

# Next: College Basketball

## *Also, Three Past Seasons for the Computer*

As speculated in STRAT FAN several months ago, Strat-O-Matic's next computer game will be college basketball, scheduled for release in September.

With different rules (40-minute game, longer shot clock, different foul system, etc.) and different game play options (the zone defenses outlawed in the NBA), this will be sold separately from SOM's pro basketball game, also scheduled for release in September.

The college game also will be computer-only, no cards. And SOM will start slowly, offering only the 64 teams from the 1995 NCAA tournament.

"It's a start," SOM creator Hal Richman said. "We should start with 64 teams. If it meets with success, it will then be expanded."

Whether expansion would mean full conferences or just more teams is undecided.

"We'll get a lot of direction from the people who play it," Richman said.

Pricing had not been determined at press time. Look for details in Strat-O-Matic's summer mailing on new football, basketball and hockey products.

However, while large increases in paper costs and postage will drive up prices by 5-6 percent this year for all card sets, SOM will price the college basketball game modestly, Richman said.

"Since we are borrowing a lot of programming from the pro game, we'll be able to offer the college game at a lower price than we would for a totally new game," Richman said. He also indicated that owners of the pro game would receive an unspecified price incentive to add college basketball to their repertoire.

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# College Hoops Come Next

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Both Richman and SOM computer programmer Bob Winberry were excited about the college game.

"It won't be like the other products on the market, which are just statistical replays," Richman promised. "We'll have all the strategy of the pro game, plus some new options with zone defenses."

Winberry said the zone defense will be the default defense, but Strat coaches will be able to choose among the match-up zone, 3-2 zones, 2-3 zones and man-to-man defenses.

"Defense in this game is dramatically different from the pro game," Winberry said. "The multiple options will allow you to attack specific areas of the opponent's offense. If you want to shut down outside shooting, for instance, you can go to a 3-2 zone."

Because of the zones, college offenses will only be able to set up one player inside (it's two in the pro game). The college game, with its readily makeable 3-pointers, is more of a perimeter game, after all.

Hence, there will be no double-teaming by the defense. You shouldn't need it.

"If there's a great scorer down low, you go with the zone, maybe a 2-3," Winberry said.

The game will offer a 64-team tournament mode, or leagues of up to 32 teams.

Since the game is still under development, there is no complete list of features. No word yet, for instance, on whether a draft module will be included in the first version of the college game.

## PRO PAST SEASONS

SOM's pro game will be updated to incorporate the new NBA rules (three foul shots on missed 3-pointers). But the big news is SOM's offer of three past-season disks (no cards):

n1976-77. The great Portland Trailblazers champs of Bill Walton and Maurice Lucas fame. Down 2-0 in the NBA finals to a Philadelphia 76ers powerhouse led by Julius Erving and George McGinnis, the Trailblazers stormed back to win the next four. Afterwards, the 76ers adopted a motto to their fans: "We owe you one."

This was also the season that the Denver Nuggets, Indiana Pacers, New York Nets and San Antonio Spurs — the lone ABA survivors — "merged" with the NBA. The collapse meant the NBA debuts of Erving, Lucas, Moses Malone, George Gervin, Bobby Jones, David Thompson, Dan Issel, Artis Gilmore and other exciting players.

Other '76-77 highlights: Pete Maravich of New Orleans won the scoring title (31.1 ppg, including 13 games of 40 points or more) ... Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (26.2 ppg, 13.3 rpg) led the Lakers to 53 wins ... Fine seasons from NBA greats Tiny Archibald, Elvin Hayes, Bob Lanier, Bob McAdoo, Earl Monroe, Calvin Murphy, Paul Westphal and Jo-Jo White, among others.

Like the previously released 1970-71 season disk, 1976-77 is a season never produced in the current card format (which debuted with the 1980-81 season). But, like 1970-71, it will be a computer product only.

n1980-81. The first SOM season in current card format. Although SOM has long sold out of its cards and this year's release will be on computer disk only, STRAT FAN has a limited supply of reprint card sets of the top eight teams from that season (\$10 for the set).

This season was notable for other debuts: The Dallas Mavericks, Robert Parish and rookie Kevin McHale as Celtics, 76ers rookie Andrew Toney and Nuggets rookie Kiki Vandeweghe.

Utah's Adrian Dantley won the scoring title (30.1) and Malone dominated with 27.8 ppg and a league-leading 14.8 rpg for Houston.

There were great teams, too. The Celtics (62-20) won the NBA title with Parish, McHale, Larry Bird and Tiny Archibald. But first, they had to rally from being down 3-games-to-1 in the semifinal against Philadelphia (62-20 with MVP Erving) to win games 5, 6 and 7 by 2 points, 2 points and 1 point.

n1983-84. A great seven-game final that matched Larry Bird and Magic Johnson for the first time in an NBA championship series ended in a Celtics title, foreshadowing a great era for the NBA.

Utah's Dantley (30.8 ppg) won the scoring title again, followed closely by Dallas' Mark Aguirre (29.5) and Denver's Vandeweghe (29.4). Gervin, Bernard King and Alex English each averaged better than 26 ppg. Rookie of the Year Ralph Sampson (21.1 ppg, 11.1 rpg) debuted in Houston.