

Abolishing the NBA Conferences

Professor Akram M. Almohalwas

Biyang Deng

Anqi Wang

Noor Eisa



Statistics

University of California, Los Angeles

US

August 4, 2017

Abstract

The National Basketball Association (NBA) playoffs are a tournament among 16 teams from East Conference and West Conference, whereby 8 teams from each of them. We claim that, since all NBA teams play against each other throughout the regular season, the seeding in the playoffs should be based on overall ranking rather than the conference ranking. The purpose of this study is to show how often the conference system has led to unfairness in the playoff seeding and propose a modified tournament system for NBA without sacrificing any games. Along the process, we ranked all teams from each year, irrespective of conference. Then we looked at the top 16 and counted how many of them were from each conference. Unfairness occurs when the seed 9 or below from one conference that has higher winning percentage than the seed 8 or above from the opposing conference. In the current playoff system, the former would not be allowed to participate in the playoffs despite having better winning records, while the latter would. In this paper, we are going to point out the unfairness of the NBA conference system and outline our visions for this issue.

Introduction

The NBA playoffs begin in late April each year, a total of sixteen teams consist of the top eight teams from the eastern conference and the top eight teams from the western conference ranked based on win-loss record, competing for the championship. However, we found out something that was dispiriting, out of 15 seasons, unfairness happened to some of teams in 12 seasons due to the conference system. They are going to miss the playoffs despite having superior win-loss records in the regular season. For instance, in season 2014-2015, the team Oklahoma City Thunder did really well in the regular season in which it had a record of 0.549 percentage of winning. However, it missed the playoffs whereas the team Boston Celtics and Brooklyn Nets got the last two playoff slots in the East who only had relative low winning percentage of 0.488 and 0.463 respectively. Given the limited amount of spots in the playoffs, we have to decide which team is more deserving of these spots. A deserving team should have the most convincing winning percentage, so we rearranged the ranking based on win-loss records for the past fifteen seasons. The 16 teams with best records were given spots in the playoffs each year. We discovered that about 5.833 percent of the spots were given to the undeserving teams.

Discussion



Figure 1: 2016-2017 NBA playoff schedule

The graph above shows the current NBA playoff schedule. The top eight teams in East and West conference are granted the spots to the playoff based on their win-loss records within their conference. The conference quarterfinals consist of four games in each conference; the strongest will face the weakest teams, with seeding matchup 1 vs. 8, 2 vs. 7, 3 vs. 6, and 4 vs. 5. The winners in the conference quarterfinals advance to the conference semifinals, the winner of 1-8 will be matched up with the winner of 4-5, and the winner of 3-6 will be matched up with the winner of 2-7. Finally, the two winners of conference semifinals advance to conference finals. Each conference consists its own conference quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals. The winner within each conference will finally be matched up and competing for the NBA championship.

Two years ago, NBA finally realized the uselessness of the division system. The reason of NBA abolished the division is to get rid of the unfairness caused by it. Before abolishing the division system, they guaranteed the top-four seeds of the playoff for those who won the champion in the four divisions. Unfairness was finally realized after the 2014-2015 season when the Portland Trail Blazers got the top-four seed and guaranteed to the playoff with a 0.622 winning-record whereas the San Antonio Spurs was seeded No.6 with a higher winning-percentage 0.671. The seed order decides which opponent they meet in the first round in playoff. Thus, San Antonio Spurs stopped in the first round by playing against a stronger team Clippers that was ranked No.3.

team	pct	conference	year	rank_by_conference	overall_rank	playoff_byConference	Deserved
Golden State Warriors	0.817	West	2014-2015	1	1	In playoff	Made and deserved playoff
Houston Rockets	0.683	West	2014-2015	2	3	In playoff	Made and deserved playoff
Los Angeles Clippers	0.683	West	2014-2015	3	4	In playoff	Made and deserved playoff
Portland Trail Blazers	0.622	West	2014-2015	4	8	In playoff	Made and deserved playoff
Memphis Grizzlies	0.671	West	2014-2015	5	5	In playoff	Made and deserved playoff
San Antonio Spurs	0.671	West	2014-2015	6	6	In playoff	Made and deserved playoff
Dallas Mavericks	0.610	West	2014-2015	7	10	In playoff	Made and deserved playoff

Figure 2: 2014-2015 Season Division unfairness

They created the new system without divisions. It helps to reward the teams based on how well they play in the regular season. They will no longer be unfairly treated due to being in a wrong division that consists of several stronger teams. However, the conference system in NBA still facing the same problem, some of the teams are going to miss the playoffs despite having superior win-loss records in the regular season because they are in the conference that having more strong teams. Though the division system has been abolished, a similar problem appears in the new system and the unfairness remains unsolved.

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference								Western Conference							
	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS		W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division								Midwest Division							
New Jersey Nets* (2)	47	35	.573	—	90.3	87.8	1.88	Minnesota Timberwolves* (1)	58	24	.707	—	94.5	89.1	5.86
Miami Heat* (4)	42	40	.512	5.0	90.3	89.7	-0.13	San Antonio Spurs* (3)	57	25	.695	1.0	91.5	84.3	7.51
New York Knicks* (7)	39	43	.476	8.0	92.0	93.5	-1.97	Dallas Mavericks* (5)	52	30	.634	6.0	105.2	100.8	4.86
Boston Celtics* (8)	36	46	.439	11.0	95.3	96.7	-1.99	Memphis Grizzlies* (6)	50	32	.610	8.0	96.7	94.3	2.95
Philadelphia 76ers (11)	33	49	.402	14.0	88.0	90.5	-2.95	Houston Rockets* (7)	45	37	.549	13.0	89.8	88.0	2.28
Washington Wizards (13)	25	57	.305	22.0	91.8	97.4	-6.12	Denver Nuggets* (8)	43	39	.524	15.0	97.2	96.1	1.65
Orlando Magic (15)	21	61	.256	26.0	94.0	101.1	-7.25	Utah Jazz (9)	42	40	.512	16.0	88.7	89.9	-0.53
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Indiana Pacers* (1)	61	21	.744	—	91.4	85.6	4.93	Los Angeles Lakers* (2)	56	26	.683	—	98.2	94.3	4.35
Detroit Pistons* (3)	54	28	.659	7.0	90.1	84.3	5.04	Sacramento Kings* (4)	55	27	.671	1.0	102.8	97.8	5.41
New Orleans Hornets* (5)	41	41	.500	20.0	91.8	91.9	-0.72	Portland Trail Blazers (10)	41	41	.500	15.0	90.7	92.0	-0.58
Milwaukee Bucks* (6)	41	41	.500	20.0	98.0	97.0	0.42	Golden State Warriors (11)	37	45	.451	19.0	93.3	94.0	-0.07
Cleveland Cavaliers (9)	35	47	.427	26.0	92.9	95.5	-3.07	Seattle SuperSonics (12)	37	45	.451	19.0	97.1	97.8	0.02
Toronto Raptors (10)	33	49	.402	28.0	85.4	88.5	-3.42	Phoenix Suns (13)	29	53	.354	27.0	94.2	97.9	-2.94
Atlanta Hawks (12)	28	54	.341	33.0	92.8	97.5	-5.00	Los Angeles Clippers (14)	28	54	.341	28.0	94.8	99.4	-3.74
Chicago Bulls (14)	23	59	.280	38.0	89.7	96.0	-6.69								

