

76ers win NBA Great Teams replay

Basketball replays aren't as rare as finding a dinosaur's eggs in one's backyard - but they come close.

The Review, in other words, doesn't receive many Strat-O-Matic Basketball replays, especially those that are full-season in duration.

Filling the void somewhat was Kurt Smeby, the S-O-M activist from Las Vegas, NV, remembered for his Federal League activities, who conducted an NBA Great Teams replay of 30 games and playoffs.

A couple of the teams - 1981-82 Los Angeles Lakers and 1982-83 Philadelphia 76ers - were great, being NBA champions, but the others were contenders and cannon fodder teams. The two challengers were Boston (1981-82) and Milwaukee ('81-82), while Dallas ('81-82) and Houston ('82-83) were the soft touches that would boost everyone's averages.

Each team would play the other six times, three home and three away. "The home court winning percentage was .633 (57 of 90 games)," says Smeby. "So it was a vital factor - worth about nine points, I calculate."

The first four teams were tightly bunched, with Philadelphia edging out Los Angeles by a game to claim first place. Dallas and Houston won only 11 games out of 60, including splitting six games against each other.

PHILADELPHIA EDGES L.A. IN PLAYOFFS

Everybody was created equal for Smeby's playoffs, with Houston and Dallas also qualifying. Every series was a best-of-seven affair.

Boston made short work of Houston, winning four straight as Larry Bird, the leading scorer in the regular season with a 24.6 average, poured in 187 for a 46.8 average. Milwaukee ousted Dallas in five games, with Dallas managing one win (111-110) on Mark Aguirre's last-second tip-in. The Bucks bashed Dallas in one game, 143-100, as Marques Johnson scored 51 points.

L.A. cooled off Bird in the semifinals and squeezed past the Celtics 4-3, despite losing the first two games at home. In the showdown seventh game, Jamaal Wilkes racked up 30 points and Mark Landsberger grabbed 14 rebounds in a 132-124 win for the Lakers. Robert Parish did a yeoman job defending L.A.'s big man, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, holding him to 10.5 points and 6.5 rebounds per game.

Philadelphia had an easier time with Milwaukee, as the Buck series stopped after five games. Moses Malone dominated Bob Lanier in the middle and Bobby Jones shackled Milwaukee's Marques Johnson, holding him to only 27 points in the five games.

The championship series, matching two teams that had split, 3-3, in the regular season, was a thriller as two of the games went overtime and six of seven were decided by four points or less. In the final game it was Philadelphia 133, L.A. 132. But the Lakers had a great chance to pull out victory when, with no time left and trailing by a point, L.A.'s Landsberger had two free throws...and missed 'em both!

"The key was Malone," notes Smeby. "He rebounded so dynamically that the Lakers' fastbreak was unable to get the ball enough to run."

GUARDS WERE UNSUNG HEROES

Although the 76ers were again sparked by Malone and Julius Erving, Smeby points to the guard combination of Andrew Toney and Maurice Cheeks as also being invaluable. And he seconds the motion (of the guards' importance) when it comes to LA's tandem of Magic Johnson and Norm Nixon.

"Constant backcourt defense (steals) and passing skills (dazzlers) really ignite a team in S-O-M. This may be the most accurate of S-O-M's four games," concludes Smeby.

Standings and leaders are found on the next page:

<u>Standings</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>GB</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>PA</u>	
Philadelphia ('82-83)*	23	7	-	131.7	108.7	* Fastbreak attack
Los Angeles ('81-82)*	22	8	1	133.9	110.7	helped these two
Boston ('81-82)	18	12	5	123.6	112.5	teams, especially
Milwaukee ('82-83)	16	14	7	115.3	111.8	with 40 percent of
Dallas ('81-82)	6	24	17	101.5	132.5	games vs. Houston and
Houston ('82-83)	5	25	18	100.6	130.4	Dallas.

<u>Scoring</u>		<u>Rebounding</u>		<u>Assists</u>	
Bird BOS	24.6	Malone PHI	17.7	Johnson LA	13.5
Malone PHI	24.2	Bird BOS	14.5	Cheeks PHI	12.2
Moncrief MIL	22.2	Parish BOS	14.4	Nixon LA	10.7
Jabbar LA	20.0	Cooper DAL	14.0	Toney PHI	9.2
Erving PHI	19.6	Erving PHI	11.3	Archibald BOS	9.1

Co-MVP: Bird BOS & Malone PHI.
