

field goal attempts per game nba history

Understanding Field Goal Attempts Per Game in NBA History

Field goal attempts per game is a critical statistic in basketball that reflects a team's offensive strategy and efficiency. Over the years, the NBA has seen a transformation in playing styles, with some eras favoring a more aggressive offensive approach while others leaned towards defensive strategies. This article will delve into the history of field goal attempts per game in the NBA, exploring how it has evolved, its implications on gameplay, and notable players and teams that have shaped this statistic.

The Evolution of Field Goal Attempts in the NBA

The NBA was established in 1946, and since then, the game has undergone significant changes. The early years of the league were characterized by lower scoring and fewer field goal attempts. Players tended to focus on fundamental skills, and teams prioritized defense.

The Early Years (1946-1970)

In the early NBA years, the average number of field goal attempts per game was significantly lower than today. Factors contributing to this included:

- **Defensive Styles:** Teams often focused on defensive strategies that limited scoring opportunities.
- **Physical Play:** The game was more physical, which often led to fewer scoring chances.
- **Offensive Schemes:** Many teams employed slower-paced games that emphasized ball control over fast breaks.

During this period, the average number of field goal attempts per team per game was around 70, with teams often scoring in the 80s or low 90s.

Shifting Paradigms (1970-1990)

The 1970s and 1980s brought a shift in how the game was played. The introduction of the three-point line in 1979 also changed the offensive landscape significantly. Teams began to adopt faster-paced styles, leading to an increase in field goal attempts.

- Rise of the Fast Break: Teams like the Los Angeles Lakers, under coach Pat Riley, utilized the fast break to increase their scoring opportunities.
- Three-Point Revolution: The three-point line opened up new avenues for scoring, encouraging teams to take more shots from beyond the arc.

By the late 1980s, the average field goal attempts per game had risen to approximately 80, with higher-scoring games becoming more common.

The Modern Era (1990-Present)

The 1990s and 2000s witnessed further changes in the style of play, with the advent of the "small ball" strategy and increased reliance on perimeter shooting. The league saw an influx of talented shooters and playmakers, which continued to elevate the average number of field goal attempts.

- Small Ball Lineups: Teams began to favor smaller, faster players who could shoot from long distances.
- Analytics Revolution: The rise of analytics provided teams with better insights into shot selection, leading to a higher volume of attempts, particularly from three-point range.

Today, the average number of field goal attempts per game hovers around 85-90, with some teams exceeding 100 attempts in certain games.

Impact of Field Goal Attempts on Game Strategy

The number of field goal attempts a team takes per game can significantly impact its overall strategy and success. Here are some key considerations:

Offensive Efficiency

Higher field goal attempts can correlate with higher scoring, but it is essential to maintain shooting efficiency. Teams that take many shots but do not convert at a high rate may struggle to win games. Key metrics to consider include:

- Field Goal Percentage: The percentage of successful field goals can indicate a team's offensive effectiveness.
- Effective Field Goal Percentage (eFG%): This statistic accounts for the added value of three-point shots, providing a more nuanced view of shooting efficiency.

Game Tempo

The pace at which a team plays can dictate the number of field goal attempts. Teams that play at a faster pace tend to generate more attempts. Factors influencing game tempo include:

- Transition Opportunities: Teams that excel in transition can capitalize on fast breaks, leading to more shot attempts.
- Defensive Rebounds: Controlling the boards allows teams to push the pace, resulting in more offensive opportunities.

Player Roles and Shooting Styles

The roles of players also play a significant part in field goal attempts. Teams with star players who dominate the ball tend to have higher attempts. Moreover, the shooting style of a team, whether it favors inside scoring or perimeter shooting, can influence the number of attempts.

Notable Players and Teams in Field Goal Attempts History

Throughout NBA history, certain players and teams have made their mark in the realm of field goal attempts.

Notable Players

1. Kobe Bryant: Known for his scoring prowess, Bryant consistently ranked among the leaders in field goal attempts during his career. His aggressive scoring mentality often led to a high volume of shots.
2. Allen Iverson: As one of the most prolific scorers in NBA history, Iverson frequently topped the charts in field goal attempts, reflecting his role as the primary offensive option for his teams.
3. Stephen Curry: Often credited with revolutionizing the game with his shooting ability, Curry's attempts from beyond the arc have helped increase the overall field goal attempts in the league.

Notable Teams

- Golden State Warriors (2015-Present): Under coach Steve Kerr, the Warriors have embraced a fast-paced, high-volume shooting style, leading to record-setting field goal attempts and three-point shooting.

- Phoenix Suns (2004-2007): The "Seven Seconds or Less" Suns, led by coach Mike D'Antoni, were known for their up-tempo style, focusing on maximizing shot attempts and creating high-scoring games.
- Dallas Mavericks (2011): The Mavericks, led by Dirk Nowitzki, had a unique offensive strategy that emphasized spacing and three-point shooting, resulting in high field goal attempts.

The Future of Field Goal Attempts in the NBA

As the NBA continues to evolve, it is likely that field goal attempts per game will keep rising. The increasing emphasis on analytics, combined with the development of young, talented shooters, will shape the future landscape of the league.

Key trends to watch for include:

- Continued Emphasis on Three-Point Shooting: As teams recognize the value of three-point shots, we can expect an even higher volume of attempts from beyond the arc.
- Youth Development: Young players entering the league are more skilled in shooting from long range, which may further elevate the average field goal attempts.
- Strategic Innovations: Teams are continually looking for new strategies to maximize their scoring potential, which could lead to new records for field goal attempts.

Conclusion

Field goal attempts per game is a statistic that encapsulates the evolution of basketball in the NBA. From the low-scoring games of the past to the high-octane offenses of today, this metric reflects broader trends in the sport. As the league continues to innovate and adapt, field goal attempts will remain a vital aspect of the game, influencing strategies, player roles, and overall team success. Understanding this statistic provides a deeper insight into the dynamics of basketball, allowing fans and analysts alike to appreciate the intricacies of the game.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the record for the highest field goal attempts per game in NBA

history?

The record for the highest field goal attempts per game in NBA history is held by Wilt Chamberlain, who averaged 22.5 attempts during the 1961-62 season.

Which player currently holds the record for most field goal attempts per game in a single season?

As of the 2022-2023 NBA season, the player with the most field goal attempts per game in a single season is Russell Westbrook, who averaged 22.2 attempts during the 2016-17 season.

How has the average field goal attempts per game changed in the NBA over the decades?

Over the decades, average field goal attempts per game have generally increased, especially with the rise of the three-point shot, leading to a more perimeter-oriented style of play.

Which teams have historically averaged the highest field goal attempts per game?

Historically, teams like the Run TMC-era Golden State Warriors and the 1990s Denver Nuggets are known for their fast-paced play and high field goal attempts per game.

What impact do field goal attempts per game have on a team's offensive strategy?

Field goal attempts per game can indicate a team's offensive strategy; higher attempts often reflect a fast-paced, high-scoring approach, while lower attempts may suggest a more methodical, half-court style.

Are there any prominent players known for their high field goal attempts throughout their careers?

Yes, players like Kobe Bryant, Allen Iverson, and Michael Jordan are known for their high field goal attempts throughout their careers, often taking over 20 shots per game in their prime.

How do modern analytics influence field goal attempts per game in today's NBA?

Modern analytics have influenced field goal attempts by encouraging teams to prioritize three-point shots and efficient scoring opportunities, leading to an increase in overall attempts per game compared to previous eras.

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