Figure 3: Extreme case in 2003-04 season that shows the conference was unfair [5]

According to the table above from basketball-reference website [5], the 2003-2004 season is an extreme case that shows the severe unfairness caused by the conference system. Based on the highlighted part in the table above, Miami Heat was seeded No.4 in the Eastern Conference with a 0.512 win-loss percentage by winning 42 out of 82 games. However, the seed 9 in the Western Conference, the Utah Jazz had the same win-loss percentage as the Miami Heat. The Miami Heat made the playoffs whereas the Utah Jazz did not make it despite it had the same record as the Miami Heat. In addition, though the seed 8 Boston Celtics in the Eastern Conference only had a poor winning percentage 0.439, it obtained the last spots in the playoff because it was the seed 8 in the Eastern Conference. However, it had an inferior record as compared to the seed 12 in the Western conference who had a 0.451 win-lose percentage. In this case, the team Utah Jazz, Portland Trail Blazers, Golden State Warriors, and Seattle Super Sonics had lost their chance to get into the playoffs because the Western

Conference consists of more strong teams. This representative case indicates how the conference system affects the seeding in the playoff. Therefore, a similar approach should be implemented: abolish the conference system as well.

Furthermore, we find out the number of teams that were undeserving in the playoffs each year. The table below illustrates the percentage of undeserving teams who made the playoffs in the past fifteen seasons when they were ranked by overall ranking irrespective of conference. 2006-2007, 2011-2012 and 2016-2017 seasons shown here are the perfectly fair seasons, in other words, despite the unfair conference system, all teams who made the playoffs deserve the spots because they have the best 16 win-loss records. Other than these three seasons, all of the seasons having at least one spot given to a team who is undeserving it. In average, there are 5.833% of playoff spots awarded to undeserving teams.

16 Teams In Playoff	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	
Made and deserved to be in playoff	15	14	15	15	16	14	15	15	15	16	15	15	15	15	16	0.942
Made but undeserving playoff	1	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0.058

Figure 4: Table on percentage of undeserving teams in playoffs

Regarding abolishing the conference system in NBA playoff, most of the controversies are about the increased travel time since all the teams need travel back and forth instead of playing within Eastern or Western that without much traveling. According to the data of teams' travel mile from the report by Leslie Josephs, we found out that even though some of the teams had more time spend on the road, they had better performance in games[6]. There is an article from The Stat Zone also provide statistical evidence to support that longer travel time will not impact on team performance [7]. In this article, the author shows the correlation plots between team's home and away performance (win-loss percentage) against miles traveled for all 30 teams in 2015-2016 season Team. Golden State Warriors and San Antonio Spurs were ranked the top 2 of the top 16 teams based on overall ranking while they had traveled more miles than most of other teams. Based on figure 5 and figure 6, it shows a positive relationship between the miles they traveled and the winning percentage regardless of playing at home or away. Therefore, we could conclude that there is no correlation between the time they spent on the road and their performance.

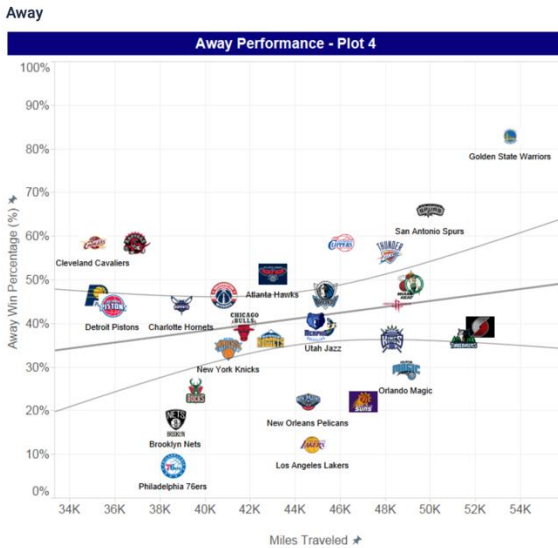


Figure 5: Away [7]

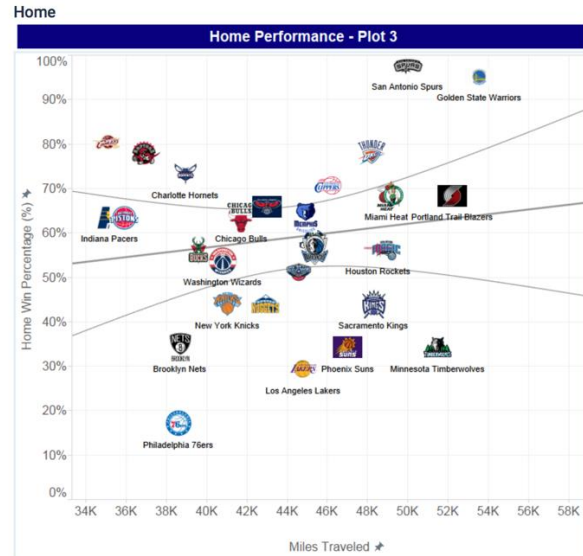


Figure 6: Home[7]

People tend to get tired when they took a long-range flight, however, the longest flight from east to west takes only about 5 hours. Moreover, many NBA players own their private jet, so the flights could be shortened to less than 5 hours. As the reporter Matt Moore from CBSSports.com mentioned, these private jet could provide more room for NBA players to rest or entertain with other teammates with minimum fatigue physically [8]. Hence, we can see that longer travel time will not affect the performance.

Our Visions

Adding Wild Cards that Could Be Used to Claim for the Last Spots for Either Conference

Since most of the time unfairness happened at the last spots of each conference, we could guarantee fourteen spots to the top seven teams in each conference, and keep the last two spots to be claimed by wild cards in either conference. Teams that are in the top sixteen by overall win-loss records irrespective of the conference but did not in the top seven within their conference will be given wild cards. For example, in the season of 2007-2008, the top seven teams from Eastern Conference are Boston Celtics, Detroit Pistons, Orlando Magic, Cleveland Cavaliers, Washington Wizards, Toronto Raptors and Philadelphia 76ers, and the top seven teams from Western Conference are Los Angeles Lakers, New Orleans Hornets, San Antonio Spurs, Houston Rockets, Phoenix Suns, Utah Jazz and Dallas Mavericks. Using the method that we suggested above, Denver Nuggets, Golden State Warriors and Portland Trail Blazers are the possible teams to get the wild cards spots since they are ranked in No.11, No.12 and No.16 respectively based on overall ranking but could not get into the top seven in their conference. However, there are only two wild cards available, we may select the two teams with better performance, which are Denver Nuggets and Golden State Warriors. Both of them are from Western Conference. Comparing with the actual schedule of 2007-2008

seasons, we find out that the Golden State Warriors did not get into the playoffs since they were No.9 in the Western conference with a 0.585 winning-percentage whereas the Atlanta Hawks made the playoffs with a bad winning-percentage 0.451 that could only be ranked No.19 based on overall ranking. Hence, this method will be very practical in solving the unfairness issue while keeping the conference system and playoff format as it is.

