olympic Games at Melbourne” 11/22/1956; Also Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p227. Besides those in attendance in person, the Opening Ceremonies were also viewed by an estimated 200,000 Australians on television. In an era where the Olympics were not yet broadcast on

television world-wide – the 1960 Games would be first where taped-delayed coverage was shown on American television – Australia embraced the “new” media. Three television stations in Melbourne and Sydney that had been on the air less than a month broadcast 20 hours of competition a day for 10 of the 15 days of the Games. Footage from Melbourne was regularly flown to Los Angeles for inclusion in a series of six bi-weekly, half-hour telecasts that were distributed to stations across the United States, the only televised portions of the Games in America. See “WPIX Will Carry Olympic Films,” *New York Times*, 11/24/1956, p39 by Richard F. Shepard; Maraniss, *Rome 1960*, p133-135; Findling, *History Dictionary of the Modern Olympic Movement*, p123. The three stations were GTV9, HSV7, and ABV2; “200,000 see Games on TV,” *New York Times*, 11/23/1956 p39; Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p156 says 5,000 television sets had been sold in Melbourne alone.

- 76 *the basketball competition began* “Americans Crush Thai Five, 101-29,” *New York Times*, 11/23/1956, p24; “U.S. Crushes Philippines in Olympic Basketball,” *New York Times*, 11/27/1956, p57”; Jones, *Rebound*, p67; Cunningham, “The Russell Model,” p73-81.
- 77 “*stuff shot*” “U.S. ‘Stuff Shot’ Is Called Legal,” *New York Times*, 11/28/1956, p57; Cunningham, “The Russell Model,” p59; Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*, p372. Sien had worked the USA-Philippines game in the preliminary round, so he had seen Russell use the shot before, but did not rule it illegal until the Bulgaria game. This maneuver would be outlawed the following year by the NCAA.
- 78 *World Championships Results of World and European Championships* taken from FIBA’s official website, <http://www.fiba.com>, which I have also used to help with spellings of several international players, which were spelled with numerous variations even in contemporary sources.
- 78 *Alexander Gomelsky* Sources included:
<http://www.jewishsports.net/BioPages/AlexanderGomelsky.htm>
- 78 *Janis Krumins* “7 Ft. 7¼ In. Player No Help to Russian Five,” *New York Times*, 5/23/1956, p25.
- 78 “*a true gentleman*” <http://www.euroleague.net/history/50-years/i/16999/1387/item>
“50 Years interview: Valdis Muiznieks, ASK Riga”
- 79 *Krumins’ foot injury* Cunningham, “The Russell Model,” p78.
- 79 *USA-USSR* “U.S. Five Subdues Russians, 85 TO 55,” *New York Times*, 11/29/1956 p44.
- 79 *USA-Uruguay* “U.S. Five Downs Uruguay, 101-38,” *New York Times*, 12/1/1956 p25.
- 79 *USA-USSR Gold Medal Game* “U.S. Quintet Routs Russia In Melbourne Final, 89-55,” *New York Times*, 12/2/1956, pS1.
- 79 “*I was the luckiest guy in the world*” Jones, *Rebound*, p67.
- 80 “*one of the biggest thrills of my life*” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p61.

Chapter 4 – Greatest Defensive Big Man in the Game

- 81 “*We could shoot like hell*” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p28.
- 82 *Boston Marathon Falls*, *The Boston Marathon: The incredible, zany story of America’s greatest foot race and the men and women who have run in it*, p13.
- 82 *Boston Garden* For more on the history of the building’s construction, see Johnson and Codagnone, *Images of Sports: The Boston Garden*, especially p2,9-11,20; Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p20; “Pro Basketball for Garden; Rickard Takes Over

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- Celtics,” *New York Times*, 5/12/1927 (Brooklyn Celtics); “Hockey Notes,” *Boston Globe*, 8/5/2007, by Kevin Paul Dupont; “Ashland’s Loring, savior of railroads,” *MetroWest Daily News*, 2/24/2008, by Bob Tremblay; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p3-4.
- 83 *Garden was purchased* Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p20; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p20-21; Johnson, *The Boston Garden*, p11.
- 83 *US National Team* Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p11-13; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p21; International Ice Hockey Federation Hall of Fame website <http://www.iihf.com/iihf/brown.htm>
- 83 “*I only wish Bob Cousy could skate*” “They Said It,” *Sports Illustrated*, 10/16/1961.
- 83 *Winter Exhibition* Johnson, *The Boston Garden*, p29; Florence and Dave Clark were famous sled dog breeders and racers. Florence visited shows around New England in the 1930’s, see: <http://www.logginginlincoln.com/user/UPHS%20Fall%202008%20final.pdf>. James Madden was a member of the 1932 Olympic Team as an individual skater; in 1936 he skated with his sister at Olympics without winning a medal; “The Garden in winter,” *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1995 by Pat Jordan; “Indoor Skiing Coming to America”, *Boston Globe*, 12/27/2007. http://www.boston.com/travel/explore/specials/ski/articles/2007/12/27/for_indo_or_slopes_business_looks_up
- 83 “*We had a building*” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p21-22.
- 84 *created the BAA* Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p15; Havlicek and Ryan, *Hondo: Celtic Man in Motion*, p3; “Basketball League of America League Minutes, 1946-1949,” obtained from <http://www.apbr.org>
- 84 *financial struggle* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p2, p7; Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p159 states that nearly 25% of the league’s 1 million fans that season received free tickets.
- 84 *decided to fold the team* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p22-23; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p26; Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p28.
- 84 *in his Garden office* Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p14.
- 85 *Lou Pieri* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p23-24; Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p28.
- 85 *Auerbach had compiled* Caps 13-5 vs. Boston 1946-47 – 1948-49; Hawks 2-0 in 1949-50 (Red coached all but 7 games that season, and Hawks did not play Celtics until 11/22); Auerbach’s teams were 10-0 at home against Boston.
- 85 “*not exactly a match made in heaven*” Feinstein and Auerbach, *Let Me Tell You a Story: A Lifetime in the Game*, p57. Some things in sports never change.
- 85 *Auerbach learned* Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p7, 116; Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p20-21.
- 85 “*I was his son*” Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p4.
- 86 *his basketball career* This account is drawn from several sources, including: Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p8 (name of high school); Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p24-25 scholarship at Seth Low was \$150 out of the normal \$250 per year tuition. Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p29 mentions how Seth Low’s coach was a protégé of Reinhart; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p13 relates that Ritings played for Reinhart at University of Oregon.
- 86 *Frank Keaney* Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p108 URI averaged 46.9 points per game in 1933-34; by comparison, the Big 10 champion averaged 41.6 points per game.
- 86 “*twenty-five years ahead of his time*” Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p5.
- 86 *After graduating* Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p40; Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p25; Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p31 his 1940-41 St. Albans’ Prep team finished 11-1; Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p101 During the 1941-42 and

- 1942-43 seasons Auerbach coached at Roosevelt High School, and while there Auerbach cut future Major League Baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn from the team.
- 86 *a good cigar* “Auerbach, pride of Celtics, dies,” *Boston Globe*, 10/29/2006 by Peter May.
- 86 *camp basketball team* Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p46.
- 86 *Redskins charity basketball team* Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p44-46.
- 87 *draw upon his Navy connections to recruit players* Auerbach did just that – Feerick and Norlander were starters on the 1946-47 Capitols.
- 87 *back on the job market* “Auerbach Resigns Post,” *New York Times*, 6/3/1949; Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p53-54 Duke head coach Gerry Gerard had cancer, and Red was in line to succeed him. But Red was uncomfortable with waiting for Gerard to resign or pass away, so he took Kerner’s offer with the Hawks. Gerard finished the 1949-50 season, retired, then passed away the following summer.
- 87 *insisting that Macauley had to go* Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk: The Glory Days of Basketball in the Words of Those Who Played It*, p93.
- 87 *pick Cousy’s name* “Hat Trick Sent Cousy to Celtics,” *The Sporting News*, by Jerry Nason in the *Boston Globe* 2/23/1963 p28.
- 88 *“the Celtics are a team”* “A Survey of the NBA Turns Up A New Look,” *Sports Illustrated*, 11/21/1955 by Roy Terrell. The Celtics soon had the last laugh. Eckman and the Pistons had compiled a 10-8 record against the Celtics during the 1955 and 1956 seasons, but after Russell arrived, Eckman and the Pistons were just 3-10 against Boston before Eckman was fired after a 9-16 start in 1957-58.
- 88 *“He was like atomic energy”* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p43.
- 88 *“He knew that I couldn’t stand failure”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p142.
- 89 *“assured me Russell was even better”* Auerbach with Fitzgerald, *Red Auerbach: An Autobiography*, p118.
- 89 *“No problem there”* Auerbach, *An Autobiography*, p118.
- 89 *“expressly” to watch Heinsohn* “‘Most Valuable’ Candidates Abound on Court,” *New York Times*, 12/29/1955, p18, by Louis Effrat.
- 89 *sportswriters’ luncheons* Legend has it that these luncheons, which were held at the Hotel Lenox, were placed on a running tab that Brown would not pay for years.
- 89 *“He’s full of...”* Auerbach, *An Autobiography*, p113 (p84 mentions Cohen’s first name. He was friend of Auerbach’s.)
- 89 *Lakers were so desperate to get him* Lazenby, *The Lakers: A Basketball Journey*, p97 The three players were reportedly former Kentucky stars Frank Ramsey, Lou Tsioropoulos, and Cliff Hagan; a trade that Auerbach later said he would never have made.
- 89 *others compared Russell to Walter Dukes* Pluto, *Tall Tales: The Glory Years of the NBA, in the Words of the Men who Played, Coached, and Built Pro Basketball*, p126-127.
- 90 *“You’d have to take him”* “Picked for the Pros,” *Time*, 1/9/1956.
- 90 *prohibited trading first round picks* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p31; “NBA Votes to Lift Ban on Trading of First-Round Pick,” *The Sporting News*, 6/22/1968.
- 90 *Sihugo Green* “Duquesne Downs Dayton, 70 to 58, In Garden Final,” *New York Times*, 3/20/1955.
- 90 *Globetrotters would offer Russell* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p52; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p31 Many salary figures have been quoted in different sources, ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000, but \$17,000 is a more realistic figure.

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- 90 *Tri-Cities* The area is now referred to as the “Quad Cities” region, and includes those three cities plus East Moline, Illinois and Bettendorf, Iowa.
<http://www.visitquadcities.com>
- 91 *decided to move to St. Louis* “Hawks Burying St. Louis ‘Sport Graveyard’ Tag,” *The Sporting News*, 1/16/1957, Sec 2, p 1; By comparison, the Hawks had just 55 season-ticket holders in Milwaukee – see Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p146.
- 91 “*Why don’t you*” Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p14-15. For more on Kerner and his feelings towards black players, see “Playoff Gifts to Hawks Cost Kerner 3 Gees,” *The Sporting News*, 1/15/1958, Sec 2 Pg 4; Kerner actually selected Ricketts on 4/13, a few weeks before his 5/1 announcement of the move to St. Louis. Kerner later also regretted not selecting Maurice Stokes.
- 91 “*Baboon*” and “*Black Nigger*” Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p94.
- 91 *Kerner had just released Chuck Cooper* Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p66. Cooper had played the entire 1954-55 season for Kerner in Milwaukee, and statistically, there was no drop off in his performance after the team moved to St. Louis.
- 92 *Macaulay* Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p87; “Ed Macaulay: In his storied career, an NIT Championship that put St. Louis University on the map stands out – The Game I’ll Never Forget,” *Basketball Digest*, April 2002, by Chuck O’Donnell.
- 92 “*I can’t imagine the Celtics without you*” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p101. Also see Sullivan, *Picture History*, p146. Patrick later died at the age of 14, after living his entire life as a virtual invalid.
- 92 *The deal was finalized* “Celtics Acquire Rights to Russell and Jones of San Francisco Five,” *New York Times*, 5/1/1956, p39, by William J. Briordy.
- 92 “*Just get the ball*” Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p37.
- 92 *The territorial draft* “Kill Territorial Draft in NBA – Kerner,” *The Sporting News*, 1/18/1956, Sec 2 p1; *The Sporting News*, 5/13/1967; Also, the rule would eventually complicate franchise movement and expansion plans, as the scope of territorial rights had to be negotiated. The Knicks held up Syracuse’s move to Philadelphia in 1963 until they were assured that they would have territorial rights to Bill Bradley of Princeton when he graduated. The owners voted to repeal the territorial draft rule in 1963, but delayed the implementation of the rule change until 1966, see “NBA’s Owners Name Kennedy New President,” *The Sporting News*, 5/11/1963. Boston voted against the proposal this time, but it passed 6-3. In 1965, Red Auerbach told Phil Elderkin that he felt that the 1963 proposal was specifically directed against Boston because Bob Cousy was taking the Boston College job and they could help each other recruit players and funnel them to the Celtics. Auerbach admitted to Elderkin the owners’ fears were well-founded: “Well, that’s exactly what I’d have done.” See *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1965 p28. Auerbach also did not support Kerner’s 1956 proposal, but Brown voted for it in spite of Auerbach’s objection.
- 93 *line drive jumpers* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p72-73.
- 93 *High School All-American* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p21-23, 28-29. Heinsohn later remembered attracting attention from local newspapers. He remembered seeing his name in the headlines after scoring 23 points in a 44-42 victory over rival Demarest in December 1950.
- 93 *chose Holy Cross* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p24-25. Union City’s Togo Palazzi was also playing for Holy Cross at the time.
- 93 *Heinsohn quickly adjusted* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p29-33; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p73. Heinsohn claimed he was not paid for the semipro games he played, but was advised to hide his identity to protect his amateur status.

- 94 *successful in the classroom* Cousy with Linn, *The Last Loud Roar*, p25; “Celtics Hailing Heinsohn as Cinch to Hoist ‘Rookie of Year’,” *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1957, Sec 2 p4, by Jack Barry in the *Boston Globe*.
- 94 “*he was one fellow*” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p73.
- 94 *Auerbach’s plans* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p34, 42-43; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p74.
- 94 *Heinsohn’s play drew rave reviews* “Celtics Hailing Heinsohn as Cinch to Hoist ‘Rookie of Year’,” *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1957 Sec 2 p4, by Jack Barry in the *Boston Globe*.
- 94 *Sharman pulled a thigh muscle* “Good Times in the Garden,” *Time*, 12/31/1956.
- 95 This account of Russell’s arrival in Boston is drawn from sources that include: Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p47; “Russell To Become Pro,” *New York Times*, 12/17/1956, p46; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p71; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p32 for autograph photo; Heinsohn would later claim to be “the greatest Bill Russell forger of them all.” See Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p339.
- 95 *Brown refused to pay Russell* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p59, 65; Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p46; “Celtics Sign Russell,” *New York Times*, 12/20/1956 p48; Brown would later give back half of that figure, saying to Russell, “Why should I punish you for winning a gold medal?”
- 95 “*I know it will be hard*” “Russell To Become Pro,” *New York Times*, 12/17/1956, p46.
- 95 “*We’ve been after a big young man*” “Russell In Debut As Pro Saturday,” *New York Times*, 12/18/1956, p51.
- 95 “*as long as I performed*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p126.
- 95 *Russell’s first game* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p75-76; Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p79 including quote from Cousy; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p89.
- 96 Frank Ramsey “*cocky as hell*” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p62; Russell, *Second Wind*, p136-137 drawl and stutter; Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p56 practical joker; Cousy with Ryan, *Cousy on the Celtic Mystique*, p23 size mismatches.
- 96 *small pregame wagers* Russell, *Red and Me*, p134 the bets were normally for a quarter.
- 97 “*we have a pretty good organization*” Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p37.
- 97 “*I was coming in halfway through*” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p74. Russell actually came in about one-third of the way through the regular season schedule, but he had also missed training camp.
- 97 *Arnie Risen* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p71.
- 97 “*It really warmed me*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p127-128.
- 97 *Auerbach agreed* “Education of a Basketball Rookie,” *New York Times*, 2/24/1957, by Arthur Daley.
- 97 “*I was eating every other shot*” See *Boston Globe*, 5/27/1999; also Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p49.
- 97 *had never played with a black player* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p76. Heinsohn took this a step further and said that Russell was the first black person he spent a lot of time with, on or off the court.
- 97 “*was excluded from almost everything*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p188. Rookie hazing Russell, *Second Wind*, p140.
- 98 “*that his color didn’t mean a damn thing*” Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p196 quote; Ramsey relationship described in Cousy, *Celtic Mystique*, p53 and Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p195. The only indirect tension was caused by the league’s decision to award Heinsohn the rookie of the year award; Heinsohn had an excellent rookie year, but Russell was changing the nature of the game, and he felt that the owners

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- did not want him to succeed Maurice Stokes as the second straight black rookie of the year. When Heinsohn received his award check, Russell told him, "I think you ought to give me half of that... if I'd been here the whole season, you never would've gotten it." See Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p91 for quote; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p92-93 for more on racial tension.
- 98 "Neil still hasn't got his hook shot back" "Bill Russell Just Finding Range, Says Red," *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1957 Sec 2 p1-2.
- 98 "Right from the start" Cousy, *Celtic Mystique*, p34.
- 98 "his biggest asset" "Education of a Basketball Rookie," *New York Times*, 2/24/1957, by Arthur Daley.
- 98 "the greatest defensive big man in the game" "Bill Russell Just Finding Range, Says Red," *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1957 Sec 2 p1-2.
- 98 *Cousy and Russell* Russell, *Red and Me*, p130-131.
- 99 "everyone on the team despised Cervi" Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p46.
- 99 *Former Celtic Togo Palazzi* "Celtics Sell Palazzi To Syracuse Quintet," *New York Times*, 12/30/1956, pS3.
- 99 *The Nats had eliminated the Celtics* Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p67; Greenfield, *World's Greatest Team*, p62.
- 100 *prompting Kerner to trade Willie Naulls* See story in *New York Times*, 12/5/1956. Trade was made December 10, after a St. Louis loss to New York and just before playing New York again on December 11.
- 100 *After Bob Pettit and Chuck Share turned him down* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p134.
- 100 *Alex Hannum* "Hannum Named Hawk Coach After Martin Requests Move," *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1957, Sec 2 p2; "Alex the Greatest as Court Conqueror," *The Sporting News*, 1/28/1967, by Jack Kiser. Hannum, who had been on the Hawks the previous year, had been cut by the Pistons and was re-signed after the Naulls-Martin trade left St. Louis short handed up front.
- 100 *shifting Cliff Hagan from guard to forward* "Hagan, Spear-Carrier Year Ago, Now Hawks' Howitzer," *The Sporting News*, 1/15/1958, Sec 2 p4.
- 101 *The series began* "Banner series in '57," *Boston Globe*, 4/13/2007, by Bob Ryan; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p93; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p33.
- 101 *Boston bounced back* "Celtics Set Back Hawk Five, 119-99," *New York Times*, 4/1/1957, p42.
- 101 *raucous basketball crowds* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p206; quote from Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p70; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p179.
- 101 "old and ragged basketballs" Sullivan, *Picture History*, p34. Kerner maintained that he did not swear at Red, but did call him a "busher."
- 102 *broke his wrist* "Banner series in '57," *Boston Globe*, 4/13/2007, by Bob Ryan; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p154.
- 102 *Boston won 124-109* "Hawks Defeat Celtics At Final Buzzer, 96-94," *Boston Globe* 4/12/1957 p1,26, by Jack Barry; "Hawks Overcome Celtic Five, 96-94," *New York Times*, 4/12/1957, p31.
- 102 "The last thing we said" Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p68.
- 102 *Hannum had drawn up* Mentioned in *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald* 4/12/1957.
- 103 "You've got no guts!" "Celts In Title Showdown," *Boston Herald*, 4/13/1957.
- 103 *WHDH radio* See *Boston Globe* 4/13/1957; *Boston Herald* 4/13/1957 notes that Joe Cronin had given up the Red Sox' time on WHDH so the Celtics game could be broadcast. *Boston Globe* says that approximately twenty fans waited outside Garden box office overnight for the 9am ticket sales opening. Also, the presence or absence of a television blackout directly affected ticket sales – 4/15/1957 *Boston Herald* states that one game in Boston that was televised locally drew less than 6,000 paying customers to the Garden.

- 103 *Those in attendance* Montreal would go on to win the Stanley Cup 4 games to 1. Sullivan was better known for his later role as part-owner and GM of the Red Sox in the 1970s and 1980s. *Boston Herald* 4/14/1957;
- 103 *"I only had one hour's sleep"* See *Boston Herald* 4/14/1957.
- 103 *When his stomach remained unsettled* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p96.
- 103 *shortly after 2:30pm* Sources for this section include game stories in *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald* 4/14/1957 and "Celtics Win Basketball Title In Double Overtime," *New York Times*, 4/14/1957. Also Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p71-73.
- 104 *"the most amazing physical display"* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p58. After the game, Coleman claimed it was goaltending, saying "I don't know how he could have stopped it", see *Boston Globe* 4/14/1957.
- 105 *As he slumped to the bench* Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p71-72; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p34.
- 105 *his hands shaking* "Jim Loscutoff: His two pressure-packed free throws pulled the Celtics ahead to stay for Boston's first-ever title – The Game I'll Never Forget," *Basketball Digest*, March-April 2004, by Chuck O'Donnell.
- 105 *"I could hit the backboard"* "On an April afternoon 40 years ago, Celtics made history," *Providence Sunday Journal*, 3/30/1997, by M. Charles Bakst.
- 105 *"Never so scared in my life"* *Boston Globe* 4/14/1957.
- 106 *"and enjoyed our championship"* Russell, *Second Wind*, p193; p144 describes how future dinners would be much more formal, with families and press invited. *Boston Globe* explains that Ramsey missed the dinner so he could return to Ft. Knox for his official discharge from the Army.
- 106 *golf pro* Postseason plans described in *Boston Globe* 4/13/1957; *Boston Herald* 4/14/1957.
- 106 *"I never saw anyone do what he did"* Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p51.

