

# S-O-M Basketball Tourney Time

Bill Salloum of Saskatoon, Sask., Canada, wanted to find out the best and worst teams in the NBA for the 1972-73 season and conducted a Strat-O-Matic Basketball tournament to find the answers. What he did was to divide the teams up, playing a "Skid Team" tourney [comprised of the worst teams] and also a best team tourney. Both were single-elimination, except that in the "Skid" tourney the team that lost advanced--remember he was trying to find the worst team.

Here is the way the tourney progressed:

## SKID TEAM TOURNEY

K-C-Omaha 117, Houston 109 -- Nate Archibald's 35 points paced the Kings, who trailed 82-77 after three periods but took advantage of Rudy Tomjanovich's injury in the final quarter to outscore the Rockets, 40-27. Jack Marin had 21 points for Houston.

Seattle 105, Cleveland 89 -- Seattle outpointed Cavs 31-14 in last quarter to pull out win. Spencer Haywood had 17 of game-high 28 tallies in final period.

Buffalo 144, Portland 101 -- Randy Smith had 24 points, Elmore Smith, Bob McAdoo and Bob Kauffman 23 each to spark Buffalo. Geoff Petrie netted 29 for Portland.

Phoenix 111, Philadelphia 91 -- Another romp as Dick VanArsdale scored 24, Charlie Scott 22 and Neal Walk 20 for winners.

Houston 108, Cleveland 94 -- 28-of-36 free throw shooting by Houston was the key. Mike Newlin led the Rockets with 25 points, 13 in the second period, while Rudy Tomjanovich had 20. Cleveland advanced despite Austin Carr's 22 points.

Philadelphia 107, Portland 98 -- Biggest upset of tourney. Portland had 58-48 lead at the half and appeared victory-bound. Jeff Halliburton, who played only the second and final quarters, led the 76ers with 16 points and four others had 15 apiece. Sidney Wicks had 24 for Portland.

Portland 102, Cleveland 90 -- Cleveland "won out" by losing, being outpointed 31-19 in the fourth quarter after a 71-all stalemate after three periods. Portland dropped in 11 of 13 free throw chances in final 12 minutes. Petrie had 23 points, Wicks 22 for Portland, while Len Wilkens and John Johnson had 18 apiece for Cleveland.

## BEST TEAMS TOURNEY

Los Angeles 107, Golden State 84 -- A tougher game than score indicated, as L.A. outscored Golden State 32-18 in final quarter. Jerry West scored 12 of his 24 points in last period. Gail Goodrich added 20 points for L.A. and Jeff Mullins matched that for Golden State.

New York 106, Atlanta 90 -- Knicks coasted to easy win, despite losing Jerry Lucas and Willis Reed via injuries in second quarter. Walt Frazier paced the Knicks with 21 points and Pete Maravich had 17 for the Hawks.

Milwaukee 112, Chicago 105 -- Bucks had to rally to pull out thriller after trailing 66-60 at halftime. Milwaukee scored 39 in third quarter in comeback and took the lead for good with five minutes to go in game. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar led Bucks with 34, Bob Dandridge added 28 and Lucius Allen 22. Clifford Ray's, 24 fired the Bulls.

Boston 111, Baltimore 110 -- Baltimore rally fell short after it had cut heavily into 11-point Celtic lead after three periods. Elvin Hayes netted 24 for Baltimore, Mike Riordan and Archie Clark 22 each, while Jo Jo White canned 23, Dave Cowens 20 for Boston.

Los Angeles 117, New York 116 -- Game was close all the way, with Knicks up by three (57-54) at halftime and one after three quarters. Fouls dealt N.Y. death blow, as it was called for 26 compared to L.A.'s 17. Lakers outscored N.Y., 27-20, from free throw line. Wilt Chamberlain had 27 points, West 22, Jim McMillian 21 for L.A.; Earl Monroe 25, Frazier 19 for Knicks. It was Wilt's three-point [yes! he made a free throw] at the buzzer that won game. He also claimed 20 rebounds as 12 players cracked double figures scoring.

Boston 103, Milwaukee 98 -- Poor four shooting [18 of 30] hurt Milwaukee as it let 79-73 third-quarter lead slip away. Cowens pumped in 26 points for Boston and held Jabbar to but 17. Paul Silas chipped in 25 and Don Chaney 21 for Celtics. Oscar Robertson had 26, Dandridge 18 for Bucks.

Boston 92, Los Angeles 86 -- The showdown amounted to a slowdown as far as interest was concerned. Boston would move ahead by 10-15 points and then L.A. would cut it to six-eight. And then Boston would spurt again. McMillian kept the score close for the Lakers with 25 points, with Chamberlain adding 18 and West 17. John Havlicek broke out of a mild scoring slump by netting 22 for Boston and Cowens broke 20 for the third time, finishing with 21.

As you may have noticed (especially if you're from Michigan) the Detroit Pistons were not part of either tournament. Since the Pistons were the closest team to .500, and because Salloum didn't want to give anyone a bye, Detroit was held out and put in a round-robin series involving the two winners--Boston and Cleveland.

In the short series Cleveland rose up and redeemed itself for its earlier sorry showing. First the Cavs whecked Detroit in a stunner, 109-97, as Wilkens and Johnson scored 23 points apiece and Bob Lanier had 24 for Detroit. Then, in the second game, Cleveland just missed the biggest upset of all, losing 97-95 to Boston as Cowens sank a last-second shot. Cleveland was on top by four going into the final period and even led by four with five minutes left. Cowens netted a game-high 25 points, White had 23 and Chaney 22 for Boston, and Carr 22 for the Cavs.

The tourney came to an end with Detroit, as expected, falling to Boston, 108-93, despite Willie Norwood's 21 points in a super sub role for the Pistons. Norwood never missed a shot from the field [10]. Curtis Rowe chipped in 20 points for Detroit, but Cowens (who else!) poured in 31 for Boston and got 28 points worth of help from Chaney.

No doubt about it, Boston was the "best" team in Salloum's tourney. But who really was the "worst" is open to question.

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