Abolishing the Conference System

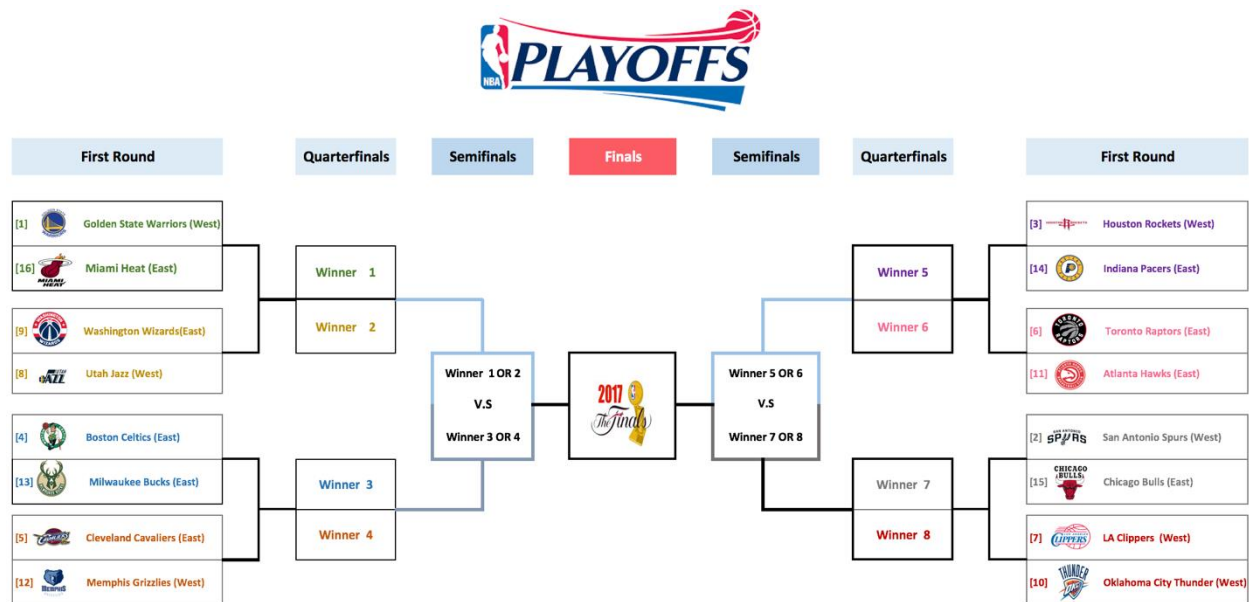


Figure 7: Schedule of 2016-2017 NBA playoff by overall rank

It will be fair and more reasonable to rank them based on the merits of how good they are. We can rank the teams based on their winning percentage instead of ranking them within the conference. In this case, we create a new system that is similar to the traditional one but without the conference. The strongest will face the weakest teams, the first round eight match-ups will be scheduled based on the seeding 1-16, 2-15, 3-14, 4-13, 5-12, 6-11, 7-10, and 8-9. Then the eight winners advance to the quarterfinals, the four winners advance to the semifinals, and finally, the two winners advance to the finals. However, it has the problem that some of the team losing the game for a certain position to avoid facing strongest team in quarterfinals, in our case, when they fight for the seeding position 9 and 10, they might deliberately lose for seed 10 to prevent facing seed 1 in the quarterfinals.

Since the NBA uses the best-of-seven elimination format, a team must win four games out of seven to win the series [4]. There are 15 brackets in total and multiplied by maximum 7 games each bracket, we get the theoretical maximum number of games in the playoff, which is 105 games. The new schedule irrespective of the conference has the same number of brackets in total and also implements the best-of-seven elimination format. Thus, the maximum number of games will also be 15 times 7 that are 105 games. This shows that we are not sacrificing any games by using our new schedule.

Borrowing Ideas from Tennis Single Elimination Tournament



Figure 8: New schedule based on tennis idea

In most tennis tournaments, the top 1 and 2 seeds are placed in separate brackets to prevent the strongest players facing each other too early, and then 3rd and 4th seeds are randomly assigned to different brackets, and so too are seeds 5 to seeds 8. By implementing this idea, we can first seed the teams by win-loss records from 1 through 16. In the first round, each of the top four seeds get their own quarter of the draw, with seed 1 at the top bracket, seed 2 at the bottom bracket, seed 3 and seed 4 at each middle bracket, this ensures that the top two teams meet in the final, the top four in the semis and the top eight in the quarters if they do not lose the games. Seeds 5-8 are then randomly drawn into those quarters with no opportunity to play with top 4 players until quarterfinals. Seeds 9-16 are then randomly drawn to face seeds 1-8. This seeding method effectively avoiding the stronger teams being scheduled to face each other in the early stage of the games which makes the game more competitive. It also prevents them deliberately lose the game for a certain seeding position to not facing seed 1 in the quarterfinals. The schedule using the tennis tournament idea also consists of 15 brackets. Therefore, its maximum number of games will also be 105. Again, we are losing any games by implementing our proposed idea.

Conclusion

In this paper, we pointed out the NBA conference system affects the playoff seeding and provided a few examples to prove the unfairness happened in most of the seasons, finally we outlined our visions for this issue. We found out 12 out of 15 seasons were unfair in which at least one of the team deserving advance to the playoff but could not make it due to the poor ranking in its conference. With our seeding methods: adding wild cards, abolishing the conference system and borrowing ideas from the tennis tournament, NBA will significantly

reduce the unfairness caused by their rules while not sacrificing any games. We created seeding schedules for each of our approaches to illustrate how we distribute the seeds in each bracket. Our methods indeed effectively prevent the stronger teams being scheduled to face each other in the early stage of the games which will make the games more competitive.

Reference

- [1]"2016-17 NBA Regular Season Conference Standings - National Basketball Association." ESPN. ESPN Internet Ventures, n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017.
<http://www.espn.com/nba/standings>.
- [2]"NBA playoffs." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 03 Aug. 2017. Web. 04 Aug. 2017.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NBA_playoffs.
- [3]Bois, Jon. "The NBA Playoffs Are Unfair, Just Like Every Other Postseason System." SBNation.com. SBNation.com, 12 Apr. 2011. Web. 04 Aug. 2017.
<https://www.sbnation.com/nba/2011/4/12/2096427/nba-playoffs-2011-teams>.
- [4]"What's the maximum number of games at the playoff phase in NBA?" Trivia - What's the maximum number of games at the playoff phase in NBA? - Sports Stack Exchange. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. <https://sports.stackexchange.com/questions/4727/whats-the-maximum-number-of-games-at-the-playoff-phase-in-nba>.
- [5]"2003-04 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2004.html.
- [6]Josephs, Leslie. "The Golden State Warriors are the NBA's champions of frequent-flyer miles, too." Quartz. Quartz, 06 June 2016. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. <https://qz.com/698136/the-golden-state-warriors-are-the-nba-champions-of-traveling-too/>.
- [7]Zone, The Stats. "Do teams that travel more in the NBA and NHL perform better?" The Stats Zone. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. <http://www.thestatszone.com/articles/does-travelling-effect-nba-and-nhl-teams-performances>.
- [8]Matt Moore @MattMooreCBS Dec 3, 2014 • 4 min read. "The good and bad of NBA road trips." CBSSports.com. N.p., 06 Apr. 2017. Web. 04 Aug. 2017.
<https://www.cbssports.com/nba/news/the-good-and-bad-of-nba-road-trips/>.
- [9]Casey, Brendan. "Why it's time for the NBA to abolish Conferences for playoff seeding." Believe The Hype. N.p., 06 July 2017. Web. 04 Aug. 2017.
<http://www.believethehype.com/2017/07/07/time-nba-abolish-conferences-playoff-seeding/>.
- [10]Matt Moore @MattMooreCBS Sep 9, 2015 • 6 min read. "5 Things to Know: NBA division winners not guaranteed playoff spot." CBSSports.com. N.p., 10 Sept. 2015. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. <<https://www.cbssports.com/nba/news/5-things-to-know-nba-division-winners-not-guaranteed-playoff-spot/>>.
- [11]"2015-16 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2016.html.
- [12]"2014-15 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2015.html.

