

THE ABCs OF PPG

In the 2018–2019 season, LeBron James scored 2,251 points to James Harden's 2,191. But Harden was the NBA scoring champion for that season. How is that possible?

Here's the deal: Instead of yearly totals, the NBA uses per-game averages to determine the scoring leader. James played in 82 games, whereas Harden was only in 72, due to an injury. In part because he played in more games, James had more points overall. But Harden had an average of 30.4 points per game (ppg), beating out James, who averaged 27.5. How do the scorekeepers get these numbers?

Time for a calculator! They take the total number of points a player scored during a season and divide by the number of games played. The result is the average number of points a player scored in each of his or her games. That is how the NBA figures out its scoring champ. The same is true for all of the counting stats, from rebounds to blocks. It's what you average *per game* that really counts, not the total score for the season.



JAMES HARDEN

points
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games
=
average

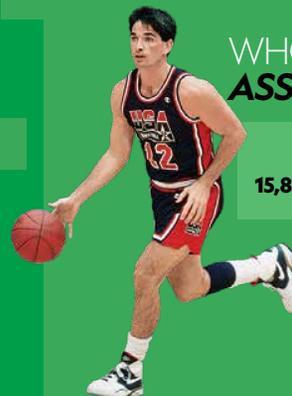
Let's do some math! Fire up your calculator and see if you can answer these questions (answers are on page 95):

WHO IS THE NBA'S ALL-TIME LEADER IN POINTS PER GAME?

MICHAEL JORDAN
32,292 points in 1,072 games

or

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR
38,387 points in 1,560 games

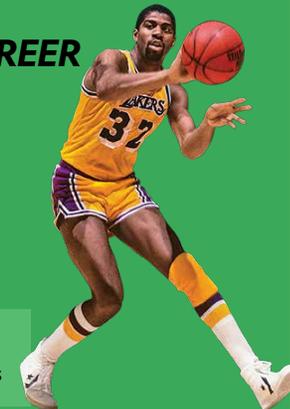


WHO HAD THE MOST CAREER ASSISTS PER GAME?

JOHN STOCKTON
15,806 assists in 1,504 games

or

MAGIC JOHNSON
10,141 assists in 906 games



WHO HAD THE HIGHEST BLOCKS-PER-GAME AVERAGE IN NBA HISTORY?

HAKHEEM "THE DREAM" OLAJUWON
3,830 blocks in 1,238 games

or

MARK EATON
3,064 blocks in 875 games

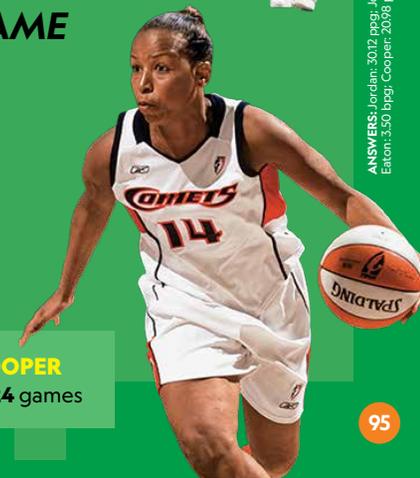


WHO IS NO. 1 IN POINTS-PER-GAME SCORING IN WNBA HISTORY?

DIANA TAURASI
8,472 points in 427 games

or

CYNTHIA COOPER
2,601 points in 124 games



ANSWERS: Jordan: 30.12 ppg; Johnson: 11.19 apg; Eaton: 3.50 bpg; Cooper: 20.98 ppg

TEST YOUR SMARTS!

Now that you understand how to calculate PPG (points per game), try out some of these word problems:

1/Penelope Peralta is a point guard for the Mars Mavericks. Over the 92 games she played this year, Penelope scored 1,152 points. Dolly Drimmer is a point guard for the Saturn Slayers. She played 80 games this year and scored 998 points. Who has the higher PPG?

2/Andre Johnston plays power forward for the Jupiter Jayhawks. He has blocked 908 times in 430 games. Sonny Parks, who plays small forward for the Pluto Pollywogs, has blocked 1,341 times during 600 games. Who has the higher blocks per game?

3/Marta Vasquez plays for the Neptune and has 13.5 PPG for this year after playing 94 games. How many points did she score? (Hint: For this one, you have to multiply the PPG by the number of games to get the amount of points Marta scored.)

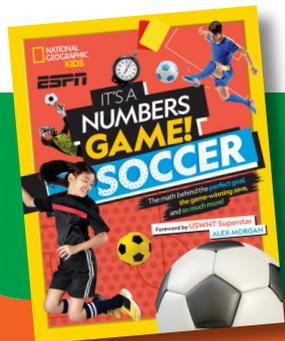
4/In 2017, Marta Vasquez had 480 blocks and a blocks per game of 4. How many games did Marta play in 2017? (Hint: For this, you need to divide the number of blocks with the number of blocks per game.)

5/Brittney Griner played 33 games in the 2018 season and scored 688 points. What is her PPG?

6/Bradley Beal has a 25.6 PPG for the 2018–2019 season and played 82 games. About how many points has he scored? Round to the nearest whole number.

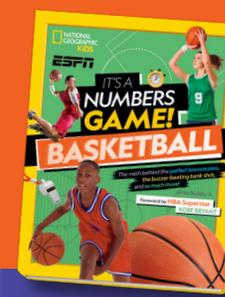
7/James Harden has played 826 games in his entire career. He has a PPG of 25.1 as of the end of the 2018-19 season. About how many points has he scored? Round down to the nearest whole number.