Chapter 5 – Celtics and Lakers

- 107 *unprecedented achievement* Harvey Pollack's 2006-07 NBA Statistical Yearbook, p211. At the time, Clyde Lovellette was the only other player who had won all three titles, but his NBA championship with the Lakers in 1954 came two years after winning an NCAA title at Kansas and a gold medal at the Helsinki Olympics.
- 107 *set an NBA record* "Russell Betters Mark As Celtics Win, 111-89," *New York Times*, 11/17/1957.
- 107 *"Conditioning demands a price"* "Colleagues Give No. 1 Nod to Old Redhead," *The Sporting News*, 3/27/1965 by Phil Elderkin.
- 107 *"His pet idea"* Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p45.
- 107 *Sam Jones* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p172-174; "Jones & Jones At Court," *Sports Illustrated*, 3/20/1961, by George Walsh; In Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p88 Russell recalled how, after McKinney told Red about Jones, Red called him to ask about Sam, assuming that Russell would know about him simply because they were both black. Russell had never heard of him. McKinney also had a bright future ahead of him, as he would succeed Murray Greason as head coach at Wake Forest for the 1957-58 season, beginning an eight year run that included a pair of ACC championships. See *2007-2008 Wake Forest Media Guide*, p186. North Carolina College was renamed North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in 1969; see <http://www.nccu.edu/aboutnccu/History.cfm>
- 108 *"I played against Sam"* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p252.

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- 108 *During the 1957 NBA draft* “Sam Slipping.... Poor Celts Pay the Price,” *The Sporting News*, 2/15/1969, p5,12, by Phil Elderkin.
- 108 *Northeastern University Sullivan, Picture History*, p36; Second Ward High School mentioned in Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p174.
- 108 “*Sam, after a couple of days*” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p174-175.
- 108 “*if Sam could get*” “Sam Slipping.... Poor Celts Pay the Price,” *The Sporting News*, 2/15/1969, p5,12, by Phil Elderkin.
- 108 *excellent card player* “Jones & Jones At Court,” *Sports Illustrated*, 3/20/1961 by George Walsh.
- 108 *Bill Sharman* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p49-50 quote; Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p183. Sharman was living in Porterville at the same time that Bill Russell’s father was running a trucking business between the nearby San Joaquin Valley area and Oakland. “Once, on a single day in 1944, he won the shotput and discus, and ran third in the high hurdles, at a morning track meet; won the San Joaquin Valley tennis tournament in the early afternoon; and later pitched his team to a baseball victory,” quoted in Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p51 and see “Charmin Sharman....,” *The Sporting News*, 3/19/1958 for the original source.
- 108 *Ileana Bough* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p51; According to “Charmin’ Sharman....,” *The Sporting News*, 3/19/1958, Sharman celebrated his birthday on 5/25/1944, graduated from high school the next day, won a tennis title on the 27th, got married on 28th, and inducted into “Army” [sic] on 29th. Also see article “He’s Basketball’s Hottest Shot,” in the April 5, 1958 edition of *This Week* magazine (insert in many newspapers, including *The Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, Washington)).
- 108 *paid extra in dozens of movies* “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 10/15/1966, p47 by Phil Elderkin; Also see “Charmin’ Sharman....,” *The Sporting News*, 3/19/1958 on some other roles during the summer of 1954.
- 109 *pro baseball ... \$12,000 contract* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p52-53.
- 109 “*It seemed good to be able*” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p152; Freedman, *Dynasty: The Rise Of The Boston Celtics*, p34 Sharman’s decision to stop moonlighting as a baseball player was also influenced by a hand injury suffered on a close play at home plate.
- 109 “*hit the rim with the impact of a snowflake*” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p54. Quote is from Bud Palmer who played with the Knicks.
- 110 *led the league in free-throw shooting* Sharman would also have three streaks of over fifty straight FTs without a miss during his career, the only NBA player to ever do so.
- 110 “*He was a hell of a good competitor*” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p72.
- 110 “*He was a tough player*” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p106.
- 110 “*Willie didn’t talk*” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p182.
- 110 “*bristle like a porcupine*” Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p53; “killer instinct” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p182.
- 110 “*fantastic concentration*” Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p66.
- 110 “*He had these index cards*” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p112.
- 110 *shoveling the driveway* “Celtics Spouses,” *The Sporting News*, 2/7/1962. Lynn Loscutoff did the same thing for her husband Jim.
- 110 “*He doesn’t pick his spots*” Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p42.
- 111 *Loscutoff had been a scorer* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p142. The Atlas-Pacific Engineers reached the AAU tournament quarterfinals in 1952. Also p154 for 1954 San Francisco Young Men’s Institute (YMI) team.

- Loscutoff also considered playing AAU ball full-time after college, but signed with Celtics for \$8,000 + \$500 bonus; see Greenfield, *World's Greatest Team*, p65.
- 111 "meaner than Brannum" Sullivan, *Picture History*, p156. Loscutoff was the fifth player taken; Gola and Garmaker were territorial picks, followed by Ricketts, Maurice Stokes, and Loscutoff.
- 111 "Loscutoff has surprising finesse" Cousy, *Celtic Mystique*, p17.
- 111 season-ending surgery "Tip-off... . . . Tidbits," *The Sporting News*, 12/25/1957, Sec 2, p8, by Clif Keane.
- 112 game two Greenfield, *World's Greatest Team*, p117.
- 112 Russell landed awkwardly Sullivan, *Picture History*, p36-37; Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p85 says that Russell was called for goaltending on the block.
- 112 Pettit was brilliant "Hawks Nip Celtics For Title, 110-109," *New York Times*, 4/13/1958 – Cousy's fifty point effort was in double overtime; Pettit set record for a 48 minute playoff game.
- 112 "There will be other seasons" Sullivan, *Picture History*, p39. Truer words were never spoken.
- 112 Andy Phillip Marecek, *Full Court: The Untold Stories of the St. Louis Hawks*, p87.
- 112 K.C. Jones had been discharged from the Army Freedman, *Dynasty*, p74; Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball* p178, 184. In 1958, K.C. made the all-tournament team, along with former Olympic teammate Burdie Haldorson, and in the quarterfinals defeated the Wichita Vickers, who featured another former Olympic teammate, Dick Boushka. Carl Cain was also K.C.'s future brother-in-law. K.C. married his sister Beverly. Note that Russell was 4-F "because of his height" and did not serve in the military, see Johnson, *The Dandy Dons*, p30.
- 113 PeteRozelle Rams drafted K.C. when his original college class graduated. K.C. was selected in the thirtieth round, pick 354 overall. See <http://www.pro-football-reference.com>; Freedman, *Dynasty*, p74 for Morrow connection; Greenfield, *World's Greatest Team*, p122 for exhibition details, including forcing a Frank Gifford fumble. K.C. quit football partly because Sid Gillman demanded that he play with an injured thigh muscle, see Jones, *Rebound*, p65.
- 113 Bennie Swain "Bennie Swain, 78; NBA backup for Bill Russell was coach and teacher for almost 30 years," *Boston Globe*, 6/22/2008, pD15.
- 113 four black players The 1956-57 Royals also had four blacks, but Si Green played just 13 games because he was in the military for most of the season. K.C. played 49 games for the Celtics, and the team's other three blacks all played more games than Green.
- 113 "boyish charm" "6-8 Conley Clobbers 'Em as Rugged Celt Rebounder," *The Sporting News*, 1/27/1960, Sec 2 p2, by Phil Elderkin.
- 113 "was the only Celtic" Russell, *Second Wind*, p136.
- 113 Conley would frequently remind Sharman Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p87. Conley's baseball statistics from Wolff, *The Baseball Encyclopedia: Ninth Edition*, p1778-1779 and Carter and Hoppel, Ed. *The Series: An Illustrated History Of Baseball's Postseason Showcase 1903-1992*, p163.
- 113 "Gene is a nice gentle guy" Cousy, *Celtic Mystique*, p40.
- 113 "was a wild man" Sullivan, *Picture History*, p155.
- 114 Buddy LeRoux Sullivan, *Picture History*, p37.
- 114 "I was really afraid" "Last Whistle for Loscutoff...," *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964, p35.
- 114 "It was a confidence-builder" Greenfield, *World's Greatest Team*, p66.

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- 114 “Every time you put him in the game” Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p229.
- 114 Ramsey and Hagan relationship “Hagan-Ramsey – NBA’s Friendliest Feud,” *The Sporting News*, 3/2/1960, Sec 2 p3-4. “Ramsey Rated ‘Most Versatile’ in NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 12/18/1957.
- 115 Auerbach proceeded to draft “Ramsey Rated ‘Most Versatile’ in NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 12/18/1957; later the rule was changed so that if the player returned to college for a fifth year, he had to go back into the draft pool.
- 115 “rather have potential great fresh blood” Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p46.
- 115 before joining the Army While in the Army, Ramsey played in at least one exhibition game in Louisville against the Celtics during the 1956-57 season, see “Last Whistle for Loscutoff...,” *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964.
- 116 Rochester’s population U.S. Census Bureau, *Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places*.
- 116 smallest ticket base Philadelphia did play some games at the 7,777 seat Philadelphia Arena, but also hosted games at Convention Hall which had 12,000 seats.
- 116 “I owned a semipro football team” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p28-29.
- 116 “He sat on the bench” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p28.
- 117 Larry Costello “Comet Costello Found Star Dust in His Own Backyard,” *The Sporting News*, 3/19/1958, Sec 2 p2; Costello was born in Minoa, “about 8 miles outside the Syracuse city limits.”
- 117 “When I was playing” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p179; “Yardley to Be Traded to Syracuse,” *New York Times*, 2/13/1959 reports rumors that Yardley was also being shopped to St. Louis for Lovellette and to the Lakers for Bob Leonard.
- 117 Biasone “resolved” the situation Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p124, 171.
- 117 “Before I played with him” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p170.
- 117 “I don’t think” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p170; Yardley had engineering jobs in the offseason; according to Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p89, Schayes turned down an offer from Boeing to play for Syracuse.
- 117 Schayes regularly finished Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p107-109. Schayes was also a great free throw shooter. Over the past seven seasons the Celtics Bill Sharman had led the NBA in free throw percentage six times, but Schayes was the only other player to lead the league during this period, and finished second four times and third twice.
- 118 “I would always play” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p117-118.
- 118 “it didn’t take Hal long” “With Greer to Steer, 76ers Can Go Like 60,” *The Sporting News*, 2/22/1964, p35,38.
- 118 “We called Greer Bulldog” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p322.
- 118 “In my opinion” “Last Whistle for Loscutoff, Celtics’ Cop,” *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964 p35.
- 118 “There was great pride in Syracuse” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p118-119; Freedman, *Dynasty*, p43.
- 118 “There was a night” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p38.
- 119 “The Strangler” “Last Whistle for Loscutoff, Celtics’ Cop,” *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964 p35.
- 119 “When you’re playing in Syracuse” Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p43.
- 119 “The fans were always” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p119.
- 119 “It took 15 or 20 cops” Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p178-179.
- 119 The under card “Brawling Marks Syracuse Victory,” *New York Times*, 2/20/1959. As was common in this era, no players were ejected from the game.

- 120 Details of early stages of Syracuse-Boston series taken from sources including: “Nationals Topple Celtics, 120 to 118,” *New York Times*, 3/22/1959, pS1; “Celtics Sink Nationals for 2-1 Series Lead,” *New York Times*, 3/23/1959, p35; “Nationals Defeat Celtic Five and Square Series,” *New York Times*, 3/26/1959 p37; “Nationals Check Celtics,” *New York Times*, 3/30/1959 p34.
- 120 “*One day Red is watching Hopkins*” “‘Coach Auerbach Celt Mainspring’ – Ramsey,” *The Sporting News*, 1/17/1962, Sec 2 p2, by Phil Elderkin in the *Christian Science Monitor*. Hopkins scored 12 points in game four, and 10 in games two and three, so Ramsey’s memory was fairly accurate.
- 121 *Conley had been traded* Wolff, *The Baseball Encyclopedia: Ninth Edition*, p2407. The trade, in which the Braves dealt Conley, Joe Koppe, and Harry Hanebrink to the Phillies for Stan Lopata, Ted Kazanski, and Johnny O’Brien, briefly revitalized Conley’s pitching career. After going 0-8 for the Braves in 1958, he posted a 12-7 record for the 1959 Phillies.
- 121 “*a short cast*” See *Boston Globe*, 4/1/1959.
- 121 *Togo Palazzi would miss* Described in *Boston Herald*, 4/2/1959.
- 121 “*Well, a lot of people*” See *Boston Globe*, 4/1/1959.
- 121 “*simply flying over the court*” Quote from *Boston Globe*, 4/2/1959. Additional game seven details and quotes from *Boston Herald*, 4/2/1959; “Celtics Halt Nationals and Take Eastern Play-Offs, 4 Games to 3,” *New York Times*, 4/2/1959 p39; “Filling it up,” *Boston Globe*, 2/16/2009, by Bob Ryan (blog post on <http://www.boston.com>).
- 123 *173-139 loss* “Celtics Triumph As 7 Marks Fall,” *New York Times*, 2/28/1959, p15; “Cousy Engineer of Scoring Spree,” *The Sporting News*, 3/11/1959, Sec 2 p2; “Filling it up,” *Boston Globe*, 2/26/2009, by Bob Ryan. The game’s timeslot help draw a crowd of 12,315, well above the usual average that season.
- 123 *forcing commissioner Podoloff to “investigate”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p42. Podoloff was quoted (or misquoted, as he later claimed) that the players might have been “goofing off” and he wondered if the officials had called the game seriously. Walter Brown was livid, worried about attracting any type of scandal in the wake of the college basketball scandals of the early 1950s. Jocko Collins, the supervisor of referees, who had attended the game, said the officiating was satisfactory. See *New York Times* and *The Sporting News* articles cited above. The game was a matinee because an ice show was booked at the Garden that night.
- 123 *Detroit Gems* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p57,64-65. The Gems played mostly in high school gyms, and normally drew less than 100 fans.
- 123 *George Mikan* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p66,75; Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p160. The \$60,000 contract included clauses for Mikan to work in the legal department of American Gear & Manufacturing Company. Mikan was a law student at the time.
- 124 “*Mikan, even if you*” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p70.
- 124 *lowest-scoring game* Ironically, Kundla, who coached the Lakers in that game, also coached the 1959 team that lost to the Celtics in the highest-scoring game in NBA history.
- 124 *Short had bought the club* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p117-118. The group paid \$150,000 for the team, a ten-fold increase over what the original Minneapolis investors had paid for the team ten years earlier.
- 124 *Lovellette had worn out his welcome* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p118 mentions a rumor that Lovellette was “accused of exposing himself to a woman at a popular St. Paul nightclub.”
- 125 *Kundla would leave* The *Boston Globe* reported on April 9 that Kundla was leaving. The official announcement was made on April 10, the day after the series

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ended. Also see “Kundla Quits Lakers To Coach Minnesota,” *New York Times*, 4/11/1959, p17.

125 “Russell has our club worrying” *Boston Globe*, 4/9/1959.

125 “This is a great team” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p40.

Chapter 6 – New Frontiers

126 “toot their horns fiercely” Freedman, *Dynasty*, p66; “Celtic Spouses...,” *The Sporting News*, 2/7/1962.

126 *Naismith ... left New England* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p48. For more on early basketball leagues and basketball in Boston, see Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p187-203; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p24; Ryan and Pluto, *Forty-Eight Minutes*, p68.

127 “Some powers in the league” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p24, 55-56.

127 *blackout rules* For one example of TV and blackout rules, see *Boston Globe* 4/15/1957. One game in Boston during the 1957 Finals was televised locally, and only 5,793 folks attended. Game seven was blacked out locally, and was a sellout. Baseball and football owners enforced similar policies during this era.

127 “Going to see the Celtics” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p96.

127 *Central Artery* Tsipis, *Images of America: Boston’s Central Artery*, p10-11, 44-47, 121, 124. The elevated rail line ran above Causeway Street, parallel to the Garden.

128 *promotions* Russell, *Second Wind*, p68-69.

128 *doubleheaders* Johnson, *The Boston Garden*, p59. The first NBA All-Star Game in 1950 was preceded by a High School game. Also note that the Magicians and Stars were competitors of Saperstein’s Globetrotters, who Brown had a run-in with after drafting Chuck Cooper. Brown had told Saperstein the Globetrotters would not play the Garden again. When an NBA doubleheader was held in this era, half of the league (four out of eight teams) would be in the same city.

128 “There were no more sober citizens” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p105; On New Year’s Day 1947, the 19-3 Capitols lost to the 8-17 Falcons by the score of 62-57. The 1946-47 Falcons finished 20-40 and then dropped out of the BAA. The 1959-60 Royals would win just 8 more games that season, finishing 19-56.

129 *career-ending knee injury* “Bennie Swain, 78; NBA backup for Bill Russell was coach and teacher for almost 30 years,” *Boston Globe*, 6/22/2008, pD15.

129 *37.6 average* Wilt averaged more points than were scored by both teams in the infamous 19-18 game.

129 *Wilt’s high school coach occassionally benched him* Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962: The Night of 100 Points and the Dawn of a New Era*, p41.

129 *Brown... politely declined* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p41-42. In 1985 Wilt admitted getting \$4,000 a year from Kansas Alumni, and Walter Brown responded after his sophomore year by trying to get him investigated so he wouldn’t be eligible for the NBA.

130 *Life magazine* Google now hosts the *Life* magazine photo archive at <http://images.google.com/hosted/life>

130 *extend territorial draft rights* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p46; Taylor writes that Gottlieb’s Warriors, who had been mired near the basement since 1951, were the subject of some pity from fellow owners. But Gottlieb was in position to draft All-American Tom Gola from LaSalle due to their territorial rights, and the 1955-56 Warriors would win the NBA title.

- 130 *Wilt frequently faced down segregation* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p83. The freshman team only played exhibition games, and not an official schedule, which gave Allen extra flexibility. The freshman team also defeated the varsity that season, as Wilt scored 42 points and had 29 rebounds. See *2005-2006 University of Kansas Media Guide*, p123. Also see Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p44. Maurice King, who would play one game for the 1959-60 Celtics, was his only black teammate.
- 130 “*When Bill first came to me*” McCallum, *College Basketball, U.S.A.*, p19.
- 130 *Al Oerter* Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p43-44; Oreter earned a business degree at Kansas. For a profile of Oreter, who won gold in 1956, 1960, 1964 and 1968, see “Al Oerter, Olympic Discus Champion, Is Dead at 71,” *New York Times*, 10/1/2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/01/sports/othersports/01cnd-oerter.html>. “Oerter’s sweep was all the more remarkable because in each case he broke the Olympic record, beat the world record holder, overcame an injury and was not the favorite to win. His winning throws were 184 feet 11 inches in Melbourne in 1956, 194-2 in Rome in 1960, 200-1 in Tokyo in 1964 and 212-6 in Mexico City in 1968.”
- 131 “*Flippin’ with the Dipper*” “Stilt Thrives in Tall Corn Country,” *New York Times*, 1/14/1957; Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p45; For history of KANU, which debuted on the air in 1952, see <http://kansapublicradio.org>.
- 131 *Chamberlain dominated college competition* “The Stilt in Gilt-Edged Bow; 52 Points and 31 Rebounds,” *New York Times*, 12/12/1956, Sec 2 pg 7; *Kansas Media Guide*, p144, 152, 171.
- 131 *The national championship game* “No. Carolina Five Nips Kansas, 54-53, In Third Overtime,” *New York Times*, 3/24/1957. Rosenbluth had also been coached by Auerbach one summer at Kutsher’s Country Club as a high school player, and Auerbach had offered him a tryout with the Celtics. See Lucas, *The Best Game Ever: How Frank McGuire’s ‘57 Tar Heels Beat Wilt and Revolutionized College Basketball*, p13. Also see “McGuire’s Miracle” at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/mcguire/> and highlights on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fQAK7uiXVk>
- 132 *Chamberlain’s junior year* See *Kansas Media Guide*, p143-144.
- 132 *Saperstein made it official* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p102. The deal was \$46,000 plus incentives that could raise the deal to \$65,000. Gottlieb had gone on tour with the Trotters during a European tour. Also see “Kerner,” *The Sporting News*, 3/23/1960 for Saperstein’s minority interest in the Warriors and friendship with Eddie Gottlieb.
- 132 *Gola ... in the military* “Celtics, Hawks Rate Picks for Repeat Titles in NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 10/23/1957, Sec 2 p8.
- 132 *Chamberlain believed he already knew* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p141.
- 132 *Paul Arizin* Douchant, *College Basketball*, p50-51.
- 133 *Woody Sauldsberry* Russell, *Second Wind*, p243; “Sauldsberry ‘Unknown’ Last Fall, Selected No. 1 Rookie,” *The Sporting News*, 4/9/1958 p18; “Life and Basketball: The Redemption of Woody Sauldsberry,” *Baltimore City Paper*, March 28, 2001, by James Michael Brodie (<http://www.citypaper.com>); Sauldsberry also knew Russell, and helped influence Russell’s decision to not sign with Trotters.
- 133 “*I never saw anyone*” Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p191.
- 133 *gave Rodgers a deflated basketball* Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p36.
- 133 *Most detested Rodgers* Ryan, *The Boston Celtics: The History, Legends, & Images of America’s Most Celebrated Team*, p204.
- 133 *Celtics finished the regular season* “Boston Quintet On Top, 148-128,” *New York Times*, 3/10/1960.