- [13]"2013-14 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2014.html.
- [14]"2012-13 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2013.html.
- [15]"2010-11 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2011.html.
- [16]"2009-10 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2010.html.
- [17]"2008-09 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2009.html.
- [18]"2007-08 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2008.html.
- [19]"2005-06 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2006.html.
- [20]"2004-05 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2005.html.
- [21]"2002-03 NBA Season Summary." Basketball-Reference.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Aug. 2017. https://www.basketball-reference.com/leagues/NBA_2003.html.

Appendix

Conference Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS	Western Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Cleveland Cavaliers* (1)	57	25	.695	—	104.3	98.3	5.45	Golden State Warriors* (1)	73	9	.890	—	114.9	104.1	10.38
Toronto Raptors* (2)	56	26	.683	1.0	102.7	98.2	4.08	San Antonio Spurs* (2)	67	15	.817	6.0	103.5	92.9	10.28
Miami Heat* (3)	48	34	.585	9.0	100.0	98.4	1.50	Oklahoma City Thunder* (3)	55	27	.671	18.0	110.2	102.9	7.09
Atlanta Hawks* (4)	48	34	.585	9.0	102.8	99.2	3.49	Los Angeles Clippers* (4)	53	29	.646	20.0	104.5	100.2	4.13
Boston Celtics* (5)	48	34	.585	9.0	105.7	102.5	2.84	Portland Trail Blazers* (5)	44	38	.537	29.0	105.1	104.3	0.98
Charlotte Hornets* (6)	48	34	.585	9.0	103.4	100.7	2.36	Dallas Mavericks* (6)	42	40	.512	31.0	102.3	102.6	-0.02
Indiana Pacers* (7)	45	37	.549	12.0	102.2	100.5	1.62	Memphis Grizzlies* (7)	42	40	.512	31.0	99.1	101.3	-2.14
Detroit Pistons* (8)	44	38	.537	13.0	102.0	101.4	0.43	Houston Rockets* (8)	41	41	.500	32.0	106.5	106.4	0.34
Chicago Bulls (9)	42	40	.512	15.0	101.6	103.1	-1.46	Utah Jazz (9)	40	42	.488	33.0	97.7	95.9	1.84
Washington Wizards (10)	41	41	.500	16.0	104.1	104.6	-0.50	Sacramento Kings (10)	33	49	.402	40.0	106.6	109.1	-2.32
Orlando Magic (11)	35	47	.427	22.0	102.1	103.7	-1.68	Denver Nuggets (10)	33	49	.402	40.0	101.9	105.0	-2.81
Milwaukee Bucks (12)	33	49	.402	24.0	99.0	103.2	-3.98	New Orleans Pelicans (12)	30	52	.366	43.0	102.7	106.5	-3.56
New York Knicks (13)	32	50	.390	25.0	98.4	101.1	-2.74	Minnesota Timberwolves (13)	29	53	.354	44.0	102.4	106.0	-3.38
Brooklyn Nets (14)	21	61	.256	36.0	98.6	106.0	-7.12	Phoenix Suns (14)	23	59	.280	50.0	100.9	107.5	-6.32
Philadelphia 76ers (15)	10	72	.122	47.0	97.4	107.6	-9.92	Los Angeles Lakers (15)	17	65	.207	56.0	97.3	106.9	-8.92

Figure 9: Conference system Unfairness in 2015-16 Season [11]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS	Western Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division								Northwest Division							
Toronto Raptors* (4)	49	33	.598	—	104.0	100.9	2.45	Portland Trail Blazers* (4)	51	31	.622	—	102.8	98.6	4.41
Boston Celtics* (7)	40	42	.488	9.0	101.4	101.2	-0.40	Oklahoma City Thunder (9)	45	37	.549	6.0	104.0	101.8	2.47
Brooklyn Nets* (8)	38	44	.463	11.0	98.0	100.9	-3.13	Utah Jazz (11)	38	44	.463	13.0	95.1	94.9	0.71
Philadelphia 76ers (14)	18	64	.220	31.0	92.0	101.0	-9.04	Denver Nuggets (12)	30	52	.366	21.0	101.5	105.0	-3.07
New York Knicks (15)	17	65	.207	32.0	91.9	101.2	-9.50	Minnesota Timberwolves (15)	16	66	.195	35.0	97.8	106.5	-8.00
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Cleveland Cavaliers* (2)	53	29	.646	—	103.1	98.7	4.08	Golden State Warriors* (1)	67	15	.817	—	110.0	99.9	10.01
Chicago Bulls* (3)	50	32	.610	3.0	100.8	97.8	2.54	Los Angeles Clippers* (2)	56	26	.683	11.0	106.7	100.1	6.80
Milwaukee Bucks* (6)	41	41	.500	12.0	97.8	97.4	-0.09	Phoenix Suns (10)	39	43	.476	28.0	102.4	103.3	-0.38
Indiana Pacers (9)	38	44	.463	15.0	97.3	97.0	-0.23	Sacramento Kings (13)	29	53	.354	38.0	101.3	105.0	-3.07
Detroit Pistons (12)	32	50	.390	21.0	98.5	99.5	-1.39	Los Angeles Lakers (14)	21	61	.256	46.0	98.5	105.3	-6.17
Southeast Division								Southwest Division							
Atlanta Hawks* (1)	60	22	.732	—	102.5	97.1	4.75	Houston Rockets* (2)	56	26	.683	—	103.9	100.5	3.82
Washington Wizards* (5)	46	36	.561	14.0	98.5	97.8	0.17	San Antonio Spurs* (5)	55	27	.671	1.0	103.2	97.0	6.34
Miami Heat (10)	37	45	.451	23.0	94.7	97.3	-2.92	Memphis Grizzlies* (5)	55	27	.671	1.0	98.3	95.1	3.62
Charlotte Hornets (11)	33	49	.402	27.0	94.2	97.3	-3.44	Dallas Mavericks* (7)	50	32	.610	6.0	105.2	102.3	3.36
Orlando Magic (13)	25	57	.305	35.0	95.7	101.4	-5.87	New Orleans Pelicans* (8)	45	37	.549	11.0	99.4	98.6	1.13

