

76ers breeze in basketball replay

Philadelphia fan relives championship season with S-O-M

Chuck Steinmetz is probably not eagerly awaiting the arrival of the new basketball cards. At least not like he was a year ago at this time.

Steinmetz is from Philadelphia and a long-time fan of the Philadelphia 76ers. Up until a year ago he was also a long-suffering fan as the 76ers frequently came close but the championship prize always eluded them.

That all changed in the 1982-83 season as the 76ers, with the addition of Moses Malone in the middle, won the title and blitzed Los Angeles in the Finals in four straight games.

"From the moment Mo Cheeks hit the floor after jamming the final points of the Philadelphia 76ers' 115-108 win over the Los Angeles Lakers May 31, 1983, I awaited the news that the new basketball cards were ready," relates Steinmetz of his anticipation.

The cards arrived and Steinmetz, plus a cousin, Bill Kirwin, began a replay of that memorable season. Kirwin played the first half of the season and Steinmetz the latter, with weekends reserved for head-to-head games. Also, all big games [those against LA, Boston, Milwaukee, etc.] were played head-to-head.

MALONE IS MVP

The 76ers compiled a 68-14 regular-season record, three games better than real-life. Some of the highlights included:

* Julius [Dr. J] Erving scoring 51 points and grabbing 14 rebounds against New Jersey.

* Malone pumping in 46 points and snaring 27 rebounds versus Milwaukee.

* The Dr. coming up with the triple against Golden State: 36 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists.

* Blowing out L.A., 139-107, in early December and giving a hint of what was to come in the playoffs. Clint Richardson had 19 points.

* And Malone winning MVP honors for the regular-season after averaging 25 points and 17.2 rebounds. Malone shot at a 47.2 percent clip from the field [671-1423], 75.5 from the line [683-905] and had a total of 1,391 rebounds, 578 off the offensive board. He also had 152 blocks, which was tops on the team, with Erving second with 131 and Bobby Jones having 106.

* Andrew Toney launched 131 of the 76ers' 171 three-point field goal attempts. He swished 36 downtown shots and went on to average 21.5 points. Erving also topped the 20-point mark, averaging 21.9.

* Maurice Cheeks doubled everyone else on the team as far as assists. He dished out 744 baskets, or an average of 9.1 per game.

* Both Cheeks and Bobby Jones shot over 50 percent from the floor, with Cheeks netting 442 of 859 shots [51.5] and Jones 298 of 571 [52.2]. Cheeks averaged 14 points and Jones 10.1.

* As a team the 76ers scored over 100 points in all but three games and held opponents under the century mark 18 times. Philly averaged 124.9 points, of which 31.6 percent, or 38.5 points, came via the fastbreak. The 76ers outscored opponents on the break, 38.5-24.3. The home record was 38-3 and the road 30-11.

PLAYOFFS ALSO A BREEZE

Just as in real-life, much to the pleasure of Steinmetz, the 76ers rolled through the playoffs, including sweeping the Lakers in four straight games in the finals.

The playoffs were replayed with the real-life teams, with the New York Knicks the first to fall, four games to one. [118-98, 127-92, 95-102, 116-110, 109-95].

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Cheeks had 13 assists in game two as four Knicks fouled out. Bernard King averaged 20.4 points for the losers, including scoring 28 in the Knicks' lone win in game three. Toney, who averaged a team-high 20 points for five games, pumped in 26 in game four. Philly had 38 fast-break points to New York's 2.

Milwaukee also suffered the same 4-1 fate in the second series. The first game set the tone for the series as Toney netted a three-point field goal at the buzzer of a 129-126 76er win. Toney and Malone each had 32 points, Sidney Moncrief 40 for the Bucks. Philly lost Erving to an injury in the third quarter (he will also miss games two and three), but Bobby Jones came off the bench to score 17.

Game two was a blowout, 130-91, as Malone had 36 points and 16 rebounds. Reggie Johnson, starting in place of the Dr., had 12 points. Milwaukee won game three, 112-87, as Moncrief scored 30, Junior Bridgman 20. Malone had 27 for 76ers.

With Erving back, Philly romped in game four, 124-114 (Erving: 21 points, three blocks; Malone: 32 points, 27 rebounds, 14 offensive). Moncrief, who averages 27 points for the series, led the Bucks with 34. Erving fires in 36 points and has 14 rebounds in the final, Toney chips in 30 points and Philly romps, 122-114. Alton Lister's seven blocks were only highlight for Milwaukee.

LAKERS HOPES DRY UP

The championship series was over quickly, at least as far as the Lakers, as Magic Johnson was injured in the first quarter and missed the rest of the playoffs.

Malone scored 25 points and grabbed a playoff-high 30 rebounds as Philly won opener, 118-108. Erving had 19 points, 9 rebounds (7 offensive) and seven blocks. L.A., surprisingly, led 83-78 going into the fourth quarter, only to be blitzed 40-25.

Toney tossed in 37 points, in only 29 minutes of playing time, and Erving added 23 as 76ers win game two, 115-104. Bob McAdoo had 27 for L.A., but centers Malone and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar neutralize each other offensively, with Kareem outscoring Moses 10-5. Malone won rebounding battle, though, 19-5.

Philly had too much firepower in game three as Malone scored 29, Erving 25 and Toney 19. James Worthy had 32, Jamal Wilkes 29 and Norm Nixon 17 assists for L.A., which fell this time 128-115. Nixon had redeemed himself after committing 11 turnovers in the third game.

Game four was the finale as Toney scored 33, in only 30 minutes, while the Sixers outpointed L.A. 36-20 in the decisive third quarter (20-0 fast breaks). Worthy had 36 points for the Lakers before fouling out. Toney averaged 28.6 points, Malone 19.3 rebounds in finals, while Worthy led L.A. in both categories (25.5 points/8.0 rebounds).

"Not only was the Sixers' replay enjoyable, it was also statistically accurate, which made it even more enjoyable to play and to relive Philadelphia's exciting and long-awaited rise to the top," concluded Steinmetz, who is probably not so anxious about the arrival of the new 1984-85 Strat-O-Matic Basketball cards.