Answers: 1) Penelope has 12.52 PPG, and Dolly has 12.48 PPG. 2) Andre has 2.11 blocks per game and Sonny has 2.24 blocks per game. 3) Marta scored 1,269 points this year. 4) Marta played 120 games in 2017. 5) Her PPG is 20.84. 6) Bradley has 2,099 points. 7) James has 20,733 points.



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PERCENTAGE PARTICULARS

Another way to track stats is by using percentages. A percentage is a number that can reveal how often something happens. For example, if you take 10 shots and 5 of them go in, you made 50 percent of your shots. To get this number, you divide the portion of shots that were made by the whole number of attempts. So, 5 divided by 10 equals 0.5. Multiply that number by 100 and, ta-da, you get 50 percent.

More math? Yes, please! Let's see how you do in figuring out these NBA single-season records. We did the first one for you as the tip-off. Check your answers on the bottom right side of page 97.

BEST THREE-POINT SHOOTING PERCENTAGE (THE PERCENTAGE OF MADE SHOTS) AMONG ACTIVE NBA PLAYERS, AS OF 2018



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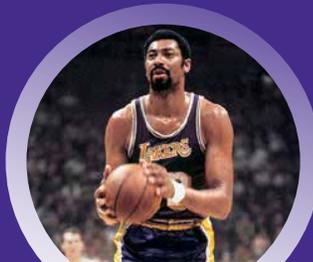
NBA STEPHEN CURRY
4,880 attempts, 2,129 made

$$\begin{array}{r} 2,129 \\ \div 4,880 \\ \hline 0.436 \\ \times 100 \\ \hline 43.6\% \end{array}$$

STAT STORY

Shaquille O'Neal was a superstar, clearly one of basketball's best ever players. He was a dominant force on the glass and could score a ton of points. But he had one downfall: He wasn't so good as a free-throw shooter. "The Diesel" tried everything, but he could never master this shot. He averaged only 52.7 percent on free throws and never did better than 62 percent in any one season.

BEST SHOOTING PERCENTAGE, SINGLE SEASON

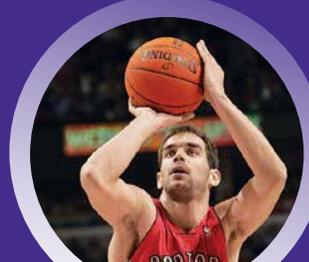


NBA WILT CHAMBERLAIN, 1972-73
586 attempts, 426 made



WNBA TAMIKA RAYMOND, 2003
193 attempts, 129 made

BEST FREE-THROW PERCENTAGE, SINGLE SEASON



NBA JOSE CALDERON, 2008-09
154 attempts, 151 made



WNBA BECKY HAMMON, 2014
35 attempts, 35 made

BEST THREE-POINT PERCENTAGE, SINGLE SEASON



NBA KYLE KORVER, 2009-10
110 attempts, 59 made



WNBA TEMEKA JOHNSON, 2012
64 attempts, 34 made



STEVE NASH

STAT STORY

The all-time best free-throw shooter was Steve Nash. The longtime guard made 90.4 out of every 100 free throws he shot. DeAndre Jordan is excellent at making field goals, sinking 67.3 percent of his shots as of 2018. A big reason for his success is that most of Jordan's shots are from very close to the basket. It's harder to miss a dunk than a shot from 30 feet (9.1 m) away!



DEANDRE JORDAN

TEST YOUR SMARTS!

Now that you understand how to calculate percentages, try out some of these word problems:

8/Franklyn Calderon plays for the Venus Velociraptors and this year has taken 152 shots and made 83 of them. Marlin Curry plays for the Uranus Underdogs and has taken 200 shots and made 130 of them. Who has the higher percentage? Round to the nearest tenth.

9/Wally Simpson plays for the Jupiter Jayhawks. He attempted 184 free-throws and made 170 of them. What is his shooting percentage?

10/The Venus Velociraptors, as a team, have 2,405 attempted free-throws during the last season. They made 1,999 of those shots. What is their overall shooting percentage?

11/Julia Kim has 35 free-throw attempts and made 33 of them. She also has 64 three-point attempts and 44 made. Tamika Roberts has 44 free-throw attempts and made 39 of them. She also has 102 three-point attempts and made 98 of them. Who has the higher overall shooting percentage? (Hint: Add up the attempts and add up the shots made to get the numbers you need to work with.)

12/LaToya Sanders attempted 59 free-throws in the 2018 season and made 51. What is her shooting percentage for free-throws in the 2018 season?

13/Nneka Ogwumike attempted 154 free-throws in the 2017 season and made 134 of them. What is her shooting percentage for free-throws in the 2017 season?

14/Chelsea Gray attempted 110 three-point shots and made 53 of them in the 2017 season. What is her shooting percentage for three-point shots in the 2017 season? Round to the nearest tenth.

Answers: 8) Franklyn has a 54.6% shooting percentage, and Marlin has a 65% shooting percentage. 9) Wally's shooting percentage is 92.39%, which you should round up to 92.4%. 10) The Venus Velociraptors' overall shooting percentage is 83.1%. 11) Tamika Roberts made 146 attempts and made 137 of them. That's a 93.8% shooting percentage. Julia's was 77.7%. 12) LaToya's shooting percentage is 86.4%. 13) Nneka's shooting percentage is 87%. 14) Chelsea's shooting percentage is 48.18%, so we round up to 48.2%.



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