

# 1975-76 Celtics are 'boys of winter'

It was never known whether or not the dice rolled by Tom Nahigian and Phil Meade, both of Arlington, MA, had a partisan geographical lie to them, but it was a fact that when the duo pitted basketball's best against each other it was the 1975-76 Boston Celtics who emerged the greatest of them all.

The championship series, in fact, matched East vs. West, with the Celtics tangling with the Bill Walton-led Portland Trail Blazers of 1976-77. The best-of-seven finale went six games, with Boston finishing off Portland with a 108-91 rout as six players scored in double figures. Earlier, Portland won game No. 1, 105-99, as Walton had 21 points and 14 rebounds and Dave Cowens 26 tallies and 17 rebounds for the Celtics; Boston blitzed the Westerners in No. 2, 125-89, as Cowens had 26, John Havlicek 23 points; and the Celtics edged Portland in No. 3, 109-106, after trailing by six points entering the final quarter. Cowens again led the way with 22 points, 16 rebounds, while Maurice Lucas of the losers had a game-high 27 tallies.

The Celtics went up 3-1 by winning No. 4, 119-108, as Cowens (of course!) had 26 points, Jo Jo White 25, only to see Portland fire in an eye-popping 70 points in the first half of No. 5 en route to a 123-114 triumph that forced a sixth game.

Teams were matched according to their won-and-lost records and the

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# Whip 1976-77 Portland in best-teams finale

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advanced version of the game was used. Other teams involved were 1975-76 Phoenix, 1974-75 Washington, 1974-75 Golden State, 1976-77 Philadelphia, 1977-78 Seattle and 1977-78 Washington.

Walton, of course, led Portland into the finals, averaging 17.8 points, 10.8 rebounds for a team that had five players average 12 points or better. Cowens was MVP, however, after averaging 20.8 points, 16.6 rebounds.

Each series was a best-of-seven, and 1977-78 Washington almost upset the eventual champs, losing 4-3 after poor shooting by its guards Kevin Grevey (.320) and Tom Henderson (.273). The 1974-75 Bullets weren't as tough as in real-life, though, losing to Portland in seven tough games. Philly, after edging Seattle, 4-3, got blown out by Boston, 4-0, while Phoenix and Golden State, one-man teams basically, were overmatched.