

# Tips for Solo Basketball

Second of two parts

By Glenn Guzzo

Last month, we discussed how to organize your tabletop and how to streamline coaching decisions to slash the time it takes to play the advanced and super-advanced versions of Strat-O-Matic basketball. With experience and these additional tips on handling substitutions and scorekeeping, you *can* reduce your game time to one hour per game — and that's with complete stats.

## MANAGING PLAYING TIME

Nothing slows down SOM basketball more than player substitutions, because changes in lineups also require changes in defensive matchups, inside-outside players and such strategy as fastbreaks.

It stands to reason that the fewer lineup changes, the smoother your game will go. But if you care about realism at all, subs are important. So here is my technique, which some of you will recognize from the December 1991 STRAT FAN:

- Divide each quarter into two 6-minute intervals.
- Divide each player's playing time into 6-minute intervals.
- Make any remaining player minutes an even number by rounding *down* if, as usual, SOM provides more minutes at a position than necessary. Round *up* if the position lacks the necessary minutes.

Now, to save even more time each game, "automate" each team's substitutions before the season with a simple chart showing how playing time will be divided at each position for each quarter.

■ Starters who average 30 minutes or more often play the entire first quarter, the first interval of the third and finish the game.

■ The second quarter and the last interval of the third are prime time for subs.

## SCOREKEEPING

Swift stat-keeping is essential to reasonable playing time and to keep the game moving smoothly.

Many scorekeepers slow their game down by trying to keep running totals for each player in every stat category. It's nice to know how many blocks Hakeem Olajuwon has three minutes into the third quarter, but if that's not essential to your enjoyment of the game in progress, I suggest a quicker way that also will give your game a better flow:

- Lay out your scoresheet in such a way

		PTS/QTR:		25			
TIME	PF	UTAH	1	2	3	4	
6X-	II	Eaton	0				
			BTRR				
66-	I	K.Malone	21X120011				
			RRRB				
6X-	I	Corbin	020				
			R				
63-	I	J.Malone	002220				
			----				
6X-		Stockton	11030				
			ASRAAT				
X6-	I	Edwards	020				
			RR				
XX-		Benoit	----				
			----				
X6-	I	Brown	01X				
			RR				
X6-	I	Murdock	X10				
			AAST				
X3-	I	Rudd	----				
			TA				
XX-		Crowder	----				
			----				
XX-		Austin	----				
			----				
		PTS/QTR:		24			
TIME	PF	MIAMI	1	2	3	4	
66-	II	Seikaly	0021X2				
			RTRRTBR				
63-	I	Long	2000				
			RSTR				
63-		Rice	222030				
			STRR				
6X-	I	Edwards	00110				
			RTAS				
6X-	II	Smith	00X1				
			ATTAR				
X6-	I	Coles	20				
			SRAAT				
X6-		Shaw	000				
			RRST				
X3-	I	Burton	0210				
			RSTT				
XX-		Kessler	----				
			----				
X3-	I	Askins	0				
			RBR				
XX-		Ogg	----				
			----				
XX-		Bennett	----				
			----				

that you can list all players for both teams on the same side of the paper. Leave space for playing time and personal fouls to the left of each player's name and lots of room for each quarter to the right.

■ List the names consistently, so that you know instinctively where to look for each player. My technique is always to list the five starters at the top in this order: C, LF, RF, LG, RG, then the subs. This sounds like a small thing. But it will save you several minutes per

game.

■ All statistic-producing action is recorded in the spaces to the right. Here's how to do it in shorthand:

**Scoring.** It's as simple as 1-2-3. A 1 for each successful free throw, a 2 for a regular field goal, a 3 for a successful 3-pointer. End-of-quarter and end-of-game totals are as easy as simple addition.

**Shooting.** Missed field goals are 0. Missed

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free throws are X. If you want to track 3-pointer accuracy, a 0 with a slash (/) through it is fine.

**Rebounds.** An R will do it. If you want to distinguish between offensive rebounds and defensive rebounds, circle the R for offensive rebounds.

**Assists, Turnovers, Steals, Blocks.** The alphabet is best here: Simply record an A, T, S or B.

**Fouls.** Keep a separate column of running totals for these. You want to know at all times who is in foul trouble.

The use of both numbers and letters lets you separate scoring from other stats at a glance. (This works even better if you can arrange your scoresheet to allow two lines per player — the top line for shooting, the bottom line for the other stats.) A glance is all you'll need to get a very accurate picture of how active each player has been and what categories he is excelling in. Post-game totals are as simple as pre-school math.

**Running Score.** Because you'll want to know the current score at all times, keep the running score separate in a visual display as shown here.

To make sure there are no unpleasant surprises, at the end of each quarter make sure your scoresheet tallies match your running score.

RUNNING SCORE					
VISITING TEAM			HOME TEAM		
90	09		90	09	
80	08		80	08	
70	07		70	07	
60	06	Team	60	06	Team
50	05	Fouls	50	05	Fouls
40	04	5	40	04	5
30	03	4	30	03	4
20	02	3	20	02	3
10	01	2	10	01	2
00	00	1	00	00	1