Figure 10: Conference system Unfairness in 2014-15 Season [12]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division							
Toronto Raptors * (3)	48	34	.585	—	101.3	98.0	2.55
Brooklyn Nets * (5)	44	38	.537	4.0	98.5	99.5	-1.58
New York Knicks (9)	37	45	.451	11.0	98.6	99.4	-1.40
Boston Celtics (12)	25	57	.305	23.0	96.2	100.7	-4.97
Philadelphia 76ers (14)	19	63	.232	29.0	99.5	109.9	-10.66
Central Division							
Indiana Pacers * (1)	56	26	.683	—	96.7	92.3	3.63
Chicago Bulls * (3)	48	34	.585	8.0	93.7	91.8	1.20
Cleveland Cavaliers (10)	33	49	.402	23.0	98.2	101.5	-3.86
Detroit Pistons (11)	29	53	.354	27.0	101.0	104.7	-4.13
Milwaukee Bucks (15)	15	67	.183	41.0	95.5	103.7	-8.41
Southeast Division							
Miami Heat * (2)	54	28	.659	—	102.2	97.4	4.15
Washington Wizards * (5)	44	38	.537	10.0	100.7	99.4	0.48
Charlotte Bobcats * (7)	43	39	.524	11.0	96.9	97.1	-0.89
Atlanta Hawks * (8)	38	44	.463	16.0	101.0	101.5	-0.88
Orlando Magic (13)	23	59	.280	31.0	96.5	102.0	-5.88
Western Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Northwest Division							
Oklahoma City Thunder * (2)	59	23	.720	—	106.2	99.8	6.66
Portland Trail Blazers * (4)	54	28	.659	5.0	106.7	102.8	4.44
Minnesota Timberwolves (10)	40	42	.488	19.0	106.9	104.3	3.10
Denver Nuggets (11)	36	46	.439	23.0	104.4	106.5	-1.40
Utah Jazz (15)	25	57	.305	34.0	95.0	102.2	-6.27
Pacific Division							
Los Angeles Clippers * (3)	57	25	.695	—	107.9	101.0	7.27
Golden State Warriors * (6)	51	31	.622	6.0	104.3	99.5	5.15
Phoenix Suns (9)	48	34	.585	9.0	105.2	102.6	3.02
Sacramento Kings (13)	28	54	.341	29.0	100.5	103.4	-2.08
Los Angeles Lakers (14)	27	55	.329	30.0	103.0	109.2	-5.33
Southwest Division							
San Antonio Spurs * (1)	62	20	.756	—	105.4	97.6	8.00
Houston Rockets * (4)	54	28	.659	8.0	107.7	103.1	5.06
Memphis Grizzlies * (7)	50	32	.610	12.0	96.1	94.6	2.18
Dallas Mavericks * (8)	49	33	.598	13.0	104.8	102.4	2.91
New Orleans Pelicans (12)	34	48	.415	28.0	99.7	102.4	-1.98

Figure 11: Conference system Unfairness in 2013-14 Season [13]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division							
New York Knicks * (2)	54	28	.659	—	100.0	95.7	3.73
Brooklyn Nets * (4)	49	33	.598	5.0	96.9	95.1	1.25
Boston Celtics * (7)	41	40	.506	12.5	96.5	96.7	-0.62
Philadelphia 76ers (9)	34	48	.415	20.0	93.2	96.5	-3.51
Toronto Raptors (10)	34	48	.415	20.0	97.2	98.7	-1.96
Central Division							
Indiana Pacers * (3)	49	32	.605	—	94.7	90.7	3.34
Chicago Bulls * (5)	45	37	.549	4.5	93.2	92.9	-0.02
Milwaukee Bucks * (8)	38	44	.463	11.5	98.9	100.4	-1.83
Detroit Pistons (11)	29	53	.354	20.5	94.9	98.8	-4.33
Cleveland Cavaliers (13)	24	58	.293	25.5	96.5	101.2	-4.87
Southeast Division							
Miami Heat * (1)	66	16	.805	—	102.9	95.0	7.03
Atlanta Hawks * (6)	44	38	.537	22.0	98.0	97.5	-0.08
Washington Wizards (12)	29	53	.354	37.0	93.2	95.8	-2.78
Charlotte Bobcats (14)	21	61	.256	45.0	93.4	102.7	-9.29
Orlando Magic (15)	20	62	.244	46.0	94.1	101.1	-7.12
Western Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Northwest Division							
Oklahoma City Thunder * (1)	60	22	.732	—	105.7	96.5	9.15
Denver Nuggets * (3)	57	25	.695	3.0	106.1	101.1	5.37
Utah Jazz (9)	43	39	.524	17.0	98.0	98.1	0.30
Portland Trail Blazers (11)	33	49	.402	27.0	97.5	100.7	-2.53
Minnesota Timberwolves (12)	31	51	.378	29.0	95.7	98.1	-1.83
Pacific Division							
Los Angeles Clippers * (4)	56	26	.683	—	101.1	94.6	6.43
Golden State Warriors * (6)	47	35	.573	9.0	101.2	100.3	1.32
Los Angeles Lakers * (7)	45	37	.549	11.0	102.2	101.0	1.48
Sacramento Kings (13)	28	54	.341	28.0	100.2	105.1	-4.26
Phoenix Suns (15)	25	57	.305	31.0	95.2	101.6	-5.75
Southwest Division							
San Antonio Spurs * (2)	58	24	.707	—	103.0	96.6	6.67
Memphis Grizzlies * (5)	56	26	.683	2.0	93.4	89.3	4.32
Houston Rockets * (8)	45	37	.549	13.0	106.0	102.5	3.69
Dallas Mavericks (10)	41	41	.500	17.0	101.1	101.7	-0.24
New Orleans Hornets (14)	27	55	.329	31.0	94.1	97.9	-3.12

Figure 12: Conference system Unfairness in 2012-13 Season [14]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division							
Boston Celtics * (3)	56	26	.683	—	96.5	91.1	4.83
New York Knicks * (6)	42	40	.512	14.0	106.5	105.7	0.48
Philadelphia 76ers * (7)	41	41	.500	15.0	99.0	97.5	1.01
New Jersey Nets (12)	24	58	.293	32.0	94.2	100.4	-6.28
Toronto Raptors (14)	22	60	.268	34.0	99.1	105.4	-6.28
Central Division							
Chicago Bulls * (1)	62	20	.756	—	98.6	91.3	6.53
Indiana Pacers * (8)	37	45	.451	25.0	99.8	100.9	-1.38
Milwaukee Bucks (9)	35	47	.427	27.0	91.9	92.7	-1.02
Detroit Pistons (11)	30	52	.366	32.0	97.0	100.6	-3.78
Cleveland Cavaliers (15)	19	63	.232	43.0	95.5	104.5	-8.88
Southeast Division							
Miami Heat * (2)	58	24	.707	—	102.1	94.6	6.76
Orlando Magic * (4)	52	30	.634	6.0	99.2	93.7	4.92
Atlanta Hawks * (5)	44	38	.537	14.0	95.0	95.8	-1.10
Charlotte Bobcats (10)	34	48	.415	24.0	93.3	97.3	-4.08
Washington Wizards (13)	23	59	.280	35.0	97.3	104.7	-7.30
Western Conference	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Northwest Division							
Oklahoma City Thunder * (4)	55	27	.671	—	104.8	101.0	3.81
Denver Nuggets * (5)	50	32	.610	5.0	107.5	102.7	4.81
Portland Trail Blazers * (6)	48	34	.585	7.0	96.3	94.8	1.85
Utah Jazz (11)	39	43	.476	16.0	99.4	101.3	-1.44
Minnesota Timberwolves (15)	17	65	.207	38.0	101.1	107.7	-5.97
Pacific Division							
Los Angeles Lakers * (2)	57	25	.695	—	101.5	95.4	6.01
Phoenix Suns (10)	40	42	.488	17.0	105.0	105.9	-0.46
Golden State Warriors (12)	36	46	.439	21.0	103.4	105.7	-2.00
Los Angeles Clippers (13)	32	50	.390	25.0	98.6	101.8	-2.71
Sacramento Kings (14)	24	58	.293	33.0	99.4	104.7	-4.80
Southwest Division							
San Antonio Spurs * (1)	61	21	.744	—	103.7	98.0	5.86
Dallas Mavericks * (3)	57	25	.695	4.0	100.2	96.0	4.41
New Orleans Hornets * (7)	46	36	.561	15.0	94.9	94.0	1.28
Memphis Grizzlies * (8)	46	36	.561	15.0	99.9	97.6	2.55
Houston Rockets (9)	43	39	.524	18.0	105.9	103.7	2.37