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- 134 “You can’t relax a second against him” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p46.
- 134 Chamberlain “never will be as good as Bill Russell” “Tip-Off Tidbits,” *The Sporting News*, 12/11/1957, Sec 2 p1, by Clif Keane.
- 134 elected the league’s Most Valuable Player “Chamberlain Named Most Valuable Player,” *New York Times*, 3/16/1960, p49. The results were announced the day before the Boston-Philadelphia series started.
- 134 “I was scrambling off the floor” Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p13. Also see Sullivan, *Picture History*, p48; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p127-129; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p75; and “Celtics Set Back Warriors, 111-105,” *New York Times*, 3/17/1960, p40; “Warriors Down Celtics, 115-110,” *New York Times*, 3/19/1960, p15; “Celtics Vanquish Warriors, 120-90, And Gain 2-1 Lead,” *New York Times*, 3/20/1960 pS1; “Boston Captures 112-104 Contest,” *New York Times*, 3/21/1960 p32; “128-107 Conquest Cuts Boston Edge,” *New York Times*, 3/23/1960, p45; “Boston Quintet On Top, 119-117,” *New York Times*, 3/25/1960, p36 for more on this incident and the series in general.
- 135 Chamberlain spent most of the summer “Chamberlain to Meet With Warrior Owner,” *New York Times*, 8/2/1960 p34; *Boston Globe* 4/4/1960.
- 135 with Macauley struggling on the court According to Macauley in Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p103, his three options were retirement, a trade to Philadelphia (to back up Chamberlain), or coach.
- 135 reached an agreement to have Seymour replace Macauley Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p103-104.
- 135 The relationship between Kerner and Macauley “Ben, Ed, Bud Partners in Links Venture, Too,” *The Sporting News*, 3/23/1960, Sec 2 p2. “Blattner, Kerner, Macauley Amusements, Inc.” owned and operated a miniature golf course in a new shopping center in St. Louis. Blattner, a former baseball infielder, was also the national play-by-play voice of the Major League Baseball game of the week on ABC and later CBS from 1953 to 1959; see Blatter’s obituary in *Boston Globe*, 9/8/2009.
- 135 “Macauley is my coach” “Owner of Hawks Denies Report That Macauley Will Be Replaced,” *New York Times*, 3/26/1960 p16. This article appeared prior to game seven of the Lakers series.
- 136 “if we win one game we’ll be lucky” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p104.
- 136 Clyde Lovellette Marecek, *Full Court*, p103.
- 136 NBC’s television schedule Mentioned in “Hawks Play Celtics At St. Louis Today,” *New York Times*, 4/2/1960 p19. Games three and four were also scheduled for back-to-back days on Saturday and Sunday.
- 136 game one was scheduled “Celtics, Led by Cousy, Vanquish Hawks in Opening Game of N.B.A. Finals,” *New York Times*, 3/28/1960, p37. The 46 point second quarter also set an NBA playoff record for most points in a quarter.
- 137 Hawks got their revenge “Hawks Defeat Celtics and Tie Series,” *New York Times*, 3/30/1960, p47.
- 137 Larry Foust “Hawks Play Celtics At St. Louis Today,” *New York Times*, 4/2/1960 p19; *Boston Globe*, 4/2/1960.
- 137 “the single dirtiest player” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p57.
- 137 “The original Mr. Nice” Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p140.
- 137 “He meant a lot to my game” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p57.
- 138 “He wasn’t that physical” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p101.
- 138 “He just did the job” Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p106.
- 138 “just wasn’t strong enough” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p100; Heinsohn believed Freedman, *Dynasty*, p64.

- 138 *used multiple players* Reported in *Boston Globe*, 4/1/1960.
- 138 *As Pettit struggled* See *Boston Globe* 4/3/1960; “Celtics Triumph, 102-86; Lead Hawks, 2-1, in Finals,” *New York Times*, 4/3/1960, pS1. Both of Boston’s sub-100 point games had come against St. Louis (96-84 loss during the regular season).
- 139 *“I’m completely exhausted”* *Boston Globe* 4/5/1960. Celtics had set a record for fewest assists with only five assists total in game four, an indication that the thumb was bothering Cousy.
- 139 *“I never threw an elbow”* “Celtics Cry Foul In N.B.A. Play-Off,” *New York Times*, 4/5/1960, p46.
- 139 *“Cousy’s back”* *Boston Globe* 4/6/1960; “Celtics Crush Hawks and Take 3-2 Lead in Pro Basketball Play-Off Series,” *New York Times*, 4/6/1960, p53; Pettit back injury trouble described in “Injury To Foust Handicaps Hawks,” *New York Times*, 4/7/1960, p48.
- 139 *“ruining this playoff”* “‘Cooz’ And The Celtics,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/18/1960, by William Leggett.
- 140 *the loss of Larry Foust* “Injury To Foust Handicaps Hawks,” *New York Times*, 4/7/1960, p48; *Boston Globe* 4/7/1960.
- 140 *Tom “Tarzan” Spencer* See *Boston Globe* 4/7/1960; <http://www.apbr.org/eb14678.html> for Eastern League information.
- 141 *“paper containers, ice cubes”* “Protest By Hawks On Official Fails,” *New York Times*, 4/9/1960 p18. Kerner and Macauley would unsuccessfully lobby Jocko Collins, supervisor of officials, to remove Duffy from the crew for game seven, partly because Duffy lived in nearby Pawtucket, Rhode Island (see “Celtics Defeat Hawks, 122-103, And Retain Title,” *New York Times*, 4/10/1960, pS1). As it turned out, the Celtics were called for more fouls than the Hawks in game seven (25-23) and Duffy personally called a technical foul on Red for complaining about a non-call on a shot by Si Green. “Hawks Set Back Celtics, 105-102,” *New York Times*, 4/8/1960, p37.
- 141 *“A new day in Boston”* *Boston Globe* 4/8/1960.
- 141 *Cousy dished out* Cousy’s 19 points came on sub-par eight of twenty-five shooting, as the effects of his thumb injury continued to linger.
- 141 *“That man Russell”* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p92.
- 142 *“He never opened his mouth”* *Boston Globe*, 4/10/1960. Sources for this section include *Boston Herald* 4/10/1960 and “Celtics Defeat Hawks, 122-103, And Retain Title,” *New York Times*, 4/10/1960 pS1.
- 142 *Jim Loscutoff was trying to come back* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p79; “Last Whistle for Loscutoff...,” *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964 p35; also see Sullivan, *Picture History*, p53 – Loscutoff was the first NBA player to return from back disc surgery.
- 142 *Sharman bristled* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p56.
- 143 *“Suddenly a fan”* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p65. When the roughed-up fan later joined a \$750,000 lawsuit against the NBA, the arena, and several Celtics, “not one Celtic admitted he was in a fight.”
- 143 *“Russell never stopped”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p53. Seymour was so enamored of the performance that he suggested that the Celtics give Russell three playoff shares – see Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p12.
- 143 *“They could have toyed”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p50.
- 143 *John F. Kennedy Wisconsin primary: Boston Globe* 4/6/1960 “KENNEDY OVER HUMP” read the banner headline. JFK captured 20.5 delegates to 10.5 for Hubert Humphrey which gave him a lead in a delegates but more importantly raised the profile of his candidacy.
- 144 Kennedy’s acceptance speech: <http://www.realclearpolitics.com>

Chapter 7 – Kaleidoscope

- 145 *The cover* “The Graceful Giants,” *Time*, 2/17/1961.
- 146 *NBC had expanded* “A Blessed Event,” *Sports Illustrated*, 2/25/1957, by Jeremiah Tax for the 1957 figures. Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p130 for NBC doubling coverage to both Saturday and Sunday afternoons; “‘Softy’ Podoloff Slashes Fines of Fiercy Coaches,” *The Sporting News*, 3/1/1961 by Phil Elderkin for per game \$ figures; “The Graceful Giants,” *Time*, 2/17/1961 for the \$500,000 overall contract amount. See *New York Times*, 10/5/1961, p74 full-page ad for NBC’s claim of 224 affiliates. For baseball figures, see “75 Years of National Baseball Broadcasts,” by Doug Pappas, 1997 at <http://roadsidephotos.sabr.org/baseball/index.htm> In 1962 NBC would sign a new five year deal that raised the World Series fee to \$3.5 million.
- 146 *Sports Broadcasting Act* Davis, *Papa Bear: The Life and Legacy of George Halas*, p275 and 363; “NFL Strikes TV Windfall – 320 Grand Per Club,” *The Sporting News*, 1/17/1962 Sec 2 p1,4. Act was signed by President Kennedy on 9/30/1961.
- 146 *With eighty-nine percent* Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A History of American Broadcasting*, p455; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p130; Design News, 2/20/2007, “Remembering the Remote Control Inventor” by Randy Frank. Dr. Robert Adler was the inventor of the “Space Commander 400” remote that debuted in 1956. See http://www.designnews.com/article/8927-Remembering_the_Remote_Control_Inventor.php for the article and a close-up photo of the four button remote. Also Early Television Museum website: http://www.earlytelevision.org/zenith_b3006e.html. See Sterling, *Stay Tuned*, p827 for a table showing that the number of television stations had exploded from 16 in 1948 to 98 in 1950, to 422 in 1955, and over 600 by 1962. Also see *New York Times*, 10/5/1961, p74 for a full-page ad from NBC describing how the World Series was being broadcast in “NBC Living Color” on 224 affiliates.
- 147 *nine franchises disbanded* This round of contraction helped build the early Celtics and Lakers, as Ed Macauley, Bob Cousy, and George Mikan were among the players redistributed to the surviving teams.
- 147 *Baltimore and Louisville* “Baltimore and Louisville Named Candidates for Basketball Loop,” *New York Times*, 12/4/1956.
- 147 *Kansas City* “A Blessed Event,” *Sports Illustrated*, 2/25/1957, by Jeremiah Tax. Baseball star Marty Marion and St. Louis millionaire Milton Fischmann were to own the club and play at the 10,500 seat Kansas City Auditorium.
- 147 *neutral site games* “Podoloff Sees the Possibility of West-Southwest Additions,” *The Sporting News*, 10/22/1958; Freedman, *Dynasty*, p67.
- 147 *“all of the teams”* “Kerner Wants 2 Pro Cage Loops,” *The Sporting News*, 12/14/1960, Sec 2 p8.
- 147 *Abe Saperstein first lobbied* “Saperstein,” *The Sporting News*, 1/7/1959 Sec 2 pg; “Chicago as Ninth Team in League National Basketball Association Admits,” *New York Times*, 9/17/1959; “NBA Set To Reap Rich Rookie Harvest,” *The Sporting News*, 2/24/1960 Sec 2 p1-2; “Chicago Sidelined in NBA, Action Delayed on Lakers,” *The Sporting News*, 3/9/1960 Sec 2 p2.
- 148 *six-year deal* “Ft. Wayne Five Shifted,” *New York Times*, 2/15/1957.
- 148 *Seven weeks later* Robertson, *The Big O: My Life, My Times, My Game*, p131-134.

- 148 *Lakers financial difficulties in Minneapolis* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p71, Doyle, *The Official Report... Melbourne 1956*; "Bunyan Strides Again," *Sports Illustrated*, 4/6/1959, by Jeremiah Tax.
- 148 *the Lakers played two games against the Warriors in California* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p126; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p136-137; <http://www.shrpsports.com>
- 148 *the number of Americans who flew* Air Transport Association of America, Inc. <http://www.airlines.org>
- 148 *their fellow owners initially voted Pluto*, *Tall Tales*, p181; "Suitable Dates Must Be Provided," *New York Times*, 4/28/1960. Two years later, the Philadelphia Warriors, who had played those two games against the Lakers in California, followed them to the West Coast, moving to San Francisco.
- 149 *American Basketball League* "Suitable Dates Must Be Provided," *New York Times*, 4/28/1960 states that the formation of the ABL was announced "last week."
- 149 *Time magazine* "The Graceful Giants," *Time*, 2/17/1961.
- 149 *turning point for the AAU* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p209; Bob Boozer had signed with the Peoria Caterpillars in 1959, but joined the Royals for the 1960-61 season; "Piper Five To Turn Pro," *New York Times*, 3/28/1961, p42.
- 150 "give the little man a chance" "New Pro Fives to Get 3 Points on Long Shots," *New York Times*, 6/6/1961 p46; "New Cage Circuit Offering 'Bonus'; Three-Point Goal," *The Sporting News*, 10/25/1961 Sec 2 p6 for quote and lane details.
- 150 *cross-promotion* "Crowd-Pleasing Trotters to Appear on ABL Cards," *The Sporting News*, 10/25/1961, Sec 2 p8.
- 150 *Chicago Stadium* "New Cage Circuit Offering 'Bonus'; Three-Point Goal," *The Sporting News*, 10/25/1961.
- 150 *Jack McMahon* "McMahon to Coach New Quintet," *New York Times*, 1/18/1961, p39.
- 150 *Andy Phillip* "Phillip Will Coach Chicago's Pro Five," *New York Times*, 4/24/1961. Red Rocha also coached the team in Hawaii.
- 150 *eight team circuit* "New Cage Circuit Offering 'Bonus'; Three-Point Goal," *The Sporting News*, 10/25/1961.
- 151 "I decided to go into the game" "Pittsburgh, Thwarted on Coach, Pulls Out of Basketball League," *New York Times*, 1/19/1961, p34 by Robert L. Teague.
- 151 *Sharman accepted* "Sharman to Coach New Pro Club," *New York Times*, 4/18/1961.
- 151 "they want to get even" "Celtics to Seek Order Stopping Sharman From Playing for Jets," *New York Times*, 10/25/1961.
- 151 *Gene Conley* "Conley Squabble Touches Off ABL Blast at Red Sox," *The Sporting News*, 10/25/1961, Sec 2 p6. It seems dubious that Frick would aim such a rule squarely at Conley, but baseball was very leery of any taint of a gambling scandal. Conley finished his baseball career with Boston in 1963. The Tapers did not remain in Washington for long, moving to New York by the end of 1961; see "Taper Five Moves to Long Island," *New York Times*, 1/1/1962, p18.
- 151 *Jets folded* "Los Angeles Five Quits New League; It Hopes to Return," *New York Times*, 1/19/1962, p53.
- 152 "a quiet, mild-mannered" Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p168. Most of this section is derived from p164-170.
- 152 *first black coach* Pop Gates had coached the 1948-49 Rens in the NBL, but the Rens were an all-black team.
- 152 "was tough on John" Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p170.

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- 152 *Steinbrenner's reaction* "Pipers Wind Up With New Boss After Big Hassle," *The Sporting News*, 2/14/1962, Sec 2 p4.
- 153 *Pipers also hired a new coach* "Bill Sharman Is Hired To Coach Piper Five," *New York Times*, 1/31/1962, p25; <http://www.apbr.org>
- 153 *more than one year of experience* "Expansion Pains and Rival Circuit Greet NBA at Gong," *The Sporting News*, 10/18/1961, Sec 2 p6. Frank McGuire and Eddie Donovan were rookie coaches, Jim Pollard was coaching the expansion Packers, and Alex Hannum was starting his second season at Syracuse, as were Paul Seymour, Fred Schaus, Dick McGuire, and Charlie Wolf.
- 153 *Gary Phillips* Possibly as a sign of Brown's annoyance with Sharman's stint in the ABL, the Celtics gave Phillips #21 to wear, which was Sharman's old number instead of retiring it immediately.
- 153 *Heinsohn was an undersized Heinsohn* was only 6'5". Russell's increase in minutes was very slight. Russell actually played more total minutes in 1960-61 than in 1961-62, but played in two fewer games in 1961-62 so his average was higher.
- 153 *nickname "Satch"* Greenfield, *World's Greatest Team*, p134.
- 154 *"Satch was the tallest"* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p144.
- 154 *"I figured NBA coaches"* "A Pain in the Neck... Tom Sanders," *The Sporting News*, 2/27/1965, by Jack Barry, p38.
- 154 *Tuck Tape Sullivan*, *Picture History*, p168.
- 154 *"look timid"* Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p146.
- 154 *"the final confidence boost"* "A Pain in the Neck... Tom Sanders", *The Sporting News*, 2/27/1965 by Jack Barry, p38.
- 154 *"a thinking basketball player"* Jones, *Rebound*, p145.
- 154 *briefcase stuffed with books* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p147; Satch and Buddy LeRoux were partners in one stock market investment idea, see Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p148-149.
- 155 *Athletes for a Better Urban Society* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p149.
- 155 *"Satch gave a good nudge"* Jones, *Rebound*, p81.
- 155 *"wind chimes"* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p147-148.
- 155 *Frank McGuire* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p146; "McGuire Raises A Standard," *Sports Illustrated*, 10/30/1961, by Ray Cave ; "Frank McGuire, 80, Basketball Coach Dies," *New York Times*, 10/12/1994 by Sam Golpaper; <http://www.hoophall.com/halloffamers/bhof-frank-mcguire.html>
- 156 *"Frank was a first class guy"* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p229.
- 156 *"Frank was very close to his son"* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p231.
- 156 *"if a bomb had blown up"* Russell, *Second Wind*, p131. Russell eventually left his wife and three children (William Jr, Kenyatta, and Jacob) within a few months of his retirement in 1969.
- 156 *"I had a couple of fancy titles"* "Frank McGuire, 80, Basketball Coach Dies," *New York Times*, 10/12/1994 by Sam Golpaper.
- 157 *McGuire nearly quit Pomerantz*, *Wilt 1962*, p79; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p147.
- 157 *had spent \$400* "McGuire Raises A Standard," *Sports Illustrated*, 10/30/1961, by Ray Cave.
- 157 *"save his legs"* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p148.
- 157 *"I had meetings with each of the players"* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p227.
- 157 *"Gola throwing the ball against the wall"* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p227.
- 158 *new single-game scoring record* "78 Points Scored By Chamberlain," *New York Times*, 12/9/1961; Baylor's 71 points was still the regulation record at the time.
- 158 *Boston had finished eleven games ahead* The Warriors followed up their 14-2 run by going 8-8 the rest of way, coasting to a second place finish eight games ahead

- of Syracuse. Wilt finished the season with 4,029 points in 80 games, 29 points above a 50 point per game average. Had Wilt scored 60 that night instead of 100, Wilt would have ended the season with a 49.86 average.
- 158 *Chamberlain had set ten NBA records* “Ten League Records Set By Chamberlain,” *New York Times*, 3/17/1962 – Points, PPG, FGA, FGM, FTA, FTM, Minutes played, Games with 50+ points (44), FT missed, and Points in a game (100).
- 158-159 *Eddie Gottlieb* “Eddie Is The Mogul,” *Sports Illustrated*, 1/22/1968, by Frank Deford; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p104; Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p72 Gottlieb would create the entire schedule himself on a yellow legal pad; Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p167; The dictionary definition of pedagogy is the art, science, or profession of teaching.
- 159 *SPHAs* Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p119-120; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p104-105; “East Solid Choice in NBA All-Star Tilt,” *The Sporting News*, 1/20/1960 Sec 2 p1-2. The 1926 version of the American Basketball League had no relation to Saperstein’s later circuit of the same name.
- 159 *uniforms* Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p73; Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p12. “Eddie Is The Mogul,” *Sports Illustrated*, 1/22/1968, by Frank Deford.
- 159 *Broadwood Hotel* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p104-105; Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p73; Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p5.
- 159 *seven ABL championships* Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p187-199.
- 159 *Peter Tyrell* Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots*, p152; Rosen, *The First Tip-off: The Incredible Story of the Birth of the NBA*, p179.
- 160 *Gottlieb openly campaigned* Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p75-76; Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p10; Snyder, *Beyond the Shadow of the Senators*, p208; Saperstein also promoted black baseball as part-owner of Indianapolis Clowns and Birmingham Black Barons.
- 160 *awarding Paul Arizin a Buick* Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p22.
- 160 *funeral of Tom Meschery’s father* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p210.
- 160 *bought the struggling team* “Warrior Quintet Is Sold,” *New York Times*, 4/26/1952, p29; Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p208.
- 160 *gall bladder operation* “Eddie Is The Mogul,” *Sports Illustrated*, 1/22/1968, by Frank Deford.
- 160 *Chamberlain played nearly every minute* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p224.
- 161 *“to keep our seats filled”* Russell, *Second Wind*, p159.
- 161 *“The respect was mutual”* Russell, *Second Wind*, p245.
- 161 *call each other by their middle names* Freedman, *Dynasty*, p132.
- 161 *psych him out* Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p127.
- 161 *“a softer shot”* Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p98.
- 161 *“That would give one of us”* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p10.
- 161 *“So Wilt countered”* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p344.
- 161 *Boston-Philadelphia series* “Celtics Turn Back Warriors, 117 to 89,” *New York Times*, 3/25/1962, p201; “Warriors Defeat Celtics, 113-106,” *New York Times*, 3/28/1962, p42; “Celtics Trounce Warriors, 129-114,” *New York Times*, 3/29/1962; “Warriors Win, 110-106, Tie Celtics at 2 Games All,” *New York Times*, 4/1/1962, p185; “Celtics Trounce Warriors, 119-104,” *New York Times*, 4/2/1962, p35.
- 162 *Tom Meschery* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p180; Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p163-164.
- 162 *“He had been jawing at me”* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p141, 161 for off-court friendship. For example, Sam would have dinner at Chamberlain’s

