

**BASKETBALL ANALYTICS' BLIND SPOT:
BASED ON BAD DATA BY WAY OF A BAD JUMP SHOT THEORY**

By Robert Tilitz

Let it be known from the get-go that my whole-body jump shot theory harbors no objection to evaluating individual and team performance in basketball on the basis of statistics. In other words, the whole-body jump theory is not in the least opposed to the currently very popular analytics approach to determining strategy, personnel and other decisions intrinsic to running a basketball team. There are alternatives. But analytics seems as valid as any and therefore merits use to whatever degree, in whole or in part, that the team's decision makers see fit.

That is not to say that basketball analytics as a decision-making system beyond criticism. In fact, the purpose of this article is to explain the whole-body jump shot theory's objections to the current iteration of basketball analytics that has become very influential in recent years.

It is hard not to notice the changes that basketball analytics have brought to the game in recent years. The most far-reaching of the changes have been to tactics and strategies on offense. For example, the closer-to-the-basket-the-better shot selection guideline is no longer an exclusive top priority. Though still part of the offensive picture, mainly via high-percentage layups and putbacks, the closer-to-the-basket-the-better offensive concept has been demoted to coequal with long-range 3-point shooting. What was lost in the transition were the mid-range and post-up jump shots that used to dominate but are now deemed inefficient.

So there it is. Today's game-changing basketball analytics and all of its revolutionary ramifications basically come down to a reappraisal of the mid-range and the post-up jump shots. The advocates for a downgrade of the mid-range and post-up jump shots cite comparatively low and headed lower shooting percentages and a mere 2-point return on makes as justification. Although their shooting percentages are comparable to mid-range and post-up jump shots, 3-point shots are preferred because of their added point value. Layups and putbacks are preferred because their shooting percentage is the highest of any category.

The whole-body jump shot theory, the only jump shot theory explicitly built around the numerous jump shot masters of the past and the not so numerous though equally excellent jump shot masters of the present, has no problem with the statistics upon which basketball analytics has based its conclusions. Parenthetically, the whole-body jump shot theory has neither scrutinized basketball analytics' statistics nor crunched its own. That's because the whole-body jump shot theory agrees with basketball analytics' conclusion that today's mid-range and post-up jump shots are overall inefficient offensive tactics. Why then does the whole-body jump shot theory vehemently oppose basketball analytics in its current form?

The whole-body jump shot theory's opposition to basketball analytics' recommendations for how the game should be played and how teams should be run is rooted in their respective reasons for being. The purpose of basketball analytics is to identify offensive strengths through statistical analysis and then advocate for offensive tactics and strategies that fully exploit the identified offensive strengths. The purpose of the whole-body jump shot theory is to identify and to analyze optimal jump shot techniques in order to maximize skills and performance.

The viewpoints of the whole-body jump shot theory and basketball analytics are not always opposed. Both viewpoints agree that in the NBA today mid-range and post-up jump shots are

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problematic for both players and teams. Where radical differences of opinion arise, however, is in developing and implementing a solution to the problem. Basketball analytics' famous solution is to cut back usage of the mid-range and post-up jump shots and replace them with more efficient scoring methods. The whole-body jump shot theory's not-so-famous solution involves first identifying the technical cause of the problems afflicting mid-range and post-up jumpshooting and second correcting the problematic jump shot techniques.

For the whole-body jump shot theory, the cause of the mid-range and post-up jump shot problems that are undeniably doing damage to individual player and team performances is neither elusive nor obscure. The whole-body jump shot theory definitively asserts that the primary cause of all the jump shot problems that afflict 21st century basketball is the carelessly developed but rigidly enforced almost all wrong elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot theory that is passed off as the jump shot ideal by NBA executives and NBA and college coaches.

It is, therefore, a matter of technique. The elbow-in shooting position is supposed to set up out front, horizontally extended and aligned with/pointed at the basket. The whole-body jump shot theory says the elbow-in shooting position sets up so far out front that it disconnects by distance from the jumpshooter's body, which is the all-important source of jump shot athleticism. The whole-body jump shot theory sets up the shooting position close-in-front or overhead. Either way the whole-body jump shots are in position to access the jumpshooter's body, especially the shooting shoulder, for run, jump and square-in-the-air athleticism and power.

Clearly, the whole-body jump shot theory aims to transform the mid-range and post-up jump shots from tactical liabilities to tactical assets. But the benefits of getting the jump shot right do not stop at improved techniques and expanded tactics. The benefits of getting the jump shot right are big-time, many and varied for the NBA and basketball in general. See below.

On a micro level, during games a rational order will return to basketball. Position play will return. No more amorphous, one size fits all, everybody-is-a-wing, as exemplified by stretch fours and stretch fives. The need for and appreciation of specialized skillsets will return. With the return of the big man, interior defenses will toughen, cutting off the conga line of unopposed dunks. Coaches with knowledge of jump shot how-to will gain authority over players and their development, which will add a new and welcome and necessary interpersonal dynamic.

On a macro level, if mid-range and post-up jumpshooting are revived, athleticism will return to once again take over basketball. The regressive day of long-range stationary/standing-start 3-point one-hand set shot domination will be gone. Basketball analytics will be OK with the change and still be in business. Basketball analytics will still work, but new conclusions based on new data by way of a correct jump shot theory will reverse the current anti-mid-range and post-up jump shot conclusions. In a nutshell, mid-range and post-up high volume and medium accuracy will outweigh 3-point low volume and medium accuracy despite its added value when it comes to playing winning basketball. Perhaps best of all, with the return of the jump shot and athleticism to offensive dominance, basketball will be more fun to play and to watch. Plus, more popularity means more viewership, which is basketball's ticket to grow and to thrive.