Figure 13: Conference system Unfairness in 2010-11 Season[15]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference								Western Conference							
	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS		W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division								Northwest Division							
Boston Celtics* (4)	50	32	.610	—	99.2	95.6	3.37	Denver Nuggets* (4)	53	29	.646	—	106.5	102.4	4.15
Toronto Raptors (9)	40	42	.488	10.0	104.1	105.9	-1.83	Utah Jazz* (5)	53	29	.646	—	104.2	98.9	5.33
New York Knicks (11)	29	53	.354	21.0	102.1	105.9	-4.01	Portland Trail Blazers* (6)	50	32	.610	3.0	98.1	94.8	3.18
Philadelphia 76ers (13)	27	55	.329	23.0	97.7	101.6	-3.93	Oklahoma City Thunder* (8)	50	32	.610	3.0	101.5	98.0	3.55
New Jersey Nets (15)	12	70	.146	38.0	92.4	101.5	-8.93	Minnesota Timberwolves (15)	15	67	.183	38.0	98.2	107.8	-9.06
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Cleveland Cavaliers* (1)	61	21	.744	—	102.1	95.6	6.17	Los Angeles Lakers* (1)	57	25	.695	—	101.7	97.0	4.78
Milwaukee Bucks* (6)	46	36	.561	15.0	97.7	96.0	1.37	Phoenix Suns* (3)	54	28	.659	3.0	110.2	105.3	4.67
Chicago Bulls* (8)	41	41	.500	20.0	97.5	99.1	-1.64	Los Angeles Clippers (12)	29	53	.354	28.0	95.7	102.1	-6.01
Indiana Pacers (10)	32	50	.390	29.0	100.8	103.8	-3.11	Golden State Warriors (13)	26	56	.317	31.0	108.8	112.4	-3.28
Detroit Pistons (12)	27	55	.329	34.0	94.0	99.1	-5.02	Sacramento Kings (14)	25	57	.305	32.0	100.4	104.4	-4.06
Southeast Division								Southwest Division							
Orlando Magic* (2)	59	23	.720	—	102.8	95.3	7.12	Dallas Mavericks* (2)	55	27	.671	—	102.0	99.3	2.66
Atlanta Hawks* (3)	53	29	.646	6.0	101.7	97.0	4.44	San Antonio Spurs* (7)	50	32	.610	5.0	101.4	96.3	5.07
Miami Heat* (5)	47	35	.573	12.0	96.5	94.2	1.99	Houston Rockets (9)	42	40	.512	13.0	102.4	102.7	-0.02
Charlotte Bobcats* (7)	44	38	.537	15.0	95.3	93.8	1.30	Memphis Grizzlies (10)	40	42	.488	15.0	102.5	104.0	-1.39
Washington Wizards (14)	26	56	.317	33.0	96.2	101.0	-4.72	New Orleans Hornets (11)	37	45	.451	18.0	100.2	102.7	-2.27

Figure 14: Conference system Unfairness in 2009-10 Season [16]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference								Western Conference							
	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS		W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division								Northwest Division							
Boston Celtics* (2)	62	20	.756	—	100.9	93.4	7.44	Denver Nuggets* (2)	54	28	.659	—	104.3	100.9	3.13
Philadelphia 76ers* (6)	41	41	.500	21.0	97.4	97.3	0.16	Portland Trail Blazers* (4)	54	28	.659	—	99.4	94.1	5.00
New Jersey Nets (11)	34	48	.415	28.0	98.1	100.5	-2.31	Utah Jazz* (8)	48	34	.585	6.0	103.6	100.9	2.31
Toronto Raptors (13)	33	49	.402	29.0	99.0	101.9	-2.54	Minnesota Timberwolves (11)	24	58	.293	30.0	97.8	102.7	-4.74
New York Knicks (14)	32	50	.390	30.0	105.2	107.8	-2.33	Oklahoma City Thunder (13)	23	59	.280	31.0	97.0	103.1	-6.04
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Cleveland Cavaliers* (1)	66	16	.805	—	100.3	91.4	8.68	Los Angeles Lakers* (1)	65	17	.793	—	106.9	99.3	7.11
Chicago Bulls* (7)	41	41	.500	25.0	102.2	102.5	-0.16	Phoenix Suns (9)	46	36	.561	19.0	109.4	107.5	1.62
Detroit Pistons* (8)	39	43	.476	27.0	94.2	94.7	-0.36	Golden State Warriors (10)	29	53	.354	36.0	108.6	112.3	-3.80
Indiana Pacers (9)	36	46	.439	30.0	105.1	106.2	-0.76	Los Angeles Clippers (14)	19	63	.232	46.0	95.1	103.9	-8.47
Milwaukee Bucks (12)	34	48	.415	32.0	99.3	100.4	-0.88	Sacramento Kings (15)	17	65	.207	48.0	100.6	109.3	-8.60
Southeast Division								Southwest Division							
Orlando Magic* (3)	59	23	.720	—	101.0	94.4	6.48	San Antonio Spurs* (3)	54	28	.659	—	97.0	93.3	3.36
Atlanta Hawks* (4)	47	35	.573	12.0	98.1	96.5	1.70	Houston Rockets* (5)	53	29	.646	1.0	98.4	94.4	3.73
Miami Heat* (5)	43	39	.524	16.0	98.3	98.0	0.49	Dallas Mavericks* (6)	50	32	.610	4.0	101.7	99.8	1.68
Charlotte Bobcats (10)	35	47	.427	24.0	93.6	94.9	-1.20	New Orleans Hornets* (7)	49	33	.598	5.0	95.8	94.3	1.41
Washington Wizards (15)	19	63	.232	40.0	96.1	103.5	-6.98	Memphis Grizzlies (12)	24	58	.293	30.0	93.9	99.3	-5.23