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- house in Philadelphia prior to game six. "The Tradition," New England Sports Museum awards ceremony, 2009, televised on NESN.
- 163 "I don't know what I'd have done" Sullivan, *Picture History*, p57.
- 163 John Havlicek Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p100; Game five took place on April 2, less than a week after the draft on March 26.
- 163 to force a seventh game "Lakers Defeat Pistons to Take Western Final," *The Sporting News*, 4/4/1962, p70; *Boston Herald* and *Boston Globe* 4/4/1962.
- 163 "we've got to get together" *Boston Globe* 4/4/1962.
- 163 *Celtics injuries Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald* 4/5/1962.
- 163 *Gola was not expected to play Taylor, The Rivalry*, p159.
- 163 *spectators for the seventh game "Lakers Here To See Last East Game," Boston Globe* 4/5/1962, p50 by Jack Barry.
- 164 *neutralized each other Sullivan, Picture History*, p56.
- 164 "I heard Red" "Value Put On Jones' Shot \$1100," *Boston Globe*, 4/6/1962 by Will McDonough. "Sam Jones – Celts' Successor to Ol' Pro Cousy," *The Sporting News*, 2/8/1964, p32 by Jack Barry. In the article, Jones claimed that he should have passed to Russell once Chamberlain began to challenge him.
- 164 "the greatest I've ever seen" Sullivan, *Picture History*, p56.
- 164 "We're getting old" "'62 Last Chance For Aging C's," *Boston Globe*, 4/14/1962, p17.
- 165 "He forces an opposing coach" "Bunyan Strides Again," *Sports Illustrated*, 4/6/1959, by Jeremiah Tax.
- 165 *having played five years Schaus had played against the Celtics in the first game coached by Auerbach, which was also the first game for Cousy and Macauley as members of the Celtics.*
- 165 *Schaus had resisted taking the job Lazenby, The Lakers*, p130; Schaus replaced Jim Pollard, who was fired after losing to the Hawks in the 1960 West Finals. The winning coach in that game was Ed Macauley, who was also fired at the end of that season.
- 165 "battler" "Schaus Can Be Friendly Fred or Fiery Fiend," *The Sporting News*, 1/10/1962, Sec 2 p6.
- 165 "Hot Rod" Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p118.
- 165 "He never embarrassed" Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p154.
- 166 "With Hundley averaging" Douchant, *College Basketball*, p313.
- 166 "gangly, extremely skinny" Salzbeg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p246.
- 166 *West scored forty-three Pluto, Tall Tales*, p186. East Bank defeated Mullens 77-73 in the semifinals.
- 166 *enroll at West Virginia Whalen, Dynasty's End*, p231.
- 166 *game-high eleven rebounds Douchant, College Basketball*, p91.
- 166 "I had my hands on the ball" Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p54.
- 166 *West rebounded nicely Pluto, Tall Tales*, p187.
- 167 *broken his nose Whalen, Dynasty's End*, p231; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p315 for nose injury count.
- 167 "Every team in the NBA" "The Long Leap Forward of Jerry West," *Sports Illustrated*, 11/20/1961, by Roger Williams.
- 167 *Baylor was among those recalled Lazenby, The Lakers*, p122, 134.
- 167 "I have a lot more confidence" "The Long Leap Forward of Jerry West," *Sports Illustrated*, 11/20/1961, by Roger Williams.
- 167-168 *virus-induced fever Pluto, Tall Tales*, p191; Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p135 for Radcliffe's comment.
- 168 "Roughhouse Rudy" Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p86.
- 168 *lack of speed Taylor, The Rivalry*, p168.

- 168 Tom Hawkins “The Hawk Gets No Headlines, But He’s Lakers’ Tough Bird,” *The Sporting News* 5/4/1968 p42 by Mal Florence.
- 168 “Each time he gave it to me” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p130.
- 168 once had four straight shots blocked Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p136.
- 168 breaking it Freedman, *Dynasty*, p115; Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p100.
- 168 Boston-Los Angeles series sources include: “Celtics Turn Back Lakers By 122-108,” *New York Times*, 4/8/1962, pS1; “Lakers Set Back Celtics, 129-122,” *New York Times*, 4/9/1962, p40; “Lakers Set Back Celtics, 117-115,” *New York Times*, 4/11/1962, p56; Game 2 stats from “Lakers Set Back Celtics, 129-122,” *New York Times*, 4/9/1962, p40. In game three, Boston squandered twenty-six points by Russell, his high so far in the series, plus twenty-four by Heinsohn and twenty-two from Cousy.
- 169 television audience Games 3, 4, and 6 were televised back to Boston on WHDH-TV Channel 5 at an expense of \$5,000 per game for Walter Brown. Note that game 2 drew over 12,000 fans in Boston, but was not a sellout; *Boston Globe*, 4/14/1962; “Celtics Defeat Lakers, 115-103,” *New York Times*, 4/12/1962, p45.
- 169 “I’ve just checked” “Celtics Out to Stop Jerry West In Fifth Play-Off With Lakers,” *New York Times*, 4/14/1962, p20.
- 170 Baylor scored sixty-one “Lakers Top Celtics; Lead Play-Offs, 3-2,” *New York Times*, 4/15/1962, pS1.
- 170 “I didn’t feel any pressure” See *Boston Globe* 4/17/1962; “Celtics On Top, Even Play-Offs,” *New York Times*, 4/17/1962, p59.
- 171 “It’s a shame” “Celtics, Win or Lose Tonight, Add To Stature,” *Boston Herald*, 4/18/1962, p37.
- 171 Game seven The game was scheduled for the 18th, despite Walter’s push to move the game to the 19th to avoid the first night of Passover. The Lakers countered that Elgin Baylor was due back at Fort Lewis when the series was over, and Podoloff kept the game on the 18th. *Boston Globe* 4/17/1962, *Boston Herald* and *Boston Globe* 4/18/1962.
- 171 “When I released the ball” See *Boston Globe* 4/19/1962.
- 171 “I was tight in the first half” “Ramsey’s Cool Chat Turned Sam Jones Into Hot Gunner,” *The Sporting News*, 4/25/1962, p32
- 171 had each fouled out Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p137.
- 172 “It was a fairly tough shot” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p55. Also see Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p137; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p55; *Boston Globe* 4/19/1962, *Boston Herald* 4/19/1962.
- 172 Russell was exhilarated “Too Much To Beat This Year,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/30/1962, by Arlie W. Schardt.
- 172 “His body seemed limp” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p57.
- 173 dribbling out the clock Details in *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald* 4/19/1962.
- 173 “I’m glad that’s over” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p57.
- 173 a stark contrast See Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p201 for description of McGuire’s behavior.
- 173 rarified status Yankees 1949-1953, Canadiens 1956-1960, Browns 1946-1949 AAFC, 1950 NFL.
- 173 Cousy missed Noted in *Boston Herald* 4/19/1962.

Chapter 8 – Faded Hopes

- 175 each scheduled in a different city The stretch began on January 29 with a win over Chicago Zephyrs in New York City, followed by a win over Wilt and Warriors on

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- January 30 in Boston. On February 1, the team returned to Boston and had their winning streak snapped by Syracuse.
- 175 *arranged by Frank Dooley* “Celts Meet Another Champ – Shake Hands, Chat With JFK,” *The Sporting News*, 2/16/1963, p24 by Jack Barry.
- 175 “overslept” “Kennedy Greeted Celtics, But Bill Russell Sleeps,” *New York Times*, 2/1/1963. Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p147-148; The absence of Swartz, a role player who had joined the team that season after playing AAU ball and a year with the Washington/New York Tapers in the ABL – a full seven years after the Celtics had first drafted him in 1956 – was barely referenced in news reports, but Russell’s no-show was prominently reported.
- 175 “*would be the biggest overhaul*” Front page story, *New York Times*, 1/25/1963.
- 175 *Cuba was also prominently* “Goldwater Asks Senate Inquiry Into U.S. Role in Cuba Invasion,” *New York Times*, 1/24/1963, p1, by E.W. Kenworthy; “Transcript of Kennedy’s News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Affairs,” *New York Times*, 1/25/1963, p4.
- 176 “*I have too high a regard*” “Transcript of Kennedy’s News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Affairs,” *New York Times*, 1/25/1963, p4.
- 176 *Over the next few days* “Kennedy Planning to Go To Costa Rica in March,” *New York Times*, 1/25/1963, p11; “President Asks Broad Program To Aid Education,” *New York Times*, 1/30/1963, p1; “Kennedy Hails ‘62 Space Gain; Satellites Exceeded Soviet’s 4-1,” *New York Times*, 1/29/1963, p1; “Robert Frost Dies at 88; Kennedy Leads in Tribute,” *New York Times*, 1/30/1963, p1.
- 176 *struggled academically* Meredith failed an algebra class.
- 176 *Kennedy would be relieved* “Meredith Begins A New Semester,” *New York Times*, 2/1/1963, p4 By Claude Sitton.
- 177 “*Recently in Cincy*” “Celts Meet Another Champ – Shake Hands, Chat With JFK,” *The Sporting News*, 2/16/1963, p24 by Jack Barry; Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p50.
- 177 *posed for a picture* Sullivan, *Picture History*, 183; Ramsey still had his copy of the photo before a 2005 tornado destroyed his home in Kentucky. See <http://www.whitehousemuseum.org> for curtain color.
- 177 “*Two years ago*” Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p48.
- 177 *Frank Power Cousy*, *Last Loud Roar*, p51; Power then spent twenty years as an assistant coach with the Eagles.
- 177 “*There is no use*” “Lakers Lead NBA Drive to Scuttle Celt Skiff,” *The Sporting News*, 11/10/1962, p28 by Dan Daniel; This is a remarkably frank statement that would be considered volatile “bulletin board material” in today’s world of 24x7 pro sports coverage.
- 178 “*All I want to do*” Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p48.
- 178 “*a pulled ligament*” “Cousy Asks: Basketball—or Vaudeville?” *Sports Illustrated*, 3/19/1962, Bob Cousy with John Underwood.
- 178 “*Experience doesn’t minimize pressure*” Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p48.
- 178 *cystic fibrosis* Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p71 As honorary chairman of the Massachusetts fundraising appeals for cystic fibrosis since 1956, Cousy had helped raise a considerable amount of money; in 1963 alone they raised \$90,000.
- 178 “*plays me just enough*” Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p51.
- 178 *Clyde Lovellette* “Meet Lawman Lovellette – Mighty Quick on the Draw,” *The Sporting News*, 2/25/1967 p39; “Celts Acquire Lovellette,” *The Sporting News*, 10/27/1962.
- 179 “*Defense is hard to sell*” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p88-89.
- 179 *John Havlicek* Much of the following section is derived from Havlicek, *Hondo*, especially p31-47.

- 179 "He was the type of person" Havlicek, *Hondo*, p33.
- 180 "Big John and the Seven Dwarfs" Havlicek, *Hondo*, p46.
- 180 draw attention from major league scouts Havlicek, *Hondo*, p59-60; He never received a formal offer, because he told the scouts he was definitely going to college. There was a lot of athletic talent in the neighborhood – Havlicek lived across the street from future major league baseball pitchers Phil and Joe Niekro.
- 180 "I was probably as good" Havlicek, *Hondo*, p44.
- 180 Bobby Carroll "Boston Mates, Coach Hail Former Buckeye," *The Sporting News*, 2/2/1963 p23-24 by Jack Barry. Schaus later sent Havlicek his first recruiting letter.
- 180 "never built the offense" Havlicek, *Hondo*, p57.
- 180 knew each other as teammates Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p88.
- 180 successfully resisted Woody Hayes Havlicek, *Hondo*, p47; Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p88. Havlicek and Hayes became friends in spite of Havlicek's decision. Havlicek also became friends with another (future) college coaching legend – Orrville, Ohio native Bobby Knight, his Ohio State teammate (see Havlicek, *Hondo*, p73).
- 180 passed over for a spot Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p204. In Havlicek, *Hondo*, p76, he wrote, "To this day I feel I should have made the Olympic basketball team, and it bothers me when I think about it." Coincidentally, his future Celtic teammate Dan Swartz played on the Peoria Caterpillars AAU team that also participated in the tournament.
- 181 Lucas signed a two-year deal "Lucas to Sign Pact With Pipers for \$10,000 and Stock Portfolio," *New York Times*, 5/16/1962 (\$40,000 in stock) The Royals offer was reportedly 3 years, \$105,000; Havlicek mentions offers of a car, an apartment, "and a few other things" in Havlicek, *Hondo*, p49.
- 181 national television deal "Leagues Hopes Rise With Lucas' Signing," *New York Times*, 5/17/1962.
- 181 "I was basically skeptical" Havlicek, *Hondo*, p49.
- 181 The Browns had drafted Roster taken from <http://www.pro-football-reference.com>
- 182 cut by legendary coach Paul Brown Havlicek, *Hondo*, p51. 1962 would be Brown's last season as Cleveland head coach after 17 years.
- 182 turned down offers Havlicek, *Hondo*, p51-53.
- 182 The vote was 5-1 "Pipers Stay In League," *New York Times*, 2/21/1962 p61, Saints owner George McKeon was the lone dissenting vote.
- 182 "I believe somebody" "Lucas Expected To Accept N.B.A.," *New York Times*, 7/12/1962.
- 182 Pipers were joining the NBA "Cleveland Five Transfers to N.B.A.," *New York Times*, 7/11/1962; "A.B.L. Won't Quit Basketball; Warns of Suit Against N.B.A.," *New York Times*, 7/26/1962.
- 182 the payments were a deal-breaker "Cleveland Balks At \$250,000 Fee," *New York Times*, 7/31/1962.
- 183 remarkable return Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p201; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p175 indicates that in addition to spending \$25,000 (along with two other investors) to buy the team in 1951, Gottlieb also invested \$2,500 as part of the Warriors original investment group in 1946.
- 183 after three weeks of lobbying "Warriors Shifted to Coast," *New York Times*, 5/24/1962, p46. The Celtics and Knicks continued to oppose the move, and were the dissenting votes in the final 7-2 vote (seven votes needed to approve the move). Also see "\$850,000 Offered By San Francisco," *New York Times*, 5/3/1962 p41; "N.B.A. Owners' Parley Put Off Until Today," *New York Times*, 5/4/1962 p36; "N.B.A. Bars \$850,000 Deal To Shift Warriors to West Coast,"

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- New York Times*, 5/5/1962 p23. With no team in Philadelphia, on June 7 Gottlieb was named GM of the Warriors for one year to oversee the team's transition to San Francisco.
- 183 *McKeon filed a lawsuit* "Warriors Shifted to Coast," *New York Times*, 5/24/1962 p46; "N.B.A. To Consider Adding One Team," *New York Times*, 7/7/1962; "Cleveland Five Transfers to N.B.A.," *New York Times*, 7/11/1962.
- 183 *air of instability* "A.B.L. Won't Quit Basketball; Warns of Suit Against N.B.A.," *New York Times*, 7/26/1962.
- 183 *By New Year's Day* "American Basketball League Failure Makes 100 Pro Players Free Agents," *New York Times*, 1/2/1963 quotes losses of \$1 million first season, \$250,000 second season; but also see "\$1,500,000 Lost by A.B.L.," *New York Times*, 4/13/1962.
- 183 *Ermer Robinson* "Robinson, Ex-Globetrotter, To Coach Oakland Pro Five," *New York Times*, 10/5/1962 p57.
- 184 *Cousy endured pre-game ceremonies* Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p51-52.
- 184 *"He's not a great shooter"* Cousy, *Last Loud Roar* .p102.
- 184 *carrying the 24-second clocks* Freedman, *Dynasty*, p190.
- 184 *the rookie's work ethic* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p86.
- 184 *"I'll be honest"* "Boston Mates, Coach Hail Former Buckeye," *The Sporting News*, 2/2/1963, p23-24 by Jack Barry.
- 185 *earned a spot* <http://www.apbr.org> for award voting results.
- 185 *"Bob Cousy Day"* Freedman, *Dynasty*, p157.
- 185 *Oscar Robertson* The main source for this section is Robertson, *The Big O*.
- 185 *"No nearby white school"* Robertson, *The Big O*, p5.
- 186 *allowed to participate* Robertson, *The Big O*, p26, 34-35.
- 186 *"racism was present in my life"* Robertson, *The Big O*, p24.
- 186 *older brother Bailey* Robertson, *The Big O*, p15-18; <http://www.apbr.org> Globetrotter historical roster
- 186 *"I'm proud to have been"* Robertson, *The Big O*, p57-58.
- 187 *paid co-op* Robertson, *The Big O*, p68,101-102. Eventually the job caught the attention of the NCAA, who ruled that any player in the co-op program had to pay for room and board while they worked.
- 187 *"it was degrading"* Robertson, *The Big O*, p74-77.
- 187 *debris that rained down* Robertson, *The Big O*, p98-99.
- 187 *"Big O"* Robertson, *The Big O*, p81.
- 187 *"a smooth, stylish"* "Robertson Sets Garden Scoring Mark as Cincinnati Routs Seton Hall Five," *New York Times*, 1/10/1958, p27 By Louis Effrat; Robertson, *The Big O*, p82-85.
- 188 *seeking to cash in* Robertson, *The Big O*, p97.
- 188 *new single-game school record* Robertson, *The Big O*, p120; "Robertson Better Record for Scoring," *New York Times*, 2/7/1960; "Cincinnati Downs Wichita By 97-76," *New York Times*, 2/28/1960.
- 188 *drew comparisons* "Cheers Mount for 'Big O' as Player of Year," *The Sporting News*, 3/4/1959 Sec 2 p2.
- 188 *1959 Pan American Games team Roster* taken from USA Basketball website http://www.usabasketball.com/news.php?news_page=mpag_1959
- 188 *Robertson first met Jerry West* Robertson, *The Big O*, p116.
- 188 *Tom Wood* Robertson, *The Big O*, p101-102.
- 188 *pickup games* Robertson, *The Big O*, p115.
- 189 *Les Harrison Peterson, Cages to Jump Shots*, p138.

- 189 *Stokes had been named* “Duquesne Downs Dayton, 70 to 58, In Garden Final,” *New York Times*, 3/20/1955; St. Francis lost to Jack Twyman and Cincinnati 96-91 in overtime in the third-place game.
- 189 *Stokes quickly adjusted* Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p178.
- 189 “A good shooter” Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p179.
- 189 “He would rather” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p81.
- 190 *The city of Cincinnati* See “New Pro Five Sought,” *New York Times*, 3/10/1956 for an example of Cincinnati’s interest in an expansion team.
- 190 *Despite briefly losing consciousness* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p82-83.
- 190 *stewardess Jeanne Phillips* Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p180; “Stokes Ailment Climaxes Jinx Year for Royals,” *The Sporting News*, 3/26/1958, p18.
- 190 *later could not recall* Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p180, quoting from Stokes’ unpublished autobiography.
- 190 “encephalitis” “Stokes Critically Ill,” *New York Times*, 3/17/1958, p26; “Stokes Ailment Climaxes Jinx Year for Royals,” *The Sporting News*, 3/26/1958, p18.
- 191 *paralyzed* Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p181; “Sports of The Times: His Brother’s Keeper,” *New York Times*, 8/18/1966.
- 191 *Harrison brothers sold the team* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p83.
- 191 “Someone had to become his guardian” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p84; Contemporary reports of the balance in the bank account varied between nine and fourteen thousand dollars. The car was a DeSoto.
- 191 *guaranteed three-year \$100,000 contract* Robertson, *The Big O*, p136.
- 191 *their first win in Boston* Robertson, *The Big O*, p141. Cousy also played well, scoring twenty-seven points and adding seven rebounds and seven assists in forty-five minutes. Celtics would finish the regular season 7-3 against the Royals.
- 192 *By February 1961* Robertson, *The Big O*, p144-145; “The Graceful Giants,” *Time*, 2/17/1961.
- 192 “Oscar was great from Day One” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p195.
- 192 *Robertson torched Gola* In Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p196 Embry says Robertson scored 45 points; in Robertson, *The Big O*, p140 he says he scored 44.
- 192 *death of owner Tom Wood* Robertson, *The Big O*, p165.
- 193 “We had been geared up” Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p36.
- 193 *develop a facial tic* Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p54 Cousy; Russell was also feeling the effects of stress, later writing that he felt he was “on the verge of a nervous breakdown,” taking pills to sleep and more pills to stay awake. “I was crawling the walls and I was unable to control myself.” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p176.
- 193 *a burning Sherry-Biltmore hotel* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p88-89; Four people were killed in the fire and twenty-six were injured. There was no major damage to Havlicek’s room, except for some smoke damage. Havlicek and his roommates continued to stay in the hotel for rest of playoffs even though the hotel was condemned and they were not supposed to stay there. See “4 Are Killed, 26 Injured by Fire in Boston’s Sherry Biltmore Hotel,” *New York Times*, 3/30/1963, p8.
- 193 *quit smoking* Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p34. Russell also gave up smoking after the Surgeon General Commission’s report on the direct link between smoking and cancer was released on January 11, 1964, see Russell, *Second Wind*, p197.
- 193 *games five and six* Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p36-37, 34; “Celtics Top Royals And Take 3-2 Lead,” *New York Times*, 4/7/1963, pg. S1; “Royals Set Back Celtics, 109-99,” *New York Times*, 4/8/1963, p43.
- 193 “If (Sid) Borgia” “Showdown for Celtics,” *Boston Herald*, 4/10/1963, by Jim Carfield. Borgia and Norm Drucker had officiated games 3-6 of the series. Also see *Boston Globe*, 4/10/1963 for details of Celtics injuries.

