

# Cut the Cards to Cut the Scoring

## Yes, NBA Scoring Trends Require Some Special Adjustments by SOM

By Chuck Barron

Tom Gantert's article about Strat basketball in the May STRAT FAN deserves a reply.

My own in-depth article on the subject is long and getting longer, but for now I'll offer just a suggestion and some test results.

I first programmed SOM Pro Basketball (the board game, obviously) back in 1988, on my 80286-based NEC APC IV. Nine years and several computers and programming languages later, it remains one of my favorite ongoing projects. To Tom Gantert and everyone else who has noted the excess of possessions, I offer the following adjustment (based on the results of many thousands of completed games): 55 action cards per pe-

riod. After shuffling, set aside the top five cards. (Overtime is 23 cards.)

Some current computer test results using, among other modifications, 55 action cards per period:

Year	POSS. PER 48	PTS. PER 48	FG ATT. per 48	FLATT per 48
91-92 NBA	115.4	906	86.7	26.5
91-92 SOM	113.6	902	87.6	21.3
94-95 NBA	110.1	914	80.8	26.9
94-95 SOM	111.2	914	85.5	20.8

POSS. PER 48 is estimated possessions (FG+FTA/2+TO) per 48 minutes. PTS. PER 48 is estimated points per 48 minutes. FG ATT. PER 48 is field-goal attempts per 48 minutes. FT. ATT. per 48 is free-throw attempts per 48 minutes.

Part of the excess of field goal attempts serves to make up for the deficiency in free throw attempts. (Strat Basketball has too many FGA per FTA.) Estimated possessions is the best way to analyze the game's pace and scoring.

As for the 1983-84 season, I can't say. I haven't bothered with it due to the old-style 3-point shot results. However, one of the first impressions I remember about playing the game back in the mid-1980s was that even then the scoring was too high.

I encourage anyone to respond to me directly, in order to get some "scholarly dialogue" on the subject going.

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# Correction

Chuck Barron sent the following note about an editing error in his playing tips from the June 4-Sport Special.

"I noticed two minor errors in the table in my article on page 22:

"1. The center column should be "points per estimated possession," not "estimated

points per 48 minutes."

"2. The formula for estimated possessions is "FGA + FTA/2 + TO," not "FG + FTA/2 + TO."

"Thanks for the per-48 minutes NBA stats.

"I buy every NBA statistical publication I can find each year, and I never find as good a summary table as yours."