Figure 15: Conference system Unfairness in 2008-09 Season [17]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference								Western Conference							
W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS		W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS	
Atlantic Division								Northwest Division							
Boston Celtics* (1)	66	16	.805	—	100.5	90.3	9.30	Utah Jazz* (4)	54	28	.659	—	106.2	99.3	6.86
Toronto Raptors* (6)	41	41	.500	25.0	100.2	97.3	2.47	Denver Nuggets* (8)	50	32	.610	4.0	110.7	107.0	3.74
Philadelphia 76ers* (7)	40	42	.488	26.0	96.6	96.2	0.19	Portland Trail Blazers (10)	41	41	.500	13.0	95.4	96.3	-0.52
New Jersey Nets (10)	34	48	.415	32.0	95.8	100.9	-5.15	Minnesota Timberwolves (14)	22	60	.268	32.0	95.6	102.4	-6.26
New York Knicks (14)	23	59	.280	43.0	96.9	103.5	-6.55	Seattle SuperSonics (15)	20	62	.244	34.0	97.5	106.3	-8.04
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Detroit Pistons* (2)	59	23	.720	—	97.5	90.1	6.67	Los Angeles Lakers* (1)	57	25	.695	—	108.6	101.3	7.34
Cleveland Cavaliers* (4)	45	37	.549	14.0	96.4	96.7	-0.53	Phoenix Suns* (6)	55	27	.671	2.0	110.1	105.0	5.14
Indiana Pacers (9)	36	46	.439	23.0	104.0	105.4	-1.87	Golden State Warriors (9)	48	34	.585	9.0	111.0	108.8	2.38
Chicago Bulls (11)	33	49	.402	26.0	97.3	100.4	-3.19	Sacramento Kings (11)	38	44	.463	19.0	102.5	104.8	-1.86
Milwaukee Bucks (13)	26	56	.317	33.0	97.0	103.9	-6.92	Los Angeles Clippers (12)	23	59	.280	34.0	93.8	101.1	-6.56
Southeast Division								Southwest Division							
Orlando Magic* (3)	52	30	.634	—	104.5	99.0	4.79	New Orleans Hornets* (2)	56	26	.683	—	100.9	95.6	5.46
Washington Wizards* (5)	43	39	.524	9.0	98.8	99.2	-0.61	San Antonio Spurs* (3)	56	26	.683	—	95.4	90.6	5.10
Atlanta Hawks* (8)	37	45	.451	15.0	98.2	100.0	-2.23	Houston Rockets* (5)	55	27	.671	1.0	96.7	92.0	4.83
Charlotte Bobcats (12)	32	50	.390	20.0	97.1	101.4	-4.49	Dallas Mavericks* (7)	51	31	.622	5.0	100.4	95.9	4.70
Miami Heat (15)	15	67	.183	37.0	91.4	100.0	-8.53	Memphis Grizzlies (13)	22	60	.268	34.0	100.7	106.9	-5.76

Figure 16: Conference system Unfairness in 2007-08 Season [18]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference								Western Conference							
W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS		W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS	
Atlantic Division								Northwest Division							
New Jersey Nets* (3)	49	33	.598	—	93.8	92.4	1.11	Denver Nuggets* (3)	44	38	.537	—	100.3	100.1	0.36
Philadelphia 76ers (9)	38	44	.463	11.0	99.4	101.3	-2.10	Utah Jazz (9)	41	41	.500	3.0	92.4	95.0	-2.49
Boston Celtics (11)	33	49	.402	16.0	98.0	99.5	-1.59	Seattle SuperSonics (11)	35	47	.427	9.0	102.6	105.6	-2.88
Toronto Raptors (12)	27	55	.329	22.0	101.1	104.0	-3.03	Minnesota Timberwolves (14)	33	49	.402	11.0	91.7	93.6	-1.75
New York Knicks (15)	23	59	.280	26.0	95.6	102.0	-6.30	Portland Trail Blazers (15)	21	61	.256	23.0	88.8	98.3	-8.91
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Detroit Pistons* (1)	64	18	.780	—	96.8	90.2	6.24	Phoenix Suns* (2)	54	28	.659	—	108.4	102.8	5.48
Cleveland Cavaliers* (4)	50	32	.610	14.0	97.6	95.4	2.17	Los Angeles Clippers* (6)	47	35	.573	7.0	97.2	95.6	1.75
Indiana Pacers* (6)	41	41	.500	23.0	93.9	92.0	1.62	Los Angeles Lakers* (7)	45	37	.549	9.0	99.4	96.9	2.53
Chicago Bulls* (7)	41	41	.500	23.0	97.8	97.2	0.51	Sacramento Kings* (8)	44	38	.537	10.0	98.9	97.3	1.61
Milwaukee Bucks* (8)	40	42	.488	24.0	97.8	98.8	-1.07	Golden State Warriors (13)	34	48	.415	20.0	98.5	99.8	-1.11
Southeast Division								Southwest Division							
Miami Heat* (2)	52	30	.634	—	99.9	96.0	3.59	San Antonio Spurs* (1)	63	19	.768	—	95.6	88.8	6.69
Washington Wizards* (5)	42	40	.512	10.0	101.7	99.8	1.57	Dallas Mavericks* (4)	60	22	.732	3.0	99.1	93.1	5.96
Orlando Magic (10)	36	46	.439	16.0	94.9	96.0	-1.26	Memphis Grizzlies* (5)	49	33	.598	14.0	92.2	88.5	3.74
Charlotte Bobcats (13)	26	56	.317	26.0	96.9	100.9	-3.90	New Orleans/Oklahoma City Hornets (10)	38	44	.463	25.0	92.8	95.6	-2.51
Atlanta Hawks (14)	26	56	.317	26.0	97.2	102.0	-4.69	Houston Rockets (12)	34	48	.415	29.0	90.1	91.7	-1.30