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- 194 “Five Miles to Midnight” cast details from <http://www.imdb.com>
- 194 “was just nervous” “Cool Movie Heats Sam,” *Boston Globe*, 4/11/1963 by Clif Keane
- 194 “Nobody in the place” “Who Makes Sammy Run? – Cousy,” *Boston Globe*, 4/11/1963 by Will McDonough
- 194 300 miles east The Thresher went down 220 miles east of Cape Cod, at Latitude 41:45 North, Longitude 64:59 West. Boston Garden was located at 42:21 North, 71:03 West, 315 nautical miles away.
- 194 U.S.S. Thresher Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p32 for Hecker’s full name. *Boston Globe* 4/11/1963 \$69 million figure.
- 194 nine-month overhaul Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p28 While such an overhaul, termed “Post Shakedown Availability,” was not unusual, the Thresher was the first of its class, and records show that there were “875 work requests” filed for the overhaul period. “Reportedly, all but five work requests – and those were described as relatively minor – were satisfactorily handled.” Many of the work requests were improvements to the cutting-edge sonar and listening devices.
- 194 On Tuesday morning Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p30-32.
- 194 due back in port Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p105.
- 195 test dive of 1,300 feet Sontag and Drew, *Blind Man’s Bluff: The Untold Story of American Submarine Espionage*, p48 states the depth as 1,300 feet. Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, written in 1964, estimated test depth at 800-1000 feet but that detail was classified at that time.
- 195 “minor problem” Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p36. Later, this “minor problem” was diagnosed as possibly loss of “diving plane” control that could have accelerated her descent.
- 195 the delay made little difference Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*. Hecker was cleared of responsibility during an inquiry, but was taken to task by his superiors for not sending a message sooner.
- 195 approximately 50,000 dives a year Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p122. The last sub to be lost was the Squalus, which sunk in much shallower water in 1939. This allowed 33 of the 59 men aboard to be rescued. The sub was later raised and retrofitted for use in WWII, see Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p134-135.
- 195 small pieces of cork and yellow plastic Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p48-50. Cork was used as an insulating material on the submarine’s interior, p114.
- 195 notifying the families Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p49. Commander Harvey’s wife was notified by telephone by Vice Admiral Grenfell, the Atlantic Submarine Force commander. The Harvey’s lived in Waterford, CT (*Boston Globe* 4/11/1963).
- 195 Among those killed The stories in this section are taken from articles in *Boston Globe*, 4/11/1963. Reading the microfilm copy of the Globe unveils a poignant coincidence – the Globe placed several ads for Good Friday services alongside the stories of the loss of the men aboard the *Thresher*.
- 196 187 children Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p148.
- 196 “overdue and presumed missing” Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p131. Statement was issued at 8pm.
- 196 “This is a setback” Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p136.
- 196 “Robertson acted like a cry-baby” “Celtics Romp Into Finals,” *Boston Herald*, 4/11/1963 by Jim Carfield.
- 196 “Don’t forget you’re the champions” “Celtics Romp Into Finals,” *Boston Herald*, 4/11/1963 by Jim Carfield.

- 196 *Celtics out-rebounded the Royals* Woten, *Game 7: Inside the NBA's Ultimate Showdown*, p147; The Royals had zero rebounds in the third quarter, *Boston Globe* 4/11/1963.
- 197 *19-3 run* "Celtics Down Royals, 142-131, for Eastern Title," *New York Times*, 4/11/1963, p57.
- 197 *Cousy had been forced to the bench* Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p257; Freedman, *Dynasty*, p159. Diagnosis of torn ligaments was made when the team returned to Boston.
- 197 "*The Navy believes*" Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p138. In the original text, Thresher was represented in uppercase type (THRESHER), but I have changed this to italics to be consistent with other sources.
- 197 *SUBSAFE* Polmar, *Death of the Thresher*, p125-127.
- 198 "*The courage and dedication*" Quoted in *Boston Globe* 4/12/1963.

Chapter 9 – Transition Game

- 199 *worth over \$400,000* Greenfield, *World's Greatest Team*, p144 Brown's estate was worth \$430,000 when he died.
- 199 *Brown gave him an extra \$2,000* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p81. Havlicek wrote, "This made quite an impression on me."
- 199 *1964 All-Star Game* Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p121-123; "East All-Stars Protect Early Lead and Defeat West Five," *New York Times*, 1/15/1964; "N.B.A. Players Threaten Strike In Dispute Over Pension Plan," *New York Times*, 1/15/1964.
- 200 "*the most accommodating and generous man*" Heinsohn, *Don't You Ever Smile?*, p128.
- 200 "*a liberal force in the anti-union wilderness*" Havlicek, *Hondo*, p121.
- 200 "*I felt the pressure right away*" "Celtics Hate to Say Good-Bye to K.C." *The Sporting News*, 3/11/1967, p31 by Phil Elderkin.
- 200 "*a good enough passer*" Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p205-206. Cousy compiled a .397 shooting percentage from the floor in his final season, one of his better shooting years, while K.C. shot .389.
- 200 "*Among the players*" Cousy, *Last Loud Roar*, p206.
- 201 *his friend Wilt Chamberlain* Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p202, 97-98 Naulls and Chamberlain were roommates, and had known each other for years. After scoring 100 points in Hershey, Pennsylvania against Naulls and the Knicks, Chamberlain drove Naulls back to the latter's home in Montclair, New Jersey.
- 201 *collapsed during his first practice* Jones, *Rebound*, p16, p114; Also see Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p41-42. When Naulls first arrived in Boston, a sixteen-year-old errand boy for the Celtics picked him up at Logan Airport in his father's Oldsmobile convertible. The boy was Jan Volk, who would eventually succeed Auerbach as Celtics general manager in 1984.
- 201 "*Working carefully with our trainer*" Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p100.
- 201 "*Until I came to Boston*" "Rimming the NBA," *The Sporting News*, 12/11/1965 p42 by Phil Elderkin.
- 201 *his teammates were determined* For two examples, see "Last Whistle for Loscuttoff...," *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964, p38 and Sullivan, *Picture History*, p62.
- 201 "*Some idiot*" Sullivan, *Picture History*, p62.
- 201 *co-captains* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, 185; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p65.

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- 202 “*Last year*” “Russell Super-Star – and Getting Better,” *The Sporting News*, 12/28/1963, p38.
- 202 “*the worst season*” “Nerves Taut, Russell Raps ‘Unfair Criticism’ and Threatens to Retire,” *The Sporting News*, 4/11/1964, p43 by Jack Barry.
- 202 *buy the star for \$100,000* “Brown Bid \$200,000 for Lucas – Had to Settle for Warriors’ Willie,” *The Sporting News*, 2/8/1964 p32 by Phil Elderkin. This headline was misleading. Brown never bid more than \$100,000, as the body of the story says that Brown *thought* about a \$200,000 bid before being talked out of it.
- 202 *The under card* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p140; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p124.
- 202 “*With about 25 seconds*” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p239. Also see Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p140; Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p197; Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p135.
- 202 *estate plans* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p129.
- 203 “*always thought of the team*” Auerbach with Fitzgerald, *On & Off The Court*, p211. Also see Sullivan, *Picture History*, p235 for a photo of the uniform patches, Havlicek, *Hondo*, p100 for a photo of the “1” banner, and Sullivan, *Picture History*, p65 shows similar banners for “22” and “14” from opening night 1963. The Celtics originally used full banners when they retired Macauley’s and Cousy’s numbers, but when Ramsey’s number was retired, the three numbers were grouped together on an eight-paneled banner to save space in the rafters. Brown’s “1” banner remained in the rafters until the Celtics filled up that original eight-paneled banner with the numbers of Heinsohn (15), Sharman (21), K.C. Jones (25), Sam Jones (24), and Russell (6). When Satch Sanders’s #16 was then retired in the 1970’s, it was placed on a second eight-panel banner, along with Brown’s #1.
- 203 “*Like General Motors*” “Champion Celtics Picked to Rule NBA Again,” *The Sporting News*, 10/24/1964, p42.
- 203 *Havlicek had torn cartilage* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p118-119.
- 203 *top three draft choices all made the club* Boston’s top three picks in 1956 all eventually made the team, but K.C. Jones didn’t join the team until the 1958-59 season, after his military commitment was over.
- 203 “*In our position*” “NBA Grabs All 7 College Olympians on First Round,” *The Sporting News*, 5/16/1964, p38.
- 203 *John Thompson* “Friars Make Hoop Foes Pay for Sins,” *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1965, p29. The territorial draft rule was surely on Auerbach’s mind when he spoke with Joe Mullaney. Thompson and Bonham also competed in the Olympic trials but did not make the team.
- 204 *one of his elbows sent Chamberlain* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p223.
- 204 *Larry Siegfried* Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p71-72; Havlicek, *Hondo*, p68; Douchant, *College Basketball*, p98.
- 204 “*one of the sharpest*” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p72.
- 204 *the first all-black starting five* The Celtics’ six black players played a total of 13408 minutes that season, the most for any team in the NBA. Six years later, baseball’s Pittsburgh Pirates would start the first all-black and latin lineup in Major League Baseball history on September 1, 1971 against the Philadelphia Phillies. See Bruce Markusen’s article at <http://baseballguru.com/markusen/analysismarkusen01.html> (cited by Maraniss, *Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball’s Last Hero*, p253).
- 205 *1965 All-NBA* Baylor, Robertson and Russell made the first team (along with Lucas and West); Chamberlain, Greer, Gus Johnson and Sam Jones made the

- second team (along with Pettit). Two years earlier, the All-NBA teams had featured five blacks for the first time.
- 205 “*already too black*” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p98.
- 205 “*was embarrassed, enraged*” Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p81.
- 205 “*Sambo*” Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p84.
- 205 *Johnny Most* Freedman, *Dynasty*, p46.
- 205 “*Well, Red*” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p63.
- 205 “*100 percent behind*” Freedman, *Dynasty*, p89; A similar incident took place in Marion, Indiana in 1961.
- 206 “*I was always on defense*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p182.
- 206 “*I’m acceptable most places*” “Desire to Excel Spurs Celts’ Russell,” *The Sporting News*, 10/26/1963, p33,36 by Phil Elderkin.
- 206 *house was vandalized* Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p52 “The intruders destroyed his trophies, spray painted the term ‘NIGGA’ on the walls, and defecated in his bed.” See Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p194 for details on K.C. Jones and Satch Sanders; Jones lived fifteen minutes away from Ramsey in Framingham and would drive to the airport together for road trips, See Freedman, *Dynasty*, p84.
- 206 “*a flea market of racism*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p182.
- 206 “*a clause which will*” “N.B.A. Acts To Bar Racial Incidents,” *New York Times*, 1/23/1959.
- 207 “*We stayed at the same hotel*” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p73. Also see “Baylor Built Up His Game Playing Someone Better,” *The Sporting News*, 2/18/1959, p36 and Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p176.
- 207 *Civil Rights Act of 1964* Transcript of Civil Rights Act of 1964, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov>
- 207 “*dignity without strength*” Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p224.
- 207 *shooting of volunteer Jimmy Lee Jackson* Goodwin, *Remembering America*, p318.
- 208 “*Bloody Sunday*” Bechloss, Ed. *Reaching For Glory: Lyndon Johnson’s Secret White House Tapes, 1964-1965*, p216-217. The award-winning PBS series *Eyes on the Prize* includes dramatic video of the tragedy along with eyewitness accounts.
- 208 “*Their cause must be our cause too*” Goodwin, *Remembering America*, p233.
- 208 “*Confrontation of good and evil*” Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p225.
- 208 “*The road ahead*” Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p226-227.
- 208 “*We are on the move now*” Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p226.
- 209 *riots erupted* Bechloss, *Reaching For Glory*, p419.
- 209 *weakened what had been broad support* Goodwin, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, p304 for statistics.
- 209 “*Our aim*” Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p227.
- 209 *Biasone sold the Syracuse Nationals* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p228; “N.B.A. Approves Syracuse Shift,” *New York Times*, 5/23/1963.
- 209 *contest to select a new team nickname* “Owners Conducted a Contest to Pick New Team Nickname,” *The Sporting News*, 11/30/1963, p41.
- 210 “*outsiders*” Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p228-229.
- 210 *team struggled on the court* “With Greer to Steer, 76ers Can Go Like 60,” *The Sporting News*, 2/22/1964, p35,38.
- 210 *Luke Jackson* “Cat-Quick Jackson Tabbed Defensive Marvel by Pros,” *The Sporting News*, 3/14/1964, p32; The Lakers took Walt Hazzard and the Royals

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- took George Wilson as territorial picks, so there were technically five players selected ahead of Jackson.
- 210 “one of the smartest offense forwards” Havlicek, *Hondo*, p100.
- 210 *pancreatitis* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p217-219.
- 210 *asked doctors for early clearance* “Return of the Native Greatest Deal Ever, Chirp Philly Fans,” *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1965 p27-28 by Jim Heffernan.
- 210 “*Chamberlain is not an easy man to love*” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p169-170; Also see Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p114: One example of Wilt’s attitude came when Mieuli tried to present him with a diamond stickpin in recognition for the Warriors 1964 Western title. Wilt asked him, “What is this piece of shit?”
- 211 *shopping Chamberlain* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p226-227.
- 211 *energize his fledging fan base* Richman was right. The 76ers drew “about 50,000” total fans for their last fourteen home games before the trade. In their first three home games with Chamberlain in the lineup, they drew 26,857. “Philly Fans Storming Gates To See Wilt Play With 76ers,” *The Sporting News*, 2/27/1965, p37.
- 211 *76ers acquired Chamberlain* According to Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p234 estimates of the cash payment ranged from \$50,000 to \$300,000. “Chamberlain’s Pride Wilts With Trade,” *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1965, p27 reported \$100,000. Wilt was making \$75,000 a year, so simply taking half that figure off their books would have been a significant savings for the Warriors.
- 211 *Philadelphia won 104-100* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p238; <http://www.shrpsports.com>
- 211 *Chamberlain had always disliked* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p239.
- 211 “*There’s a myth*” “Return of the Native Greatest Deal Ever, Chirp Philly Fans,” *The Sporting News*, 1/30/1965, p27-28 by Jim Heffernan.
- 211 *But privately Schayes was worried* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p240.
- 211 “*I Want Team, Not Stars*” “‘I Want Team, Not Stars,’ Says Schayes,” *The Sporting News*, 2/27/1965, p37-38.
- 212 *Celtics won the opener* “Celtics Rout 76ers, 108-98, as Playoffs Start,” *New York Times*, 4/5/1965, p40. Chamberlain also held Russell to 16 rebounds.
- 212 *Chamberlain dominated inside* “76ers Top Celtics, 109-103,” *New York Times*, 4/7/1965, p50.
- 212 *nearly held Chamberlain without a basket* “Celtics Set Back 76ers By 112-94,” *New York Times*, 4/9/1965, p23. Chamberlain was still able to collect 24 points and 37 rebounds by the end of the game.
- 212 *the fourth game* “76ers Defeat Celtics in Overtime by 134-131,” *New York Times*, 4/10/1965, p24.
- 213 “*I can’t feel like rejoicing now*” “76ers Top Celtics, 112-106, and Tie Series,” *New York Times*, 4/14/1965, p49.
- 213 “*Tell anyone who wants to know*” “Heinsohn, Sanders Carry Celtics’s Hopes in Finale,” *Boston Globe*, 4/15/1965, p43, by Will McDonough. Before 1962, the last Boston-Philadelphia series was in 1960, which the Celtics won four games to two; the road team had won the final three games of that series.
- 213 “*No matter what happens*” “Heinsohn, Sanders Carry Celtics’s Hopes in Finale,” *Boston Globe*, 4/15/1965, p43, by Will McDonough.
- 213 “*Lose? Are you kidding me, baby?*” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p144.
- 213 *televised in much of the country* “Television,” *New York Times*, 4/15/1965, p65. WOR-TV Channel 9 had the broadcast in New York, up against such network programs as repeats of Perry Mason and The Donna Reed show, and new episodes of Dr. Kildare, My Three Sons, and Bewitched.
- 214 “*I wish you got hit by a car*” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p143.

- 214 *the first six minutes* Sources for details on the seventh game include “Celtics Save Crown in Last 5 Seconds,” *Boston Globe*, 4/16/1965, p1, 19 by Will McDonough; “Celtics Beat 76ers in Series Finale,” *New York Times*, 4/16/1965, p19. Also, “The Celts Are Back: 1974 Playoffs” video from the Celtics DVD box set (NBA Entertainment) includes the final moments of this game.
- 214 *Schayes went to his bench* Schayes had been prescient about Jackson, who would score just eight points on three of ten shooting from the floor. Gambee finished with 25 points and 6 rebounds in 29 minutes before fouling out; Woten, *Game 7*, p27.
- 214 *Still wearing a brace* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p144.
- 215 *one-inch thick wire* “Havlicek Tops All Hub Crooks,” *Boston Globe*, p19, by Bud Collins.
- 215 *allowed the 24-second clock to expire* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p127 The plan was to run down the shot clock before trying a shot, but as Havlicek wrote, “we overdid it a bit and never did get a shot off.”
- 215 *were installed only a few years earlier* See photos in Sullivan, *Picture History*, p52 and 53 for two examples. Pictures from earlier in the 1960s show no evidence of them. *Boston Herald* 4/17/1965 says the wires were taken down two days after the series ended and Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p250 says they were never used again. But the wires were actually repositioned not removed forever. A photo in Sullivan, *Picture History*, p73, taken during the 1966 Finals, clearly shows wires running from the balcony to the angled supports behind the basket, which would have been well out of the field of play. Additional photos from the 1973 playoffs (Sullivan, *Picture History*, p100) and television footage from 1974 playoffs also shows wires in that position.
- 215 *“from one of these four wires”* “Havlicek Tops All Hub Crooks,” *Boston Globe*, 4/16/1965, p19 by Bud Collins.
- 215 *Chamberlain reacted instantly* Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p146 for Russell’s claim on Walker; Havlicek, *Hondo*, p127 Auerbach’s reaction; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p68 Russell’s reaction. The legendary irony of this story is that when the coaches and officials met before the game, Auerbach objected when Schayes suggested that the ground rule be changed and the team who hit the wire should keep the ball. Perhaps he was fearful of a Chamberlain block bouncing off the wire, since he was a less precise shot-blocker than Russell. See Sullivan, *Picture History*, p67.
- 216 *“Play defense but don’t foul”* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p249.
- 216 *“I knew they would have grabbed him”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p68-69.
- 216 *Kerr towered over Sam Jones* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p128; This lineup shows Auerbach’s lack of trust in rookies John Thompson and Mel Counts, who played little in the playoffs. Also, Heinsohn’s arch injury had limited him to sixteen ineffective minutes in this game, and the 6’6” Willie Naulls played just four minutes, Woten, *Game 7*, p27.
- 216 *“When the official handed Greer the ball”* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p128.
- 217 *“Havlicek stole the ball!”* Fleetwood Records included the call in an album of Most’s Celtics highlights, entitled “Havlicek Stole the Ball!” Havlicek, *Hondo*, p130.
- 217 *so eager for souvenirs* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p129; Freedman, *Dynasty*, p187.
- 217 *“went right down to the wire”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p69.
- 217 *“I didn’t put enough on the ball”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p69.
- 217 *“The moment the ball left his hands”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p69.
- 217 *“Philadelphians would rather”* “Havlicek Tops All Hub Crooks,” *Boston Globe*, 4/16/1965, p19 by Bud Collins.

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- 217 *By March* “Elgin Ticking Off Two-Pointers Again With Old-Time Precision,” *The Sporting News*, 3/14/1964, p30.
- 217 *tore his left patellar tendon* Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p190; also see Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p251-252.
- 218 *Ellis unexpectedly scored twenty-nine* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p141.
- 218 “*I cost us the ball game*” “‘Fabulous’ – It’s Red’s Word for Celts,” *The Sporting News*, 5/8/1965 by Phil Elderkin.
- 218 *The fifth game* “Celtics Beat Lakers, 129-96, and Take Record 7th Straight N.B.A. Title,” *New York Times*, 4/26/1965. The Celtics scored 42 points in the fourth quarter on the strength of an NBA record 21 field goals (zero free throws).
- 218 *Heinsohn refused the meaningless curtain call* Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p137.
- 219 “*I just wish Walter Brown*” “‘Fabulous’ – It’s Red’s Word for Celts,” *The Sporting News*, 5/8/1965 by Phil Elderkin.

