

Realism! That's S-O-M Basketball

Dawkins' dunk at buzzer wins 129-127 thriller

For those of you who ordered the new hockey cards, and were frustrated by the long delay in their arrival, Strat-O-Matic profusely apologizes. An apology, in fact, was contained in the new hockey card set.

The main reason for the delay was the development and testing of the revised basketball game. A last-minute change in the basic game,

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for example, created three extra weeks worth of work and completely threw the deadline timetable off.

But when it comes to offering apologies, S-O-M certainly doesn't have to regarding the new basketball game. It is, without a doubt, the closest thing to real-life without actually performing on the hardwood.

Review co-editor Del Newell played a game with the Boston Celtics and Houston Rockets, which was duly reported in the November Review. That was a race to beat a deadline, however, and the game wasn't given a true test--mainly because action cards and dice were handled with one hand and the instruction was held in the other.

The next test of the game was when Del Newell took the Philadelphia 76ers and played the Los Angeles Lakers, guided by longtime S-O-M Basketball buff Jeff Kik. Although the time needed to play the game, replete with statistics of almost every kind, still hovered around 1:40, the replay captured every facet of real-life basketball.

Magic Johnson and Norm Nixon were super passers, particularly the Magicman. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, however, was somewhat neutralized by the aggressive play of Darryl Dawkins, and the Lakers sorely missed a top-flight rebounder on the front line to go with Kareem.

The Dr., Julius Erving, operated on the Laker defense throughout, scoring a game-high 37 points, including 25 in the first half alone. He also had a game-high 13 rebounds. Dawkins came through with a slam-dunk at the buzzer to pull out a wild 129-127 victory.

The game had all the dips and rises of an NBA roller-coaster. First, L.A. roared out to a 12-point lead in the first half. Later, Philly caught the Lakers and then passed 'em up, building as much as an 18-point lead at the outset of the fourth quarter.

L.A. came back to tie it, outscoring the 76ers 45-30 in a frenzied fourth quarter as Jabbar had 11 points, only to have "Chocolate Thunder" end it dramatically.

"There's no comparison with this game and the old one," marveled Kik. "The fast-break, pressing, assists and the changes on defense make this game so much more realistic. And it flows just like real basketball, with the pulling of the action cards and the continuous action."

HOW TO CUT DOWN TIME

Making substitutions still took the most time as far as detracting from actually playing the game. The instruction booklet, however, was consulted infrequently, and the questions about the rules were very few.

Subbing quicker would be one way to speed up play. Another would be to limit the number of stats kept when first learning the game. S-O-M feels that, after a "break-in" period, the advanced game can be played in an hour to an hour and 15 minutes. The basic game was once played in 34 minutes during the testing period, but S-O-M admits that was exceptional.

Now, and for the curious, here is a box score on the Philadelphia-Los Angeles thriller:

LOS ANGELES	FGA-FGM	FTA-FTM	TP	PF	REB	LOS ANGELES	34	29	19	45--127			
Wilkes	22 10	2 2	22	5	3	PHILADELPHIA	30	31	36	30--129			
Carter	2 1	0 0	2	0	0								
Chones	3 1	0 0	2	1	5	PHILADELPHIA	FGA-FGM	FT-FT	TP	P	REB		
Lansberger	7 0	0 0	0	2	6	Erving	26	16	6	5	37	2	13
Jabbar	17 7	8 7	21	0	12	Mix	4	2	2	2	6	1	2
Brewer	0 0	0 0	0	1	0	C.Jones	10	4	0	0	8	2	10
N.Nixon	21 15	2 1	31	4	6	B.Jones	12	4	0	0	8	1	8
Jordan	12 7	0 0	15	4	2	Dawkins	11	9	2	1	19	3	12
E.Johnson	18 12	6 6	30	6	9	Cureton	1	0	3	2	2	0	0
Cooper	7 2	0 0	4	2	0	L.Hollins	6	2	2	2	6	3	3
TOTALS	109 55	16 16	127	25	43	Toney	12	8	6	5	21	2	2
Turnovers:	LA - 13;	Philly - 23.				Cheeks	10	5	3	4	14	3	2
Blocks: LA - Jabbar 3, Chones 2,						Richardson	7	4	0	0	8	0	2
M.Johnson 1; Philly - B.Jones 2,						TOTALS	99	54	26	21	129	17	58
Erving 1, C. Jones 1, Dawkins 1.													

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