Figure 17: Conference system Unfairness in 2005-06 Season [19]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference								Western Conference							
W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS		W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS	
Atlantic Division								Northwest Division							
Boston Celtics* (3)	45	37	.549	—	101.3	100.4	0.35	Seattle SuperSonics* (3)	52	30	.634	—	98.9	96.6	2.59
Philadelphia 76ers* (7)	43	39	.524	2.0	99.1	99.9	-1.07	Denver Nuggets* (7)	49	33	.598	3.0	99.5	97.5	2.23
New Jersey Nets* (8)	42	40	.512	3.0	91.4	92.9	-1.82	Minnesota Timberwolves (9)	44	38	.537	8.0	96.8	95.3	1.73
Toronto Raptors (11)	33	49	.402	12.0	99.7	101.4	-1.81	Portland Trail Blazers (13)	27	55	.329	25.0	92.9	96.9	-3.45
New York Knicks (12)	33	49	.402	12.0	97.3	99.7	-2.72	Utah Jazz (14)	26	56	.317	26.0	93.0	97.3	-3.74
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Detroit Pistons* (2)	54	28	.659	—	93.3	89.5	3.31	Phoenix Suns* (1)	62	20	.756	—	110.4	103.3	7.08
Chicago Bulls* (4)	47	35	.573	7.0	94.5	93.4	0.65	Sacramento Kings* (6)	50	32	.610	12.0	103.7	101.6	2.56
Indiana Pacers* (6)	44	38	.537	10.0	93.0	92.2	0.49	Los Angeles Clippers (10)	37	45	.451	25.0	95.7	96.5	-0.47
Cleveland Cavaliers (9)	42	40	.512	12.0	96.5	95.7	0.27	Los Angeles Lakers (11)	34	48	.415	28.0	98.7	101.7	-2.32
Milwaukee Bucks (13)	30	52	.366	24.0	97.2	100.2	-3.09	Golden State Warriors (12)	34	48	.415	28.0	98.7	100.9	-1.74
Southeast Division								Southwest Division							
Miami Heat* (1)	59	23	.720	—	101.5	95.0	5.77	San Antonio Spurs* (2)	59	23	.720	—	96.2	88.4	7.84
Washington Wizards* (5)	45	37	.549	14.0	100.5	100.8	-0.71	Dallas Mavericks* (4)	58	24	.707	1.0	102.5	96.8	5.86
Orlando Magic (10)	36	46	.439	23.0	99.5	101.8	-2.52	Houston Rockets* (5)	51	31	.622	8.0	95.1	91.0	4.27
Charlotte Bobcats (14)	18	64	.220	41.0	94.3	100.2	-6.15	Memphis Grizzlies* (8)	45	37	.549	14.0	93.4	91.1	2.64
Atlanta Hawks (15)	13	69	.159	46.0	92.7	102.5	-9.62	New Orleans Hornets (15)	18	64	.220	41.0	88.4	95.5	-6.30

Figure 18: Conference system Unfairness in 2004-05 Season [20]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference								Western Conference							
	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS		W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division								Midwest Division							
New Jersey Nets* (2)	47	35	.573	—	90.3	87.8	1.88	Minnesota Timberwolves* (1)	58	24	.707	—	94.5	89.1	5.86
Miami Heat* (4)	42	40	.512	5.0	90.3	89.7	-0.13	San Antonio Spurs* (3)	57	25	.695	1.0	91.5	84.3	7.51
New York Knicks* (7)	39	43	.476	8.0	92.0	93.5	-1.97	Dallas Mavericks* (5)	52	30	.634	6.0	105.2	100.8	4.86
Boston Celtics* (8)	36	46	.439	11.0	95.3	96.7	-1.99	Memphis Grizzlies* (6)	50	32	.610	8.0	96.7	94.3	2.95
Philadelphia 76ers (11)	33	49	.402	14.0	88.0	90.5	-2.95	Houston Rockets* (7)	45	37	.549	13.0	89.8	88.0	2.28
Washington Wizards (13)	25	57	.305	22.0	91.8	97.4	-6.12	Denver Nuggets* (8)	43	39	.524	15.0	97.2	96.1	1.65
Orlando Magic (15)	21	61	.256	26.0	94.0	101.1	-7.25	Utah Jazz (9)	42	40	.512	16.0	88.7	89.9	-0.53
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Indiana Pacers* (1)	61	21	.744	—	91.4	85.6	4.93	Los Angeles Lakers* (2)	56	26	.683	—	98.2	94.3	4.35
Detroit Pistons* (3)	54	28	.659	7.0	90.1	84.3	5.04	Sacramento Kings* (4)	55	27	.671	1.0	102.8	97.8	5.41
New Orleans Hornets* (5)	41	41	.500	20.0	91.8	91.9	-0.72	Portland Trail Blazers (10)	41	41	.500	15.0	90.7	92.0	-0.58
Milwaukee Bucks* (6)	41	41	.500	20.0	98.0	97.0	0.42	Golden State Warriors (11)	37	45	.451	19.0	93.3	94.0	-0.07
Cleveland Cavaliers (9)	35	47	.427	26.0	92.9	95.5	-3.07	Seattle SuperSonics (12)	37	45	.451	19.0	97.1	97.8	0.02
Toronto Raptors (10)	33	49	.402	28.0	85.4	88.5	-3.42	Phoenix Suns (13)	29	53	.354	27.0	94.2	97.9	-2.94
Atlanta Hawks (12)	28	54	.341	33.0	92.8	97.5	-5.00	Los Angeles Clippers (14)	28	54	.341	28.0	94.8	99.4	-3.74
Chicago Bulls (14)	23	59	.280	38.0	89.7	96.0	-6.69								

Figure 19: Conference system Unfairness in 2003-04 Season[5]

Division Standings * Playoff teams

Eastern Conference								Western Conference							
	W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS		W	L	W/L%	GB	PS/G	PA/G	SRS
Atlantic Division								Midwest Division							
New Jersey Nets* (2)	49	33	.598	—	95.4	90.1	4.42	San Antonio Spurs* (1)	60	22	.732	—	95.8	90.4	5.65
Philadelphia 76ers* (4)	48	34	.585	1.0	96.8	94.5	1.76	Dallas Mavericks* (3)	60	22	.732	—	103.0	95.2	7.90
Boston Celtics* (6)	44	38	.537	5.0	92.7	93.1	-0.75	Minnesota Timberwolves* (4)	51	31	.622	9.0	98.1	96.0	2.46
Orlando Magic* (8)	42	40	.512	7.0	98.5	98.4	-0.39	Utah Jazz* (7)	47	35	.573	13.0	94.7	92.3	2.76
Washington Wizards (9)	37	45	.451	12.0	91.5	92.5	-1.47	Houston Rockets (9)	43	39	.524	17.0	93.8	92.3	1.89
New York Knicks (10)	37	45	.451	12.0	95.9	97.2	-1.61	Memphis Grizzlies (12)	28	54	.341	32.0	97.5	100.7	-2.60
Miami Heat (13)	25	57	.305	24.0	85.6	90.6	-5.13	Denver Nuggets (14)	17	65	.207	43.0	84.2	92.4	-7.41
Central Division								Pacific Division							
Detroit Pistons* (1)	50	32	.610	—	91.4	87.7	2.97	Sacramento Kings* (2)	59	23	.720	—	101.7	95.2	6.68
Indiana Pacers* (3)	48	34	.585	2.0	96.8	93.3	2.79	Los Angeles Lakers* (5)	50	32	.610	9.0	100.4	98.0	2.71
New Orleans Hornets* (5)	47	35	.573	3.0	93.9	91.8	1.52	Portland Trail Blazers* (6)	50	32	.610	9.0	95.2	92.5	2.97
Milwaukee Bucks* (7)	42	40	.512	8.0	99.5	99.3	-0.24	Phoenix Suns* (8)	44	38	.537	15.0	95.5	94.4	1.57
Atlanta Hawks (11)	35	47	.427	15.0	94.1	97.6	-3.87	Seattle SuperSonics (10)	40	42	.488	19.0	92.1	92.3	0.37
Chicago Bulls (12)	30	52	.366	20.0	95.0	100.1	-5.31	Golden State Warriors (11)	38	44	.463	21.0	102.4	103.6	-0.60
Toronto Raptors (14)	24	58	.293	26.0	90.9	96.8	-6.10	Los Angeles Clippers (13)	27	55	.329	32.0	93.8	97.9	-3.45
Cleveland Cavaliers (15)	17	65	.207	33.0	91.4	101.0	-9.59								

Figure 20: Conference system Unfairness in 2002-03 Season [21]