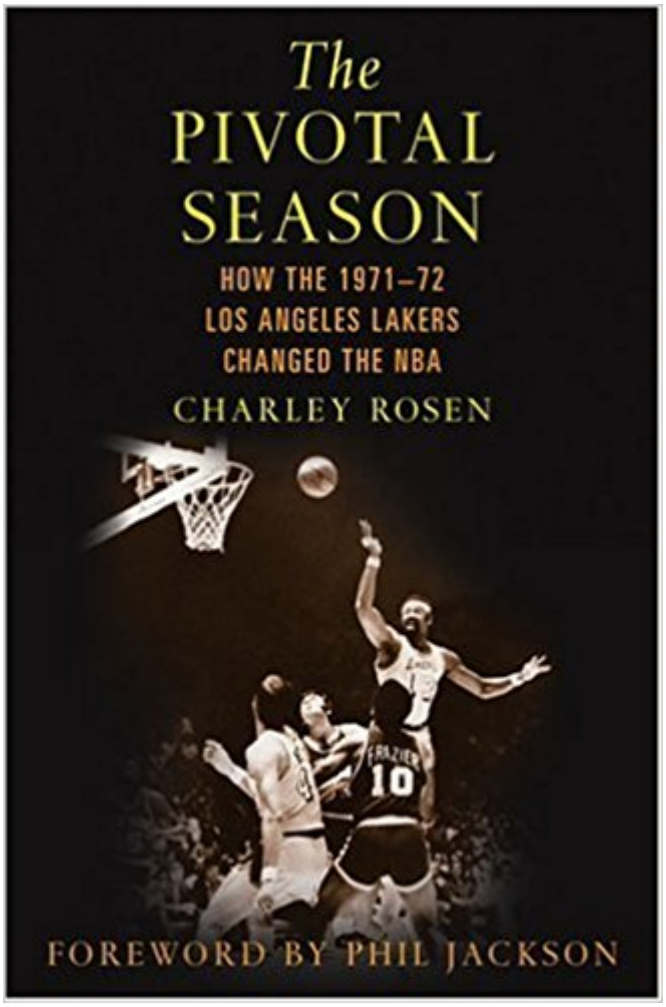
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The Pivotal Season: How The 1971--72 Los Angeles Lakers Changed The NBA



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Synopsis

An in-depth look at the most influential Lakers championship team-the coach, the players, the season that changed the NBA.The 1971-72 basketball season was one to go down in history. For the Los Angeles Lakers it was a season of records, an incredible championship, and many personal victories-by a team featuring several players bound for the NBA Hall of Fame. For the sport of basketball it was a season of transition, when West Coast style overcame East Coast sophistication. And for the fans, it was simply a season to remember.Charley Rosen, one of the best sports historians in recent years, brings to life all of the memories, events, and spectacles. Featuring an iconic all-star roster that includes Wilt Chamberlain and Jerry West, The Pivotal Season is an account of some of the greatest names in the game and their contributions to one of the most remarkable seasons in history. This dramatic narrative credits the Lakers coach, Bill Sharman, who, though virtually unknown today, was the best basketball coach of his time.Photographs and action-packed narrative portray the pivotal 1971-72 season in this memorable book of sports history, which includes a special foreword by Phil Jackson. Basketball fans will be able to relive this amazing story of despair turned to triumph, when the Los Angeles Lakers won a record thirty-three consecutive games, persevered and defeated their archrival, the New York Knicks, won the championship-and in so doing changed the sport of basketball forever.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Now a basketball mecca, Los Angeles was once anything but. In the 1960s, the Lakers lost the NBA championship to Boston six times and again in 1970 to New York. By 1971, Laker fans had grown

tired of being perennial bride’s maids, so much so that, despite a star-studded lineup featuring Wilt Chamberlain, Jerry West and Gail Goodrich, the Lakers’ first home game attendance was 2,500 short of capacity. It wasn’t until well into "the streak," during which the Lakers won a record 33 straight games, that fans began paying closer attention. Rosen, a columnist for ESPN.com, writes, "The scoop around the league was that the Lakers’ 1970-71 season had marked the team’s last chance for glory....The Lakers were the over-the-hill gang and ready for the glue factory." And yet their new coach, Bill Sharman, "the best basketball coach nobody ever heard of," was determined to turn this aging group into a fast-breaking bunch. Rosen’s volume is less about how these Lakers changed the NBA than it is about a team remaking itself in one remarkable season. The narrative pulls the reader deep into the action, describing every game, strategy and key injury, as well as the many records set (a 63-point margin of victory, a record 69 wins and those astounding 33 consecutive wins). Casual fans will likely be overwhelmed by the level of detail presented here, but serious NBA history enthusiasts, and certainly Laker fans, will find this armchair entertainment almost as exciting as watching a Lakers’ game on television. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

