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First Look: The 2004–05 NBA Schedule

By Dave Fitzpatrick

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Admit it, the first thing you did when the 2004–05 NBA schedule came out last week was check to see when Shaq and the Miami Heat would visit Kobe Bryant and the Lakers. It probably didn't take long to find that game, though, as we all know the NBA marketing machine would slate it for big time ratings on X–Mas day. Kobe and Shaq won't be the only hyped–up, intriguing match–up of the season, though, that's for sure. With such an active off–season, the 2004–05 season is sure to be loaded with must–see games. Here are some of the games I'm looking forward to...

November 2, 2004 – Opening night always brings some interesting games, but, with this year's season opening on the first Tuesday of November in an election year, I'm sure a lot of viewers are going to be watching something else. That's too bad because they'll be missing a solid lineup of 3 games to start the season. The new–look Rockets, headlined by Yao Ming (now in his third season) and last year's scoring champ and newest Houston arrival, Tracy McGrady, will head to Detroit to take on Rip Hamilton, Ben Wallace, and the defending champion Pistons, who will be receiving their rings. We'll also get to see the Kings with–or–without Peja Stojakovic take on the Nash–less Mavs. And, Kobe and the new–look Lakers host Denver.

November 4, 2004 – Francisco Elson apologized for making some derogatory comments about Kevin Garnett during the playoffs, but it's safe to say KG's probably got payback coming in the form of a huge game as his Wolves face off against the Nuggets. Also, it's worth noting the Charlotte Bobcats tip off their franchise history against the Washington Wizards.

November 16, 2004 – Just halfway into the first month of the season and Steve Nash will head back to his old stomping grounds to take on the Dallas Mavericks. The good money says Mavs owner Mark Cuban and Nash won't be bickering by then, and Nash should be well–received. Nash might wonder why he didn't get a better offer from Cuban, though, when he sees his former owner giving a million bucks away to a complete stranger sometime this fall on The Benefactor.

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December 14, 2004 – Knicks at Nets before the New Year looks pretty innocent on paper, but chances are Tim Thomas doesn't feel the same way. Thomas is still bitter over a flagrant foul by New Jersey's Jason Collins in last year's playoffs and has vowed revenge. Thomas never got a chance to deliver his payback in the playoffs and who knows if he'll cool down by the time this December meeting rolls around.

January 20, 2005 – Tracy McGrady heads back to Orlando to face his old team. If you're playing fantasy basketball and you can update your roster daily, I'd think about adding T–Mac right about this time of year. It wouldn't surprise anyone if he drops 40 or even 50+ against his former team. We'll also get a look at how Francis, Mobley, Dwight Howard and the young Magic are progressing.

February 13, 2005 – Kenyon Martin will lead the Nuggets against New Jersey. No bad blood, here, but it's always interesting to see a guy like K–Mart return to his old city. You've got to wonder if Jason Kidd will be still a New Jersey Net when this one rolls around.

March 15, 2005 – It's too bad we have to wait until the middle of March to see Carlos Boozer return to Cleveland, but better late than never, right? The city of Cleveland isn't going to forget. If Boozer were to wait five years before stepping foot in Gund Arena again, I'm willing to bet he'd get booed. It's going to be pretty ugly up there. Now, why isn't this game scheduled to be on national TV? To add to the interest factor, Lebron might be positioning the Cavs for a late–season playoff push.

April 20, 2005 – It's impossible to know exactly what the playoff situation is going to be late in the year, but Spurs at Wolves on the last day of the season sure does look interesting.

Dave Fitzpatrick is the owner of

NBA Basketball Betting

By Sebastien Veilleux

Do you want to know a little secret? NBA basketball betting can make you a lot of money. NBA basketball is a game that has helped turn sports betting losers into happy sports bettors with larger bankrolls. It's really no secret to winning sports bettors—NBA basketball is the easiest game to make money at. The game itself gives sports bettors plenty of opportunity and the ability to win right up until the end. Unlike Football, Baseball and Hockey, NBA basketball does not have limited scoring. In those other games you might see a handful—or less—of scoring executions per game. If your side gets behind too much, it's over no matter how much time is left. However, in NBA basketball, your team is usually in the game until the end.

Think about it for a moment. If you were to bet a –8 point favorite in football and the game was tied with 6 minutes left and the other team had the ball, would you have a realistic shot at winning? The answer is probably not. However, let's apply the same situation to an NBA basketball game and chop 4 minutes off the clock—so there's 2 minutes left. Would you have a realistic shot at covering the 8 points? You bet! Teams must shoot the ball within 24 seconds and each made basket is worth 2 or 3

points. You would only need 3–4 baskets to make the 8 points. Granted, the other team can score too, but in the NBA, two minutes at the end of a game is an eternity when the teams are close.

Let's look at another scenario. Imagine that it's half time in Basketball and Football, it's the 5th inning in Baseball and it's the 2nd period in hockey. Which of these four following scenarios have the best outcome?

1.The team you bet on in Baseball is down by 6 runs. 2.The team you bet on in Hockey is down by 3 goals. 3.The team you bet on in Football is down by 21 points. 4.The team you bet on in NBA Basketball is down by 22 points.

The answer, of course, is number four. Scores are hard to come by in the first three options. While comebacks happen sometimes, in the NBA, teams always go on runs. Each season is filled with games where a team was down 10,15, even 20 points and came back to win. There are many other games where the underdog was down by a lot and game back to lose by just a few points. With the NBA, you are almost always in the action right up to the end of the game. Can you say that about any other sport?

Finally, let's talk about NBA basketball totals. You might find that betting the total points in a game (under or over) is your thing and you would not be alone. There is a theory out there that those who can get a feel for totals betting are among the most successful sports bettors alive. You could debate that theory, but it does point out a very important idea. Totals betting in NBA basketball is full of winning opportunity and the sports books don't set them as well as the spread. Will this translate into more money in your pocket? That's for you to decide.

If you are not on fire right now for some NBA basketball action, check your pulse. NBA basketball presents one of the greatest opportunities open to sports bettors. Don't miss out of a great thing. Sports bettors and handicappers look forward to the NBA basketball season every year and now you know why.

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