Chapter 10 – Hustle and Guts

- 220 “*People tend to think*” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p24 Quoted from “No. 2 In The Rafters, No. 1 In Their Hearts,” *Sports Illustrated*, 1/14/1985 article by Frank Deford.
- 220 “*I feel like a machine*” “Auerbach Hopes Final Season Is Winning One,” *New York Times*, 3/13/1966.
- 220 *After Walter Brown’s death* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p224.
- 220 “*At one point*” Havlicek, *Hondo*, p140.
- 221 *Auerbach personally scouted Willis Reed* “1,000 Victories – Red Gains Summit, Sights End of Trail,” *The Sporting News*, 1/29/1966 by Phil Elderkin. Marty Blake, then the general manager of the Hawks, planned to take Reed earlier, in the first round, before coach Harry Gallatin talked him out of it (the Hawks instead selected swingman Jeff Mullins from Duke, who had a solid, but not spectacular, twelve year career). Blake then fired Gallatin after a 17-16 start, and when New York fired Eddie Donovan, the Knicks hired Gallatin – who ended up coaching Reed anyway.
- 221 *Auerbach pocketed Sullivan*, *Picture History*, p274; Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p69.
- 221 *improving financial position* “Inflation and Escalation Boost NBA Franchise Prices,” *The Sporting News*, 11/20/1965, p48-47 by Melvin Durslag in the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*. Warriors sold for \$850,000 in 1962, Nationals (76ers) were purchased for \$500,000 in 1963, while Baltimore fetched \$1.2 million in 1964.
- 221 *national TV contract* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p258.
- 221 *Celtics were a bargain* Halberstam, *October 1964*, p278-279. Dan Topping and Del Webb sold at just the right time, in August 1964, as the Yankees were driving towards their last World Series appearance before an 11 year drought.
- 221 *Waldron talked him out of it* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p257. Red signed a one-year contract to coach – his first real contract in years after a series of handshake deals with Walter Brown.
- 221 “*He really wanted to go out a winner*” Havlicek, *Hondo*, p140.
- 222 “*the genius of sports*” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p87.
- 222 “*No broads at practice!*” Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p41.

- 222 *Auerbach yelled at rowdy fans* “Ol’ Red Still Real Comic as Villian,” *The Sporting News*, 12/21/1960 Sec 2 pg8; Freedman, *Dynasty*, p13-14. Auerbach used the program to keep himself from bruising his hand with his wedding ring.
- 222 “*Do me a favor*” Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p258.
- 222 *ejected in the third quarter* All-Star game story in *The Sporting News*, 1/21/1967 p11.
- 222 “*The reason that Auerbach is disliked*” Quoted in an advertisement for the *Saturday Evening Post* in *The Sporting News*, 3/19/1966, p34.
- 223 “*it got everyone’s attention*” Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p9.
- 223 “*since his Navy days*” Freedman, *Dynasty*, p19.
- 223 *endorsement deal* “Red’s Plan Goes Up In Smoke,” *The Sporting News*, 3/13/1965, p34 by Melvin Durslag in Los Angeles Herald-Examiner. Contract began in 1963 with a “New England tobacco firm”. Also see Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p23.
- 223 “*this game*” Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p9.
- 223 “*If there is a way to beat the rules*” “Auerbach’s Not All Fire Brand – He Soothes Too,” *The Sporting News*, 1/29/1958, Sec 2 p8 by Phil Elderkin in the *Christian Science Monitor*.
- 223 “*I had rules for our huddles*” Auerbach, *On & Off The Court*, p61.
- 223 “*always liked the last shot to go in*” Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p91.
- 223 “*coaching is simple*” Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p273.
- 224 “*it’s what they absorb*” Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p13.
- 224 “*Every once in a while*” Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p204.
- 224 *tell them the rant was coming* Russell, *Second Wind*, p146. Sometimes Auerbach would even ask Russell’s permission to yell at him.
- 224 *let him skip a workout* Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p295; “Colleagues Give No. 1 Nod to Old Redhead,” *The Sporting News*, 2/27/1965, p34 by Phil Elderkin cites Cousy intentionally making appointments for first couple of days of practice in 1962 and 1963 so he could report to camp late.
- 224 “*As time went on*” Cousy, *Celtic Mystique*, p53.
- 224 “*had a unique way*” “Meet Lawman Lovellette – Mighty Quick on the Draw,” *The Sporting News*, 2/25/1967 p39.
- 224 “*hustle and guts*” “Auerbach’s Not All Firebrand – He Soothes, Too,” *The Sporting News*, 1/29/1958, Sec2 p8 by Phil Elderkin in the *Christian Science Monitor*.
- 225 “*if everything is quiet*” “Kindly Teacher or Cruel Tyrant, Auerbach Plays Both,” *The Sporting News*, 2/29/1964 by Phil Elderkin.
- 225 *asked players to suggest options* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p68; Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p81.
- 225 “*There may be other coaches*” “‘Coach Auerbach Celt Mainspring’ – Ramsey,” *The Sporting News*, 1/17/1962, Sec 2 p2 by Phil Elderkin in *Christian Science Monitor*.
- 225 *Eastern Professional Basketball League* Forerunner of the Continental Basketball Association. Some details taken from <http://www.cbamuseum.com>
- 226 *When the Lakers dumped Nelson* “Celts Hit Bonanza In Nelson,” *The Sporting News*, 12/11/1965, p44 by Phil Elderkin. Nelson was signed on October 28. Fairchild, who the Lakers’ kept as their eleventh man, played thirty games for the Lakers during the regular season but did not play in the playoffs. That was the end of his NBA career, though he later played three seasons in the ABA.
- 226 *Don Nelson* Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p134-135; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p138; *Iowa Basketball History and Record Book*; It is likely that Chuck Darling grabbed more rebounds during his three seasons at Iowa (1950-1952), but

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rebounds were only officially collected for one of those years (1951), so Darling ended his career with 387 official rebounds.

- 226 “*the tougher a game got*” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p135.
- 226 “*shot-putter*” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p190; For a few examples, watch the *NBA Dynasty Series: Boston Celtics* DVD set.
- 226 “*I couldn’t believe*” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p139.
- 227 “*We were comics*” “Life and Basketball: The Redemption of Woody Sauldsberry.”
- 227 *above average defensive player* “Former Trotter Woody Heavy Gun of Warriors,” *The Sporting News*, 2/19/1958 sec 2 pg3-4; Russell, *Second Wind*, p243.
- 227 “*the prettiest jump shot in the league*” “Sauldsberry, ‘Unknown’ Last Fall, Selected No. 1 Rookie,” *The Sporting News*, 4/9/1958, p18 jump shot quote, which is partially contradicted by Marecek, *Full Court*, p208 which describes it as more of a “line drive.”
- 227 *unofficial quota system* “Life and Basketball: The Redemption of Woody Sauldsberry”; Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p77-78; Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p53.
- 228 “*insubordination*” “Hawks Drop Sauldsberry,” *New York Times*, 6/12/1963; “Life and Basketball: The Redemption of Woody Sauldsberry”.
- 228 *Russell convinced Auerbach* See *The Sporting News*, 12/11/1965 p16; Also <http://www.cbamuseum.com> for Eastern League details. Si Green, the player who had been drafted ahead of Russell in 1957, had made the Celtics at the start of the season, but was demoted to the Elms to make room for Sauldsberry on the roster. Sauldsberry retired for good after the 1965-66 season, after averaging just 4.4 points in 13.6 minutes per game, and did not earn a spot on the Celtics playoff roster, as Bonham and Thompson claimed the tenth and eleventh spots.
- 228 *suffered a fatal heart attack* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p259-260.
- 228 “*It’s difficult for me*” “Big Dipper Pours Out Heart Over ‘Rap Wilt’ Gang,” *The Sporting News*, 2/26/1966, p1, 40 by Jim Heffernan.
- 229 *bench-clearing brawl* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p71.
- 229 *Jack McMahan* Robertson, *The Big O*, p173; “Royal Reversal In The East,” *Sports Illustrated*, 2/7/1966, by Tom C. Brody.
- 229 “*20-10 vision*” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 10/8/1966, p63 by Phil Elderkin.
- 230 “*Oscar saw the whole floor*” Thomas, *They Cleared The Lane*, p207.
- 230 “*Of all the players*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p162-163.
- 230 “*who plays the game*” “Royals Rampage Behind Hot Mitt Of Gritty Smitty,” *The Sporting News*, 3/7/1964, p30 by Earl Lawson.
- 230 *Ford Mustang convertible* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p199. Smith still had the car in the 1990’s.
- 230 *negotiations lingered on* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p195 for \$70,000 figure and trade request; *The Sporting News*, 10/23/1965, p41.
- 230 *the series opener* Sources for the series against Cincinnati include: “Royals Set Back Celtics, 107-103,” *New York Times*, 3/24/1966, p50; “Celtics Defeat Royals, 132 to 125, to Even Eastern Semi-Final Playoffs,” *New York Times*, 3/27/1966, p205; “Hairston Is Hero With Late Surge,” *New York Times*, 3/28/1966, p45; “Celtics Defeat Royals, 112-103, to Reach Eastern Final of N.B.A. Playoffs,” *New York Times*, 4/2/1966, p31; “The Celtics Stretch An Era,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/11/1966 by Curry Kirkpatrick.
- 231 “*If we can get at least 80 percent*” “Celtics, Bullets On Brink Tonight,” *New York Times*, 3/30/1966, p52.
- 231 “*I’ll play*” “Celtics, Bullets On Brink Tonight,” *New York Times*, 3/30/1966, p52.

- 231 *juggled his starting lineup* “The Two Seasons of John Havlicek,” *The Sporting News*, 4/27/1968, p43 by Phil Elderkin.
- 231 “*The Second Best Secret Agent...*” “The Celtics Stretch An Era,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/11/1966 by Curry Kirkpatrick. Auerbach was quoted as saying it was the “Worst movie in the world.” According to <http://www.imdb.com>, the movie was also released as “Licensed To Kill.”
- 232 “*You get this one, Russ*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p152.
- 232 “*Sanders shot over him*” “Celtics Beat Royals, 120-103, and Tie Series,” *New York Times*, 3/31/1966, p51.
- 232 *Billy Cunningham* “Tar Heels’ Jumping Jack Defies Gravity,” *The Sporting News*, 2/22/1964, p29-30 by Gene Warren; Douchant, *College Basketball*, p302.
- 233 “*I knew Cunningham*” “Tar Heels’ Jumping Jack Defies Gravity,” *The Sporting News*, 2/22/1964, p29-30 by Gene Warren.
- 233 “*I just didn’t have the moves*” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 2/5/1966, p38 by Phil Elderkin.
- 233 “*We realized that Billy*” “Basketball’s Best Sixth Man? 76ers Name Billy Cunningham,” *The Sporting News*, 3/26/1966, p34,40.
- 233 *Lakers-Hawks* The seventh game of the Western Finals was Cliff Hagan’s final game with the Hawks.
- 234 *possible merger* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p141, which also mentions the eventual selling price of \$5.175 million.
- 234 *Canadian radio station* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p160-161.
- 234 *Toronto Maple Leafs baseball team* Maraniss, *Clemente*, p41; <http://www.jkcf.org> Jack Kent Cooke foundation website. Cooke sold the Maple Leafs in 1964.
- 234 “*You were on call 24 hours a day*” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p160.
- 234 “*Every conversation with Cooke*” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p159.
- 234 *Cooke had no eye for basketball talent* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p141-142.
- 235 “*Something pulled*” “A Tiger Who Can Beat Anything,” *Sports Illustrated*, 10/24/1966 by Frank Deford.
- 235 “*It was very, very difficult*” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p162.
- 235 “*The more I thought about it*” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p161.
- 235 “*I told him*” “A Long and Painful Path – Gritty Baylor’s Comeback,” *The Sporting News*, 3/5/1966, p38 by Dan Hafner.
- 235 *older brother David Maraniss*, *Rome 1960*, p236.
- 236 “*It used to be a big problem*” “Smashing Hurrah For The Lakers,” *Sports Illustrated*, 2/8/1965 by John Underwood.
- 236 *Goodrich led the Bruins* Douchant, *College Basketball*, p118-122.
- 236 *Wooden had compared* “New Russell? Cal Suggests Imhoff,” *The Sporting News*, 2/25/1959, Sec2, p 36 by Jim Scott in *Berkeley Gazette*.
- 237 “*Every time I’ve been traded*” “Rimming the NBA,” 2/4/1967 p6 by Phil Elderkin.
- 237 “*I never yet have had a player*” Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p105-106.
- 237 *averaged double-figures* Douchant, *College Basketball*, p98,314.
- 237 *named Russell as his successor* “Lakers Set Back Celtics, 133-129,” *New York Times*, 4/18/1966, p40.
- 238 “*You must make the other player*” “The Psych...and My Other Tricks,” *Sports Illustrated*, 10/25/1965, Bill Russell and Bob Ottum.
- 238 “*what have I got to gain*” “The Psych...and My Other Tricks,” *Sports Illustrated*, 10/25/1965, Bill Russell and Bob Ottum.
- 238 “*Russell would never play for me*” Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p153. In his “Rimming the NBA” column in *The Sporting News*, 11/6/1965, p38, Phil Elderkin writes that the job is Ramsey’s if he wants it.

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- 238 “A player-coach is not for me” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 1/24/1966 by Phil Elderkin; “Quotes from 1966,” *The Sporting News*, 1/7/1967 p31.
- 238 *Alex Hannum Russell, Red and Me*, p146. Russell does not name Hannum directly, but describes the coaching candidate as “a successful, veteran NBA coach” that had “coached a good friend of mine, one of the greatest players in the game, who told me how this guy tried to manipulate him in disrespectful ways, including trying to persuade him not to talk to me during the season.” The reference to Chamberlain is unmistakable, and other sources document how Hannum was convinced that Russell’s friendship with Chamberlain was motivated by trying to gain an advantage on the court, not true friendship. Frank McGuire shared that belief, but McGuire was hardly a “veteran” NBA coach.
- 238 “You know when a pro athlete” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p31.
- 238 “I can’t pinpoint the one thing” “Bill Russell Named Boston Celtic Coach,” *New York Times*, 4/19/1966, p1.
- 239 *Sam Jones was quoted* “Bill Russell Named Boston Celtic Coach,” *New York Times*, 4/19/1966, p1. Jones said that just like Robinson’s breaking of the color barrier, Russell’s hiring “opens up so many fields for Negroes.”
- 239 “This doesn’t even come close” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p32.
- 239 “one of the best efforts” “Celtics Win to Even Series,” *New York Times*, 4/20/1966, p59. A month later, Robinson stated that major league baseball was unlikely to follow suit: “baseball owners don’t have the guts to do it,” *The Sporting News*, 5/21/1966, p16.
- 239 “If I thought for one second” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p32.
- 239 “No, the most important factor” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p32; Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p94.
- 239 “Russell deserves to be coach” “Russell Has Sharp Mind Of Pro Star,” *The Sporting News*, 5/7/1966, p44,43.
- 239 *fired up the team* Auerbach, *An Autobiography*, p147.
- 239 *Boston tied the series* “Celtics Win to Even Series,” *New York Times*, 4/20/1966, p59.
- 240 “No one in the league” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p162.
- 240 *Havlicek again scored* “Celtics Beat Lakers, 120-106, and Lead in Playoff Series, 2 to 1,” *New York Times*, 4/21/1966, p51. Havlicek scored 21, 21, 21, 32, 23, 27, and 16 in the seven games, averaging exactly twenty-three points per game.
- 240 *physically assaulted* “Celtics Triumph; Lead Series, 3-1,” *New York Times*, 4/23/1966, p21.
- 240 “They killed us in the first half” “Schaus Moans, Refs ‘Killed Us’,” *Boston Globe*, 4/23/1966, by Jack Barry. Schaus also blasted Auerbach within the Lakers locker room. Nelson later recalled that while he was with the Lakers, “Instead of preparing us for the game, Freddie would rave for five or ten minutes about Auerbach! But no one interrupted. Frankly, we didn’t like Red either.” Auerbach, *An Autobiography*, p269.
- 240 “You don’t win or lose” “Schaus Moans, Refs ‘Killed Us’,” *Boston Globe*, 4/23/1966, by Jack Barry.
- 241 *Weldon Haire announced* Described in *Boston Globe*, 4/25/1966; “Lakers Subdue Celtics, 121-117, and Cut Boston Five’s Lead to 3-2,” *New York Times*, 4/25/1966, p42.
- 241 *a piece of the referees* “Officials and Fans Scuffle After Laker-Celtic Game,” *New York Times*, 4/25/1966, p42; *Boston Globe* 4/25/1966.
- 241 “Batman” movie “Cat Woman Flips Hip, Lights Red’s Cigar – No Penalty,” *Boston Globe*, 4/27/1966, by Francis Rosa. In the photo, which pictures (from left

- to right) Frank Gorshin, Lee Meriwether, Red, Burgess Meredith, and Cesar Romero, Red is next to the former 1955 Miss America, who playfully flirted with him. In an example of the phrase “it’s a small world,” Meriwether was a classmate of Johnny Mathis at George Washington High School in San Francisco. Mathis competed in track meets against Bill Russell and became a longtime friend.
- 241 *game six* “Lakers Conquer Celtics, 123-115,” *New York Times*, 4/27/1966, p54; *Boston Globe*, 4/27/1966.
- 241 *closed-circuit television* See *Boston Globe*, 4/26/1966.
- 242 *pregame pep talk* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p284.
- 242 *join the game in progress* *Boston Globe*, 4/28/1966 – The first 15 minutes of the game were pre-empted for “National Geographic’s ‘World of Jacques-Yves Cousteau’ Color Special” on CBS, which aired from 7:30-8:30pm after Walter Cronkite. More details in *Boston Globe*, 4/29/1966. The 10-0 run included Laker turnovers by Baylor (double-dribble), Goodrich (traveling), and King, who “threw the ball out of bounds.” Leroy Ellis made the first Laker field goal four minutes into the game.
- 242 *The first half* Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p93; “Celtics Defeat Lakers, 95-93, for Eighth Title in Row and 9th in 10 Years,” *New York Times*, 4/29/1966, p51.
- 242 *broken bone in his foot* “Some Old Pros Refuse To Die,” *Sports Illustrated*, 5/10/1966, by Frank Deford discusses the foot injury, which was not revealed until after the series was over.
- 243 *traditional postgame celebration* Other than 1959 and 1963, each of the Celtics first eight titles were clinched in front of the home fans at the Garden.
- 243 “*The people were really a menace*” Havlicek, *Hondo*, p141.
- 243 “*I never came closer*” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p72.
- 243 “*We came awfully close*” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p163.
- 243 “*the most disappointing thing*” “Celtics Win, So What Else Is New?” *The Sporting News*, 5/14/1966, p43 by Phil Elderkin.
- 243 “*We said before the game*” “Celtics Win, So What Else Is New?” *The Sporting News*, 5/14/1966, p43 by Phil Elderkin.
- 243 “*Of all the Celtic teams*” “One Last Smoke”, *Time*, 5/6/1966.

