

'70-71 on Disk, Not Cards

Flop Could Discourage Other Past Seasons

Strat-O-Matic will be shipping the 1970-71 basketball season on disk only, not on cards as previously advertised.

SOM's James Williams, who computes the basketball cards, and Bob Winberry, who does the disks, said SOM encountered a two-headed problem with the cards: The difficulty of translating incomplete NBA statistics to the card format and a lack of orders for the cards.

Had the stats (the NBA did not keep blocks, steals, turnovers and offensive rebounds, among other stats, then) translated better, SOM may have been willing to wait for a longer payback, Williams said.

Had orders been stronger, it may have justified the many hours of alterations to make the stats conform to the card formulas, he added.

Orders for the 1970-71 disks have been "reasonably strong," Winberry added, as have card and disk orders for the 1993-94 basketball season.

"So rather than a computer/cards issue, it seems to be a lack of interest in the 1970-71 season," Winberry said.

The 1970-71 set was SOM's first attempt to do a non-baseball past season. So this outcome could have a ripple affect as SOM considers whether to print past-season card sets for football and hockey.

"Based on this experience, I'd say we're much less interested in producing a past-season card set in any of the 'minor' sports," Winberry said.

"I'd always thought that a past season in any of the minor sports would sell, because of all the pent-up demand, but that hasn't been the

case."

SOM has already said it intends to produce past-season disks when it computerizes hockey, but probably wouldn't produce cards. STRAT FAN and SOM collaborated on a 1966-67 NHL set with STRAT FAN producing the cards from research by gamer Tim Comely. The ratings that research produced was used to produce the cards and to supply SOM with a disk down the road.

Similarly, STRAT FAN is now selling a 1959-60 hockey card set (available in November) that will provide SOM with that disk.

REFUNDS

If you are one of the few who ordered the 1970-71 card set, you will receive a refund from SOM. If you ordered other merchandise at the time, expect your refund to arrive in the package with your other merchandise.

1993-94 RATINGS

Ratings for every 1993-94 player who averaged at least 10 minutes of playing time per game are in this issue.

This is STRAT FAN's most extensive basketball ratings preview ever, with more players and more ratings (positions, blocks, rebounds and X-column defense). Most other ratings were not available at press time.

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Support Weak for Old Hoops Cards

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Here are a few oddities we noticed:

■ Philadelphia's Shawn Bradley not only looks weird, he has weird ratings. Bradley is one of only two men with 1-20 inside block ratings (Denver's Dikembe Mutombo is the other), but is a 0 rebounder, both offensively and defensively.

■ Bradley needs to learn more from teammate Moses Malone. Old Man Moses, the man who caused the NBA to record offensive rebounds as an official stat, is still a force on the offensive boards: 21 at Center and 30 at

Left Forward.

■ Four pure centers — they play no other positions — are also 0/0 rebounders: Indiana's Rik Smits, the Clippers' Elmore Spencer, Chicago's Bill Cartwright and Milwaukee's Mike Gminski

■ San Antonio's Dennis Rodman, he of the attention-getting hairdo, again has the most attention-getting rebound ratings: 29/85 at Right Forward, 21/50 at Left Forward and 12/30 at Center. But this time he is not rated at guard.

■ The toughest defender inside is Mu-

tombo, with a blank Inside X column and a 1-20 block. Next is Houston's Hakeem Olajuwon and Charlotte's Alonzo Mourning (blank and 1-18), San Antonio's David Robinson (blank and 1-16) and New York's Patrick Ewing and Orlando's Shaquille O'Neal (blank at 1-14).

■ The only defenders with a blank Outside X column are Rodman and Chicago's Scottie Pippen.

■ Worst X column belongs to Orlando's Scott Skiles.