Checking out the defensive card

Should you penetrate or shoot the jumper in basketball?

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To shoot or not to shoot is not the question: it's whether to penetrate or take the jumper that most of us worry about. By noting a few basic features about the defense card and its structure, your knowledge and understanding of Strat-O-Matic Basketball might dramatically improve.

In order to keep things simple, let's assume we are dealing with a typical shooter that has 18 of his 36 shooting column chances (O, P and I) filled with positive resullts (X, F(2), or X+F(1)).

Imagine that this player is shooting against a typical defender (2-5, 11 O, P and I defense ratings), with a typical shot-blocker (1-10) playing inside defensively. What can we expect, versus the average defense card in the normal mode, to occur in the long run?

Outside, our typical shooter will get positive results .405 of the time. Penetrating, the percentage is .448, while inside it would be up to .462. Note that these percentages are for position shots only; the waters really get muddy when you start considering open shots, rebound shots, dazzlers and where the inside defensive man is located. To keep things simple, we will deal with only the standard position shots for now.

POWER OF 'POSITIVE' SHOOTING

First,, every shooting point above (or below) 18 results in a plus/minus of about 1.5 percent (to be technical, it's actually 1.39%). That is, a player with 20 positive results in a shooting column is two 1.39% 'steps' more likely to roll a successful result when shooting than an 18 shooter.

In other words, a 20 shooter will, other things being equal, roll a positive result 2.78% morre often than an 18 shooter.

Interestingly enough, defense ratings are tied into these same 1.39% 'steps.' Each defensive level will give a 2.78% better chance of stopping a shot than the next lower rating (i.e., two 'steps'). So, an 18 shooter versus a 2-5, 11 defender has a 2.78% better chance of getting a successful result than the same shooter versus a 2-4 defender, and so on.

As for blockers, each plus/minus of five in an inside block rating results in a single 'step' difference; a man shooting with a 1-15 blocker inside will connect on 1.39% (one 'step') less than against a 1-10 blocker.

BEST PERCENTAGE SHOT

To determine what is the best percentage shot in any given situation, simply add (or subtract) the 1.39% 'steps' involved to the base percentage for each particular shot. Using this formula, you'll be able to weigh the merits of good defenders and blockers when deciding how to shoot.

For example, let's say you have a shooter who is a 17 outside and 19 penetrating. He is defended by a 2-6, 10 (outside) and 2-4 (penetrating) defender, with a 1-20 blocker to deal with. Using the average of defense cards as our base, our shooter will get a positive result .419 of the time shooting outside (.405 outside base, minus one 'step,' plus two 'steps' for a net change of plus one), while his penetrating percentage would be .406 (.448 penetrating base, plus one 'step,' minus four 'steps').

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We have not dealt with the natural advantages of driving to the hoop (more fouls, three-point plays), nor with different modes or other complications present in the game. Nevertheless, knowing the basics about the structure of the game system should help you in making wiser choices when it comes to shot selection.