Chapter 11 – Soul Force

- 244 “*and all he wants to do*” “Celtics Like to Swap Insults – And Russell Is Champ Needler,” *The Sporting News*, 10/1/1966, p43 by Joe Falls in *Detroit Free Press*.
- 244 *But Sam Jones* Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p33. Jones would be quoted in a newspaper article a month after the season – see Freedman, *Dynasty*, p197-198.
- 244 *Russell had listened* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p279-280.
- 244 “*Bill got some of the guys*” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 4/8/1967, p44 by Phil Elderkin.
- 244 “*It dawned on me*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p142.
- 245 *allowing K.C. Jones to run the team* For one example of Russell missing practice for a valid reason, see “Here’s a Report Card on Coach Russell,” *The Sporting News*, 12/17/1966, p3 by Phil Elderkin. Russell missed practice on November 30 to get an injured foot x-rayed.
- 245 *Brandeis University* “Celtics Hate to Say Good-Bye to K.C.” *The Sporting News*, 3/11/1967, p31 by Phil Elderkin. In 1966 it was remarkable that Brandeis, a Jewish-sponsored institution, would hire a black coach, but there was a story behind the story. Athletic director Irv Olin, who was retiring as basketball coach,

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- had worked for Auerbach at the latter's summer basketball camp. Olin asked Auerbach for suggestions to replace him, and Jones was one of them. Olin recommended Jones to the board at Brandeis based on his basketball knowledge and character, and Jones was accepted immediately. The Olin-Auerbach relationship also facilitated K.C. staying with the Celtics for one last season in 1966-67. During that season, former JFK press secretary Pierre Salinger approached Jones with an offer to coach the expansion NBA Seattle SuperSonics. Salinger was a "business associate" of Sonics owner Eugene Klein. K.C. turned down the job, citing his commitment to Brandeis and telling friends that he was tired of the grind of the NBA travel schedule. See "Rimming the NBA," *The Sporting News*, 3/25/1967, by Phil Elderkin.
- 245 *Howell had clashed* "New Lease on Life for Bailey Howell," *The Sporting News*, 3/18/1967, by Phil Elderkin.
- 245 *Seymour was fired* The moves did not improve the Bullets on the court. Farmer was fired after a 1-8 start, then Jeannette briefly took over, posting a 3-13 mark, and Baltimore ended the season with a 20-61 record. Farmer, who was a teammate of Russell's at USF, had also played nine games for St. Louis in 1965-66 in addition to his assistant coaching duties. See *The Sporting News* 10/22/1966 and 11/19/1966. Counts's stay in Baltimore did not last long; he was traded to Los Angeles after twenty-five games for Leroy Ellis.
- 245 *"I've never played with Bill"* "Celtics Like to Swap Insults – And Russell Is Champ Needler," *The Sporting News*, 10/1/1966 p43 by Joe Falls in *Detroit Free Press*.
- 245 *"I've always admired"* "NBA Basketball," *The Sporting News*, 1/11/1969, p23, by Phil Elderkin.
- 245 *"Joining the Celtics"* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p157-158.
- 246 *twenty-third leading scorer* "New Lease on Life for Bailey Howell," *The Sporting News*, 3/18/1967, by Phil Elderkin.
- 246 *insurance salesman* "Howell Hitting New Heights as Glistenin' Piston," *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964, p39 by Jack Saylor.
- 246 *fly home immediately* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p158 flights home instead of waiting for charter the next morning.
- 246 *"I don't have the ability"* "Howell Hitting New Heights as Glistenin' Piston," *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964, p39 by Jack Saylor.
- 246 *"Bailey Howell's got twelve elbows!"* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p107.
- 246 *"southern gentleman"* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p106.
- 246 *In his senior year* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, 159; Douchant, *College Basketball*, p88. Howell was fourth in the country in scoring average and second in rebounding, joining Oscar Roberston, Jerry West, and Bob Boozer as consensus All-Americans.
- 246 *Baton Rouge Teamsters* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p189. The Teamsters lost in the Semifinals.
- 247 *"I did it to avoid"* "Howell Hitting New Heights as Glistenin' Piston," *The Sporting News*, 3/21/1964, p39 by Jack Saylor.
- 247 *eight player deal* The June 16, 1964 trade was Terry Dischinger, Rod Thorn and Don Kojis for Howell, Don Ohl, Bob Ferry, Les Hunter and Wally Jones. 2007-08 *Detroit Pistons Media Guide*, p165.
- 247 *"I had made five All-Star teams"* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p358.
- 247 *Auerbach gave the Royals \$6,000* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p358; *The Sporting News*, 10/1/1966 p43; Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p74. It is likely that the Celtics would have made the Counts-for-Howell deal in any case, but the fact that they felt they

- could get Embry to upgrade their backup center position certainly enhanced their pursuit of the trade.
- 247 “*the meanest picks*” Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p156.
- 248 *pick-and-roll* Robertson, *The Big O*, p156.
- 248 “*Red gave me my confidence back*” “The Significance of Wayne Embry,” *New York Times*, 3/11/1972. Embry averaged 5.2 points and 4.2 rebounds in ten minutes per game in his first season with the Celtics. The year before with the Royals, Embry played twenty-four minutes a game, but averaged just 7.6 points and 6.6 rebounds.
- 248 “*a team so powerful*” “Alex the Greatest as Court Conqueror,” *The Sporting News*, 1/28/1967, p3 by Jack Kiser. Schaus had good reason to be scared – his Lakers were 1-8 against the 76ers that season.
- 248 *started the season 15-1* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p74; Celtics records from 2007-08 *Boston Celtics Media Guide*, p186.
- 249 *It was a sign of things to come* Sources for the 1967 series against the 76ers include Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p286-295.
- 249 *armed with eggs, oranges* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p100.
- 249 “*Boston is dead!*” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p75.
- 249 “*We’re only dead until October*” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p75.
- 250 “*The Celtics are not dead*” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 4/29/67, p44 by Phil Elderkin.
- 250 “*Over and over that summer*” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p76.
- 250 “*outcoached*” Greenfield, *World’s Greatest Team*, p110.
- 250 “*There is a century of basketball experience*” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p35.
- 250 “*This was the biggest thing*” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p35
- 251 “*You might say*” *The Sporting News*, 2/24/1968, p14.
- 251 “*As far as I’m concerned*” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 3/30/1968, p40 by Phil Elderkin.
- 251 “*We had lost a couple of games*” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p361-362.
- 251 “*accentuate the positive*” Heinsohn, *Don’t You Ever Smile?*, p163.
- 251 “*Flakey*” Russell, *Go Up For Glory*, p98.
- 252 *nearly posted three straight triple-doubles* “The Two Seasons of John Havlicek,” *The Sporting News*, 4/27/1968, p43 by Phil Elderkin. Game four 35/9/9; Game five 18/13/12; Game six 31/12/10 (points/rebounds/assists).
- 252 *lead the league in assists* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p300-302.
- 252 “*It’s obvious*” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 2/24/1968, p13 by Phil Elderkin.
- 252 *Hannum had yet to stay* The pattern would continue, as Hannum never would spent more than three years in any of his future coaching stops.
- 252 “*Sitting and watching*” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 5/4/1968, p42 by Phil Elderkin.
- 252 *Larry Costello* Costello served as an assistant coach the rest of the season after his injury. *The Sporting News*, 4/20/1968, p45.
- 253 *Spectrum lost sections of its roof* “A Heavy Blow in a Windy City,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/1/1968, by William Johnson. The initial event occurred during an Ice Capades show on February 17, and then the patched roof did not survive another gale on March 1, closing the arena again. Also mentioned in *Harvey Pollack Yearbook*, p151;
- 253 *Eugene McCarthy* Goodwin, *Remembering America*, p480.
- 253 *polling in the low double-digits* New Hampshire 1968: A Primary That Really Mattered by Al Eisele http://www.huffingtonpost.com/al-eisele/new-hampshire-1968-a-pri_b_89707.html

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- 253 *Robert F. Kennedy* Goodwin, *Remembering America*, p518.
- 253 *Lyndon Johnson ended* Goodwin, *Remembering America*, p522. Johnson made his famous announcement by saying, "I shall not seek, and will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president."
- 253 "There is at the outset" Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p388-389.
- 254 *Shriver estimated* Editorial in *Boston Globe*, 4/2/1968 editorial – \$10 to \$15 billion needed per year for the next decade.
- 254 *Larry Payne* Payne's family claim that he was "surrendering" when patrolman L. D. Jones shot him. Payne's family also claim he was not involved with the looting, and that he did not have a knife; no knife was ever produced by the police. See <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/mar/28/mother-grieves-sons-death/> from the Memphis Commercial Appeal. The strike had begun on February 12, 1968 after two sanitation workers were crushed by a malfunctioning compactor. Also see *Boston Globe*, 4/2/1968.
- 255 "these massive industries" Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p414. King specifically mentioned Coca-Cola, Sealtest milk, Wonder Bread, and Hart's Bread.
- 255 "soul force" Text of speech on August 28, 1963, downloaded from <http://www.realclearpolitics.com>
- 255 "Like anybody" Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p418-419.
- 255 *King was shot* Timeline taken from "Martin Luther King Is Slain in Memphis; A White Is Suspected; Johnson Urges Calm," *New York Times*, 4/5/1968, by Earl Caldwell.
- 255 "was in a state of shock" Game story in *Boston Globe*, 4/6/1968 p22.
- 255 *team debated whether to play* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p304-306; Bailey Howell, despite his moderate views, was unmoved and did not understand why they should not play.
- 255 *Russell called Chamberlain* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p304-306; Also Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p51. Chamberlain had been a name-only figurehead for a membership drive of the Philadelphia branch of NAACP, but he had hired only black contractors and subcontractors for the apartment complex he was building in California. Chamberlain had also attended the March on Washington with Cal Ramsey, see Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p197.
- 255 *exploded into violence* See *Boston Globe*, 4/6/1968. 6,000 members of the 82nd airborne from Ft. Bragg North Carolina were sent to Washington, and over 950 rioters had been arrested so far.
- 255 *In Roxbury and North Dorchester* Most occurred in the Grove Hall area along Blue Hill Avenue. Boston had 2,100 of their 2,500 officers on duty that night. See stories in *Boston Globe*, 4/5/1968.
- 256 *dispatched volunteers* *Boston Globe*, 4/5/1968 and 4/6/1968. By the evening of April 5, Jefferson said he had been awake for thirty-six straight hours.
- 256 *James Brown's concert* "The Night James Brown Saved Boston," VH1 Classic documentary, 2008; *Boston Globe* 4/5/1968. Brown's concert was carried on WGBH Channel 2, their sister station Channel 44, and on WGBH-FM radio. The concert was aired in its entirety, and then repeated, so that the second showing ended at 2am. Brown had initially objected to the broadcast out of fear of losing ticket sales, but the city agreed to pay him \$60,000 to compensate for any losses. Both the concert and the game began at 8pm. The game was also televised in Boston on Channel 56 with Heinsohn and Auerbach handling play-by-play and commentary, respectively.

- 256 *Brown skillfully defused* “The Night James Brown Saved Boston” Watching the video of the concert forty-plus years later, it is still a remarkable sight.
- 257 *somewhat disinterested fans* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p306 Many fans left the game early.
- 257 *postponement of the second game* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p306. Virtually all sporting events were also delayed, including baseball’s opening day. *Boston Globe*, 4/5/1968.
- 257 “Listen, we’re down” Havlicek, *Hondo*, p104.
- 257 *Havlicek was brilliant again* “Two Seconds Stretch For First,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/29/1968, by Frank Deford.
- 257 “Philly is dead!” *Boston Globe*, 4/18/1968. Two Boston fans even carried a banner in the stands with “Philly is dead” written on it, just as the Philadelphia fans had done the year before.
- 258 *sausage sandwiches* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p104-105.
- 258 “You can’t get up” *Boston Globe* 4/20/1968, postgame quote in article by Will McDonough.
- 258 “Here, this is for apes” Freedman, *Dynasty*, p202.
- 258 “Any time he got the ball” Freedman, *Dynasty*, p176. Also see *Boston Globe* and *New York Times* 4/20/1968; Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p118 mentions Chamberlain rumors.
- 259 “the most satisfying victory” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p35.
- 259 “I know I passed up shots” “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 5/11/1968, p44 by Phil Elderkin.
- 259 “Russell did a fine job” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p35.
- 259 *shipping Leroy Ellis to Baltimore* See *The Sporting News*, 10/8/66 p63.
- 259 *midseason three-way deal* “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 2/18/1967, p11 by Phil Elderkin. Ray Scott from Detroit to Baltimore was the third leg of the trade. LaRusso refused to report to Detroit due to his expectant wife; but the deal stood. LaRusso would be sold to San Francisco for the 1967-68 season.
- 260 *Butch van Breda Kolff* Ryan, *Forty-Eight Minutes*, p163.
- 260 *West proceeded to break* “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 11/4/1967 p23 by Phil Elderkin broken hand; *The Sporting News*, 3/30/1968 p42 other injuries.
- 260 *bizarre playoff format* The NBA would not change its playoff format until the 1970-71 season, when the league split into four divisions (Atlantic and Central in the “Eastern Conference” and Midwest and Pacific in the “Western Conference”), awarded the top two teams in each division a playoff spot, then seeded the teams one through four in each conference with the division champions guaranteed the top seeds. Ironically, the new format fared no better in 1971, as only five of the top eight teams as ranked by winning percentage qualified for the playoffs: the 42-40 Baltimore Bullets won the Central and the 36-46 Atlanta Hawks and 41-41 SF Warriors also reached the postseason, while the Suns, Pistons, and Celtics, who won 48, 45, and 44 games, respectively, finished third or worse in their divisions and stayed home.
- 261 *cool start* Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p353; “Two Seconds Stretch For First,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/29/1968, by Frank Deford.
- 261 *West sprained his left ankle* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p317.
- 261 *Celtics turnovers* “Celtics Strut Again Behind Big Bill,” *The Sporting News*, 5/18/1968, p41 by Phil Elderkin.
- 261 “I felt terrible” “Celts Court Disaster, Then Regain Crown,” *The Sporting News*, 1/4/1969 p21 by Phil Elderkin.

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- 261 *Russell blocked Baylor* “This One Was Worth Shouting About,” *Sports Illustrated*, 5/13/1968, by Frank Deford.
- 261 *free throw line* Boston’s fifteen point margin of victory came almost completely on free throws. Boston made 26 of 29, while Los Angeles shot 13 for 26.
- 262 “*I have never seen Bill play better*” “Celtics Strut Again Behind Big Bill,” *The Sporting News*, 5/18/1968, p41 by Phil Elderkin.
- 262 “*Russell was the enforcer again*” “Celtics Strut Again Behind Big Bill,” *The Sporting News*, 5/18/1968, p41 by Phil Elderkin.
- 262 *lead the team in prayer* “This One Was Worth Shouting About,” *Sports Illustrated*, 5/13/1968, by Frank Deford.

Chapter 12 – Pride

- 263 “*The guys just got together*” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p375. Also see Havlicek, *Hondo*, p105-106; Shaughnessy, *Ever Green*, p125.
- 263 *played a key role against Philadelphia* “This One Was Worth Shouting About,” *Sports Illustrated*, 5/13/1968, by Frank Deford; *The Sporting News* 5/4/1968, 5/11/1968, 5/18/1968 boxscores.
- 263 *The NBA was expanding* Ben Kerner, who had moved his Hawks from Milwaukee for financial reasons, was chairman of the NBA expansion committee when they awarded the Bucks to “supermarket king” Herbert Kohl. In October 1967 Kerner told Bob Wolf of *The Sporting News*, “Milwaukee is definitely one of the best cities available. It wasn’t ready for pro basketball then, but it is now.” He noted that a Boston-Chicago exhibition game had drawn 6,029 fans on 10/6/1967, and that Chicago had scheduled regular season games against New York and Los Angeles in Milwaukee during the 1967-68 season. “Kerner Claims Milwaukee Is Ready For NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 10/28/1967, p46.
- 263 “*two financially disastrous*” “Rookie-Triggered Bullets Riddle NBA Targets,” *The Sporting News*, 2/29/1964 p45.
- 263 *back in Chicago* “Chicago Five Assigned to West and Bullets Will Shift to East,” *The Sporting News*, 1/28/1966.
- 264 *Charlie Paulk* Paulk had played on the 1967 United States World Championship team, but played just 17 games for the Bucks as a rookie, part of 120 game NBA career that ended with the Knicks in 1972. Gregor had a more impressive rookie season as he averaged 14 points and 11 boards over 80 games, then was traded for Paul Silas. Gregor played six years in the NBA and ABA.
- 264 *in preparation for the expansion draft* “Milwaukee and Phoenix Obtain N.B.A. Franchise for Next Season,” *New York Times*, 1/23/1968; “NBA to Take New Look at Expansion,” *The Sporting News*, 5/18/1968, p41.
- 264 *Celtics had been mostly unaffected* See all-time expansion draft records at www.nba.com
http://www.nba.com/bobcats/news/draft_central_expansion_alltime_results.html
Also see Feinstein, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, p141-142. In 1966 Marvin Kratter had wanted to leave K.C. and Satch unprotected, but Red rejected that idea. Bonham and Thompson were selected that year by the Bulls. In hindsight, Barnett was a loss. Barnett had barely played as a rookie in Boston but went on to have a solid nine year NBA career and certainly could have helped the Celtics in the backcourt during the 1968-69 season. Barnett averaged fourteen points, four assists and four rebounds for the Rockets that season.
- 264 *a shot at drafting ... Alcindor* Which is exactly what happened. The Bucks won eight more games than the Suns, but won a coin flip to earn the top pick in 1969.

- The Celtics also lost backup guards Tom Thacker and Johnny Jones to the Bucks. Embry liked the Boston area and planned to keep his home in nearby Newton while moving his family to Milwaukee (“NBA Basketball,” *The Sporting News*, 10/12/1968, p47 by Phil Elderkin). Embry would play one season for the Bucks, average thirteen points and eight rebounds a game, and eventually became the Bucks general manager.
- 264 *rising popularity of pro basketball* Attendance figures in *The Sporting News*, 6/22/1968, p54; Pluto, *Loose Balls: The Short, Wild Life of the American Basketball Association*, p108 minimum salaries; Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p258 television contract.
- 264 *NBA Properties* “New Company to Promote Sale of NBA-Backed Items,” *The Sporting News*, 11/16/1968, p27.
- 265 *a shell of its former self* Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*, p223, 236-239.
- 266 *“Industrial basketball is dying”* “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 10/30/1965, p39 by Phil Elderkin.
- 266 *ending their sponsorship of the 66ers* “Phillips Oilers Drop Basketball,” *New York Times*, 4/10/1968.
- 266 *two to three times as many fans* Based on figures found at <http://www.apbr.org>, <http://www.baseballchronology.com>, and Maher, Tod and Bob Gill Ed., *The Pro Football Encyclopedia*, 1997, I calculated average attendance figures as NBA 6,749, MLB 14,261, NFL 27,270.
- 266 *three times more popular* “ABA Basketball,” *The Sporting News*, 5/10/69, p52 by Bob Fowler; “ABA Basketball,” *The Sporting News*, 5/3/1969, p50 by Bob Fowler.
- 267 *fought back in court* Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p49-51; “Barry Accepts \$500,000 Contract,” *New York Times*, 6/21/1967. Coincidentally, Feerick had been a teammate of Hale’s at Santa Clara.
- 267 *Barry refused to report* Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p50-51.
- 267 *Alex Hannum, restless as ever* “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 5/18/1968, p42 by Phil Elderkin.
- 267 *captured the 1969 ABA title* Pluto, *Loose Balls*, p87,113. Hannum then left again – the Oaks were sold and moved to Washington, and Hannum had an escape clause in his contract if the team moved. He would coach 2 years in San Diego and 3 years in Denver, all in the ABA, before finally retiring in 1974.
- 267 *Ollie Johnson* See *USF Media Guide*, p67.
- 267 *Van Arsdale twins* Johnson was the eleventh overall pick. Dick was selected thirteenth by the Knicks, and Tom was taken by the Pistons with the fourteen pick.
- 268 *gradually reducing his playing time* Russell averaged 35 minutes as a rookie, then 38 in 1957-58. From 1959 to 1966 his average minutes varied between 43 and 45 a game. After Embry’s arrival, and Russell taking over as coach, his regular season average fell to 41 in 1966-67 and 38 in 1967-68, though his playoff averages were 43 and 46 minutes, respectively. Russell would play 43 minutes a game during the 1968-69 season.
- 268 *Joe Strawder* “NBA Basketball,” *The Sporting News*, 9/28/1968, p46 by Phil Elderkin. Detroit had bought Strawder from the Celtics in September 1965 after they were rebuffed in their attempts to acquire Mel Counts from Boston – see “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 12/4/1965, p54 by Phil Elderkin.
- 268 *a shaky candidate* “NBA Basketball,” *The Sporting News*, 5/18/1968, p42 by Phil Elderkin. Strawder never played pro ball again.

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- 268 *Toby Kimball ... Bud Olsen* "NBA Basketball," *The Sporting News*, 11/2/1968, p23 by Phil Elderkin. Olsen's best season by far was in 1964-65, when he averaged 7.5 points and 4.2 rebounds in seventeen minutes per game. Kimball was coming off what would be the best season of his nine year NBA career, having averaged 11 points and 11 rebounds a game during San Diego's first season. He would average a shade under 8 points and 9 rebounds in 1968-69.
- 268 *Graham was coming off a six month stint* See *The Sporting News*, 2/24/1968, p14; Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p170-171; Graham averaged 28.7 points as a college star.
- 268 *Don Chaney* Chaney, a former teammate of Elvin Hayes on the powerhouse Houston Cougars teams that made two consecutive trips to the national semifinals, would develop into a starter during the 1970s, more than validating Auerbach's decision to select him.
- 268 "It would have been too much" "Like Paint ... Bryant Clings to NBA Foes," *The Sporting News*, 4/26/1969, p49,54 by Phil Elderkin.
- 269 *Auerbach had watched Bryant Freedman*, *Dynasty*, p170.
- 269 "I had read where Johnny Green" "Knickerbockers Going Lyrical Over the Poet," *The Sporting News*, 2/27/1965, p36.
- 269 *combination of the injury and his age* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p166.
- 269 "He isn't much of a scorer" "Rimming the NBA," *The Sporting News*, 2/6/1965, p34 by Phil Elderkin.
- 269 "The Poet" "Knickerbockers Going Lyrical Over the Poet," *The Sporting News*, 2/27/1965, p36.
- 270 "plays me as tough" Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p164.
- 270 *Bryant was hampered* "Rimming the NBA," *The Sporting News*, 3/25/1967, p40 by Phil Elderkin.
- 270 *Lenny Wilkens* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p73; "Rimming the NBA," *The Sporting News*, 11/9/1968, p32 by Phil Elderkin. Wilkens was indeed traded by Atlanta to Seattle for Walt Hazzard.
- 270 *the significant raise* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p73-75. Woolf would have several more dealings with Auerbach over the next two decades, most famously as the agent for Larry Bird.
- 270 *diagnosed with sarcoid* Graham ended his career after the 1969 season, and became a scout for the Celtics, becoming most famous for filing the initial reports on the next great Celtics center, Dave Cowens.
- 270 *groin injury* "Sam Slipping ... Poor Celts Pay the Price," *The Sporting News*, 2/15/1969, p5 by Phil Elderkin. The Celtics went just 3-6 during Jones's absence.
- 270 *\$200,000 a year* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p68-69.
- 271 "Russell arrived thirty minutes late" Plimpton, *George Plimpton on Sports*, p63; Plimpton does not name the gym, saying only that it overlooked Massachusetts Avenue and was "rundown" but Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p69 contradicts this, stating that training camp was held at the Tobin Gym in Roxbury.
- 271 "The grades I gave myself" Russell, *Second Wind*, p167.
- 271 "To want something that bad" Russell, *Second Wind*, p167.
- 271 "We figured Bad News" Clayborne, *The Eyes On The Prize Civil Rights Reader*, p125.
- 272 *a four-player deal* Salzberg, *From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p219.
- 272 *complaining about his lack of playing time* "Rimming the NBA," *The Sporting News*, 11/9/1968, p32 by Phil Elderkin.
- 272 *Russell was forced to sit out* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p124; *The Sporting News*, 12/14/1968 and 12/21/1968. Auerbach coached the two games that Russell missed (*The Sporting News*, 12/28/1968 p16).

