

How important is home court?

How important is the home court in basketball?

Well, as far as Ed Caylor of Hampton, NH, is concerned, it's far too important in Strat-O-Matic's version of the hardwood game. "I have found it virtually impossible to win on the road," laments Caylor, who purchased S-O-M Basketball late last fall, played a number of practice games and then embarked on a replay of the Boston Celtics' championship season.

"The '83-84 Celtics were never once in an even close game at home with an 11-0 record (through 24 games), but were 4-9 on the road and just four points shy of actually being 1-12!" says Caylor.

Caylor admits that it is tough to win on the road in the NBA anyway, but adds that S-O-M's "home-court advantage" of eight points might be a little low.

Caylor kept statistics on all aspects of the game, used the advanced rules and also all rules clarifications that have been published in the Review.

He also found that left forwards frequently did not launch as many shots as real-life and the centers got off a few more attempts. "Most other stats were fairly close, with two or three exceptions (turnovers - down slightly; rebounds - up slightly; and run-and-gun teams not drawing as many fouls as in real-life)," concluded Caylor.

As far as statistics, they were extremely close as Larry Bird averaged 23 points (compared to 24.2 in real-life), shot .511 from the field (.492) and grabbed 12.6 rebounds (12.6 exactly).

Robert Parish clicked for 19.7 points (19.0), 16.8 rebounds (14.3) and blocked an average of 2.1 shots (1.9). Kevin McHale, the third member of Boston's inside triumvirate, averaged 16.3 points (18.4), 10.2 rebounds (11.4) and blocked 2.3 shots (2.3 on the nose).

Parish dropped in shots at a 53.3 percent clip (54.6) and McHale at 58.8 (55.6). Dennis Johnson's numbers were 15 points (13.2) and 2.1 steals (1.7) while Gerald Henderson averaged 13.6 points (11.6) and 2.8 steals (2.7).

Caylor adhered to the number of minutes played for each player.

CELTICS MAY NOT BE 'THE GREATEST'

Caylor's brief replay and the replay of the championship series by Review co-editor Del Newell (found in this issue), point up that perhaps the Boston Celtics are not as good on paper as in real-life.

The Celtics won only one game in five of the championship series against Los Angeles - and that was at L.A. They lost three times on the home court and never beat the Lakers once with the 'advantage.'

Boston it seems, was snake-bitten in the final crucial minutes. One game it was turnovers...the next it was missed shots. And Magic Johnson throwing those "dazzler" passes, especially in the clutch, didn't help, either.

In the turnover department, Boston coughed up the ball an average of 16.8 times per game and L.A. only 14.6. Boston's high was 20 in game three, while the Lakers' three times committed 16 turnovers.

Boston lost the battle of the boards (as pointed out in the replay story) by a 279-257 margin, with L.A. outrebounding it in three games. Game one was owned by L.A. as far as the boards, 65-47, while Boston's best effort was in game four - the only game the Celtics won - as it ruled 68-52.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's consistent scoring was another factor in the playoffs, as Parish averaged only 15.6 points compared to Mr. Sky Hook's 22.6. Parish did average 14.6 rebounds, but too many times shots by Jabbar needed no rebounding.