- 272 *freak head injury* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p125 Barnes was “knocked over by recoil blast of a jet engine at takeoff.”
- 272 *Barnes rarely played* “...and That Old Celtics Wheel Rolls Again,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/28/1969 by Frank Deford. Deford described Barnes plight thusly – “Bad News Barnes, the backup man, is so deep in Russell’s doghouse that he may soon be waived to the American Kennel Club.” Rookie Rich Johnson was also a non-factor, appearing in only thirty-one regular-season games and averaging five minutes per game. He would play just four minutes in the playoffs.
- 272 *Russell confidently predicted* Mentioned in *Boston Globe*, 1/17/1969, as quoted in Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p134.
- 272 *Russell lay face down* Photograph in *The Sporting News* 4/5/1969, p71.
- 273 *“I’ve never seen him in pain like that”* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p152-153. The Celtics subsequent five game losing streak was their longest since 1949. When Russell returned February 9 wearing a knee brace, he grabbed twenty-three rebounds against Philadelphia and tied the game at the end of regulation with a dunk. Russell played forty-five minutes in the 122-117 win.
- 273 *“Emmette had been playing”* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p163.
- 273 *“Age, injuries and the rest”* “Mighty Celtics Finally Yielding to Old Father Time,” *The Sporting News*, 3/1/1969, p48,46 by Phil Elderkin.
- 273 *“It’s just that”* Sullivan, *Picture History*, p80.
- 274 *Jack Ramsay* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p310. According to columnist Phil Elderkin, with Ramsay as coach “there will be less concentration on the deep post and more emphasis on running and playing a tough defense” See “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 10/19/1968, p45.
- 274 *Chamberlain had ties to the city* Pomerantz, *Wilt 1962*, p1; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p312; Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p119. Chamberlain even considered an offer from the ABA to jump to the Los Angeles Stars for \$1 million, but the NBA threatened a lawsuit, similar to the Rick Barry reserve clause case.
- 274 *antique furniture and art* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p170.
- 274 *“That’s the way we play”* “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 10/26/1968, p44 by Phil Elderkin.
- 274 *Ramsay rallied the team* See *The Sporting News*, 5/10/1969, p51 Kosloff gave Ramsay credit for “rallying the club after it lost Luke Jackson”; Ramsey also dealt Chambers, who was in the military for a second straight season, to Phoenix for backup center George Wilson *The Sporting News* 2/15/1969 p8.
- 275 *home attendance record* “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 3/29/1969, p44. Phil Elderkin gave some of the credit to 29-year-old business manager Pat Williams, who used “wrestling bears and singing baseball players” to entertain fans. Williams, who later become the 76ers general manager, had learned his promotional skills during his previous position as president and general manager of the Phillies farm team in Spartanburg, South Carolina.
- 275 *playoff series against Boston* Sources for this section include Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p187-189; “Celtics Down 76ers in Playoff Opener,” *New York Times*, 3/27/1969, p63; “Celtics Crush 76ers, 134-103, and Lead Eastern Semi-Final Playoffs by 2-0,” *New York Times*, 3/29/1969, p43.
- 275 *losing Sam Jones* “Young referee” Jack Madden ejected Sam Jones for arguing a traveling call.
- 275 *Viet Cong* “Comebacks All Over,” *Sports Illustrated*, 4/14/1969 by Frank Deford. Deford cleverly wrote: “The experts were surprised last week when the annual Spring Offensive began on schedule. After all, the troops from the North had suffered their worst reverses in years last winter, and all reports indicated that the gaunt, bearded old leader was no longer capable of rallying his forces. ... If the

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Celtics bear a resemblance to the Viet Cong, the Knicks are reminiscent of those few surviving Legionnaires in Beau Geste who ran around the fort firing the guns still held by their fallen comrades.”

- 275 *Knicks acquired Dave DeBusschere* “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 4/16/1969, p46 by Phil Elderkin; Bellamy had averaged fifteen points and eleven rebounds per game for the Knicks, while DeBusschere averaged sixteen points and eleven rebounds during the remainder of the season in New York. The Knicks were 18-17 at the time of trade, then improved to 44-21 by February 15 at the conclusion of an eleven game winning streak.
- 276 *6-1 record against the Celtics* In contrast, Boston was 5-2 against Philadelphia that season, and 2-4 against Los Angeles, their other two playoff opponents. New York had been so bad for so long that they did not win in Boston from December 22, 1962 to February 4, 1968, but were now beating Boston regularly.
- 276 *“I noticed” Whalen, Dynasty’s End*, p196-197.
- 276 *“We ran with them today” Whalen, Dynasty’s End*, p197. Other details from “Celtics Topple Knicks, 108-100, in Opener of Eastern Final Playoff Here,” *New York Times*, 4/7/1969, p52 and “Celtics Beat Knicks, 97-96, for 3-1 Lead,” *New York Times*, 4/14/1969, p58.
- 277 *“I saw him holding” Whalen, Dynasty’s End*, p208.
- 277 *Lakers had survived a scare* The Lakers became the first team to rally from an 0-2 deficit since the 1956 Ft. Wayne Pistons against the St. Louis Hawks. The Lakers task was more difficult because they dropped the first two at home. *The Sporting News*, 4/19/1969, p46.
- 277 *losses of Walt Hazzard and Gail Goodrich* Hazzard was selected by Seattle; Goodrich by Phoenix.
- 278 *van Breda Kolff* McCallum, *College Basketball, U.S.A.*, p189-190; Cousy, *Celtic Mystique*, p316; Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p119.
- 278 *“beauty” and “flow” Taylor, The Rivalry*, p318-319.
- 278 *“I did not say” “Rimming the NBA,” The Sporting News*, 11/18/1967, p23 by Phil Elderkin. Van Breda Kolff also let the officials hear it on the court; he picked up 32 technical fouls during the 1968-69 season – “Rimming the NBA,” *The Sporting News*, 5/17/1969, p46 by Phil Elderkin.
- 278 *freely said as much Taylor, The Rivalry*, p319.
- 278 *“He made it clear” “The Hawk Gets No Headlines, But He’s Lakers’ Tough Bird,” The Sporting News*, 5/4/1968, p42.
- 279 *block shots like Russell did Taylor, The Rivalry*, p322; Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p120.
- 279 *“What do you want me to do” Pluto, Tall Tales*, p355.
- 279 *death of his father Whalen, Dynasty’s End*, p213; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p321.
- 279 *“Sure, we were winning” Pluto, Tall Tales*, p356. Van Breda Kolff had once said “All I care about it my family and the guys. You play the game, you have a few beers, and you go home, that’s it, that’s life.” Quoted in Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p316.
- 279 *eager to sow seeds Lazenby, The Lakers*, p170 – “I wonder if Jerry West and Elgin Baylor are going to be willing to be underlings to Wilt Chamberlain?” But Auerbach also made some public comments that indicated he thought the three would eventually adjust and play well together.
- 279 *Chamberlain clogged the lane “Ageless Elgin – Laker Meal Ticket,” The Sporting News*, 2/8/1969, p9 by Dan Hafner.
- 279 *smothering personality Whalen, Dynasty’s End*, p121.
- 279 *“I felt the deal” Salzberg, From Set Shot to Slam Dunk*, p249-250.
- 280 *Keith Erickson The Sporting News*, 10/12/1968, p47.

- 280 *Rodgers was a better fit* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p320-321.
- 280 *Counts helped the Lakers* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p331.
- 280 *"I've seen Wilt play"* "Now Frustrated Lakers Battle an Old Nemesis," *The Sporting News*, 5/3/1969, p47-48 by Mal Florence. Baylor averaged 12.2 points in the first ten playoff games, but scored twelve points (on six of seven shooting) in the fourth quarter of game five against Atlanta while West was out with a migraine headache.
- 280 *West was out of the lineup* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p163; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p330.
- 280 *twenty minute profanity-laced tirade* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p178.
- 280 *"I'd rather it be over Boston"* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p213.
- 280 *"dissolve"* "Celtics Strut Again Behind Big Bill" *The Sporting News*, 5/18/1968, p41. After the Lakers loss to the Celtics in the 1968 Finals, West was quoted as saying "But then suddenly you look up at the clock and there is no time left. A whole season dissolves right in front of you."
- 280 *"If we don't beat"* "Now Frustrated Lakers Battle an Old Nemesis," *The Sporting News*, 5/3/1969, p47-48 by Mal Florence.
- 280 *two-to-one favorites* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p336 says 9-to-5, but "Even Champ Celts Salute Loser West," *The Sporting News*, 5/17/1969 p47,50 by Mal Florence quotes the opening odds as 11-to-5.
- 281 *The series began* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p217 attendance; The crowd included two of the Celtics ballboys, Skip Welsh and Jim Jackson, who paid their own way to Los Angeles for the opening two games of the series. See "NBA Basketball," *The Sporting News*, 5/17/1969, p46 by Phil Elderkin.
- 281 *"fired up a little more"* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p111.
- 281 *his wife gave birth* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p339.
- 281 *the game was close throughout* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, 338-339; Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p217-218; Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p173-174.
- 281 *a pair of ten point leads* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p339-341.
- 281 *an early 11-2 lead* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p221.
- 281 *controversial ending* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p226.
- 282 *Chamberlain was unable* "Even Champ Celts Salute Loser West," *The Sporting News*, 5/17/1969, p47,50 by Mal Florence; Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p224.
- 282 *used at Ohio State* "The Last Drop in The Bucket," *Sports Illustrated*, 5/12/1969 by Frank Deford. When the Celtics practiced this play, K.C. Jones was on hand, helping out his former teammates, calling out the time remaining while they executed the play.
- 282 *"Sam Jones had already started"* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p111.
- 282 *Jones stumbled* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p224-225; Havlicek, *Hondo*, p111-112; Sullivan, *Picture History*, p81.
- 282 *"let it get away"* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p226.
- 282 *"It was the key play"* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p224. Bob Ryan put it more bluntly in Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p366 – "... they fouled the hell out of him..."
- 282 *Nelson and Chamberlain had collided* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p339; Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p220.
- 282 *poked in the eye* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p342.
- 283 *Erickson replaced him* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p226.
- 283 *even he knew* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p343; Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p227.
- 283 *a standing ovation* Whalen, *Dynasty's End*, p232-233.
- 283 *distracted by a sore eye* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p344.
- 283 *"was the most nervous"* Havlicek, *Hondo*, p113.

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- 283 *West ... Baylor* “The Last Drop in The Bucket,” *Sports Illustrated*, 5/12/1969 by Frank Deford.
- 283 “we definitely deserve to” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p234.
- 284 *three point favorites* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p346.
- 284 *carnival-like atmosphere* Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p174.
- 284 “It’s dumb” Freedman, *Dynasty*, p209.
- 284 “Most of the guys” Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p367. In a battle of dueling superstitions, Havlicek himself claimed to have only rubbed the stone once. The Celtics lost that game, so he never rubbed it again.
- 284 “a game whose complexion” “Celtics Conquer Lakers by 108 to 106 and Capture N.B.A. Crown,” *New York Times*, 5/6/1969.
- 284 “I knew some of them were tired” Havlicek, *Hondo*, p114.
- 285 *The strategy worked* Additional game details from Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, p234-235; Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p174-175.
- 286 *Counts and Egan replaced* The fourth quarter of game seven is included in its entirety in the *NBA Dynasty Series: Boston Celtics* DVD set. On the TV broadcast, when ABC’s Chris Schenkel initially saw Counts heading to the scoring table, he told viewers Counts was going in for Hawkins, and was surprised when he saw Chamberlain heading out of the game.
- 286 “I didn’t think” Russell, *Second Wind*, p169.
- 286 “We’re doing well enough without you” Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p175.
- 286 “I was just hoping” Sullivan, *Picture History*, p174.
- 287 *lit up his cigar* Plimpton, *George Plimpton on Sports*, p67. Plimpton was sitting next to Auerbach in the stands during the game.
- 287 *final block of Russell’s career* Russell played the final eight minutes of the game with five fouls. Russell did not score against Counts, but was able to grab two key rebounds without having to fight off Chamberlain. Counts finished with nine points and seven rebounds in twenty-one minutes, but the lingering question is, would Russell have challenged Chamberlain down the stretch and risked fouling out of the game?
- 287 “They can eat those balloons!” Cooke declined to follow Auerbach’s suggestion, and instead donated the balloons to a children’s hospital, see Lazenby, *The Lakers*, p176.

Epilogue – A New Ballgame

- 288 “comradeship” Whalen, *Dynasty’s End*, pxiii.
- 288 “Let’s face it” “Even Champ Celts Salute Loser West,” *The Sporting News*, 5/17/1969, p47,50 by Mal Florence for this and all other quotes in this paragraph. By the end of the month, Van Breda Kolff had left the Lakers through a “mutual agreement” with Cooke to coach the Detroit Pistons.
- 288 *returned hundreds of tickets* “The Last Drop In The Bucket,” *Sports Illustrated*, 5/12/1969 by Frank Deford puts the number at almost 1,000.
- 289 *celebratory hangovers* Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p353-354,308; Pluto, *Tall Tales*, p375; Plimpton, *George Plimpton on Sports*, p67. Plimpton saw Siegfried being brought to the plane in Los Angeles in a wheelchair “near comatose, head lolling.” As Plimpton recalled: “Three nuns were standing close by. ‘Look at that poor child,’ one of them said. I leaned in and said, ‘He is a member of the team that won the championship last night.’ She shook her head. ‘What a brutal game it must have been,’ she said.”

- 289 *30,000 people lined the route* “Sam Leaves Celtics in Hole,” *Boston Globe*, 5/8/1969, p51 by Jack Barry; Taylor, *The Rivalry*, p353. Globe places the starting point at the intersection of Charles and Boylston, which is the boundary between the Public Garden and the Common.
- 289 “*Hell, he is the Celtic tradition*” “Letter from the Publisher,” *Sports Illustrated*, 8/4/1969, by Garry Valk.
- 289 “*I want to tell you*” Russell, *Second Wind*, p169-170. In a statistical oddity, the Celtics winning percentage against the Royals during the Russell era was the same as their mark against the league as a whole – .705 regular season, .647 playoffs, see table in *Boston Globe* 5/8/1969.
- 289 “*This is nothing new*” “Russell Retiring? No, Says Auerbach,” *The Sporting News*, 6/28/1969, p50 by Phil Elderkin. Russell had bit parts in “Cowboy in Africa” and “It Takes a Thief”, but in his *Sports Illustrated* article, he made it clear that he was not considering a serious career in Hollywood. “I’m leaving in a few weeks to make a movie in Spain—it’s a western in which I’ve got a small part—and I expect to enjoy that, too. I may do some other film work with Jim Brown. But I can’t see acting as a career, even if it is fun, and my decision to explore other areas of the entertainment field will be a considered one.” “I’m Not Involved Anymore,” *Sports Illustrated*, 8/4/1969, by Bill Russell.
- 289 “*I suppose if I want it said right*” “Letter from the Publisher,” *Sports Illustrated*, 8/4/1969, by Garry Valk.
- 290 “*Believe me*” “I’m Not Involved Anymore,” *Sports Illustrated*, 8/4/1969, by Bill Russell.
- 290 “*I have not given up hope*” “Auerbach Hoping Pride Will Lure Russell Back,” *The Sporting News*, 8/16/1969, p55 by Phil Elderkin.
- 291 *assistant K.C. Jones Thomas, They Cleared The Lane*, p230-231.
- 291 *leadership of Oscar Robertson Pluto, Loose Balls*, p427-428.
- 291 *Chamberlain tested the ABA waters* Chamberlain then retired at the end of the season, never playing for San Diego. In an ironic twist, the man he replaced as coach – his former rival K.C. Jones, went on to coach the NBA’s Bullets into the Finals, and later won two championships as coach of the Celtics in the 1980s.
- 291 *a rough form of revenue sharing* “Top N.B.A. Stars Were Subsidized,” *New York Times*, 3/21/1976.
- 292 *both coaches in the Finals were black* For comparison, as of 2009, there have never been two black managers in the World Series, and Super Bowl XL, played in 2007, was the first to feature two black coaches, Tony Dungy of the Indianapolis Colts and Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears.
- 293 “*We felt it was a mistake when we lost*” Freedman, *Dynasty*, p191.

Appendix

- 294 NCAA Tournament boxscores taken from the *New York Times* and the ESPN NCAA Tournament Box Score Archive, San Francisco Dons: <http://espn.go.com/ncb/tournament/history?teamId=7275>. Olympics Gold Medal Game boxscore taken from *New York Times*. Boston Celtics boxscores taken from Woten, *Game 7* (for all Game 7’s) and cross-checked against Sullivan, *Picture History* and boxscores found in the *Boston Globe*. Game five Cincinnati boxscore taken from *New York Times* due to newspaper strike in Boston that prevented the local papers from publishing during the series. Notes under boxscores taken from various sources too numerous to list again here.

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- 316 In this chart, created by the author, Russell's 8-0 mark in the 1956 Olympics is used instead of the Celtics regular season record before his arrival in Boston on December 22, 1956 (Celtics were 16-8 at that point).
- 317 This chart is based on data collected from: Thomas, *The Cleared The Lane*, p251-255 (covers 1950-51 through the 1964-65 season, but I discovered some omissions); *Harvey Pollack Yearbook*; APBR Biographical Database from www.apbr.org (Association of Professional Basketball Research), Researched by John Grasso.
- 320 All MLB figures from *75 Years of National Baseball Broadcasts* by Doug Pappas, 1997. <http://roadsidephotos.sabr.org/baseball/index.htm>
- 320 All NFL figures from www.nfl.com unless noted. The merger of NFL and AFL led to: "Four-year television contracts, under which CBS would televise all NFC games and NBC all AFC games (except Monday night games) and the two would divide televising the Super Bowl and AFC-NFC Pro Bowl games, were announced, January 26," 1970.
- 320 *1954 NBA TV Pluto, Tall Tales*, p23.
- 320 *1955 and 1956 NFL TV Davis, Papa Bear*, p273-275. Commissioner Bert Bell negotiated the first CBS deal, and brought teams such as the Chicago Bears into the deal despite Bears owner George Halas having his own arrangement with ABC in 1955 (for \$100,000). But Bell was unable to convince the Browns, Colts and Steelers to abandon their local TV contracts. Also see Maraniss, *When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi*, p170-175.
- 320 *1959 NBA All-Star Game* "Rookie Baylor Only New Starter Picked for NBA Star Game," *The Sporting News*, 1/7/1959, sec2 pg8. The broadcast of the second half of the All-Star Game began at 10pm ET.
- 320 *1960 NBA TV NBC Television Ad, New York Times*, 6/14/1960, p59.
- 320 *1961 NBA TV NBC Television Ad, New York Times*, 10/5/1961, p74; "'Softy' Podoloff Slashes Fines of Fiery Coaches," *The Sporting News*, by Phil Elderkin 3/1/1961 Home team receives \$15,000 per regular season game, \$20,000 per playoff game.
- 320 *1962 NBA TV Pluto, Tall Tales*, p244.
- 320 *1964 NBA TV on Sports Network Inc.* "Knick-Bullet Contest on Jan. 2 Will Launch TV Season in NBA," *The Sporting News*, 10/19/1963 p42, also *The Sporting News* 1/18/1964. San Francisco and Baltimore did not have a local station on the network, which consisted of a mixture of CBS, NBC, and ABC affiliates. SNI was hardly a minor player in sports television, though it did not televise the World Series or NFL games. In "The Maitre D' of Sports TV," *Sports Illustrated*, 11/8/1965: "This year SNI has handled, for example, the NCAA basketball championship, the collegiate indoor track, swimming and diving, and ski championships, the national indoor tennis championship, pro basketball games and 90% of the major horse races run on the East Coast. It also scheduled 13 live telecasts of PGA golf tournaments and did all of the road games televised back home by the 20 major league baseball clubs."
- 321 *1965 NBA TV Taylor, The Rivalry*, p215; ABC Television Ad, *New York Times*, 1/10/1965, pS3. Chris Schenkel and Bob Cousy broadcast the games.
- 321 *1967 NBA TV Jack Twyman* replaced Bob Cousy as commentator, and the All-Star Game in San Francisco was not televised on ABC. See *The Sporting News*, 10/29/1966, p21 and *The Sporting News*, 1/14/1967 p23. All-Star Game was nationally broadcast on radio on the RKO General-Madison Square Garden Network, 11pm EST. Jerry Gross (Hawks announcer) and Bill Sharman (San Francisco coach) were the announcers.

- 321 *1969 NBA TV* “Time Out! NBA Fans, All-Stars Blow Stacks,” *The Sporting News*, 2/1/1969, by Alan Goldstein. National telecast of All-Star Game in Baltimore was interrupted by President Richard Nixon’s first State of the Union message. *The Sporting News*, 5/10/1969 p52 – ABC drew ratings of 8 for the NBA, compared to CBS’s 4.4 rating for its NHL telecasts.

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In the span of fifteen years, Bill Russell won two NCAA championships, an Olympic gold medal, and eleven NBA championships - and changed the game of basketball forever.

RISING ABOVE THE RIM is the story of how Russell and a group of other superstars - Chamberlain, Robertson, Baylor, West, and more - transformed basketball into a major league sport during a troubled and turbulent period in American history.