The 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers won 33 consecutive regular season games on their way to a championship. The team, built around future Hall-of-Famers Wilt Chamberlain and Jerry West, was coached by a third Hall member, Bill Sharman. Rosen, author of five novels and coauthor, with Phil Jackson, of More Than a Game (2001), traces the team from training camp through the start of the next season. His dual focal points are Sharman and Chamberlain. Sharman, who played with Bill Russell in Boston, convinced Chamberlain to play a more Russell-like style, emphasizing passing and teamwork. Rosen provides background for all the principals, context for games in the streak, as well as an account of the team’s play-off run to the championship. This is wonderful reading for NBA history buffs, replete with anecdotes, humor, and revealing profiles. What Rosen doesn’t do is make the case that this team changed the NBA. Still, recommend this to anyone with even a passing interest in the NBA. Wes LukowskyCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

First off, hats off to Judd Vance for his wonderful review. My comments are similar, there are so many lazy errors in this book that it diminishes a wonderful team.Page 1 compares the Laker-Buck series of that year to rivalries like Dodgers-Yankees, Hatfields-McCoys, Louis-Schmeling and Michigan-Michigan State.First off, comparing two good teams that met a couple of times does not

make a rivalry. Second, Michigan-Michigan State is a big rivalry? I thought it was Michigan and Ohio State.Rosen repeats the old cliche that LA anything is style and no substance. What a schlocky and wrong stereotype. I am a born and bred New Yorker and even I think it is a stereotype.Page 3, if the Bucks double-teamed West and Goodrich, that leaves one man to cover Hairston, McMillan and Chamberlain. Is that ridiculous?Page 62, Chamberlain and Russell were two vastly different people off the court and on. They were good friends.Page 247, eastern teams do not play fast-break basketball. I guess the Celtics in the 50s and 60s never ran the ball.Page 273, the Knicks in the early 70s were not a 1-hit wonder. In 70 they won it, 71 had them in the divisional finals, 72 had them lose to Lakers in finals, 73 they were champions, with the same core team.It is a shame that this great team received such a careless and slipshod book like this.

I've been a Lakers fan all my life and know a great deal about the team's history so I was pleasantly surprised that there was much in this book that was new to me. I especially enjoyed how they went chronologically, game by game, giving a feel of the 1971-72 season as it progress, not just as it affected the team but the city and the country as well.Lots of stuff to fascinate you or just make you laugh out loud; Bill Sharman's mind games to get Wilt to play a more team game is an example of the former, Happy Hairston's habit of going to bars in his Lakers warm up to try and pick up women an example of the latter.However, there are biographical and factual errors throughout the book. An example of a minor one; Neal Walk was in his 3rd season in 1971-72 season and he had some wonderful stories (especially about Wilt) but in one part of the book they refer to an incident he had with Wilt that allegedly took place in 1961 which would be impossible unless he was the NBA's first 10 year old player so you don't know if the book is referring to a different player or year. More glaring ones are addressed by other reviewers who have a lesser opinion of this book then I.I give the book the benefit of the doubt because it has a number of interviews from Lakers' contemporaries that I found indispensable. Nat Thurmond, Jack Marin, Jim Barnett, Fred Carter, Jack Ramsey, Tommy Heinsohn among others all give interesting antidotes and opinions about the team and players, both leading up to and during the season and playoffs that I found very insightful.Did I have a problem with Rosen's many factual errors? That would be a big yes but that didn't deter me from the enjoyment I garnered from reading firsthand what the Laker players and their opponents had to say about that season as they progressed to their first NBA Championship in Los Angeles.

Interesting look at classic team by a longtime hoops insider.

As an avid Laker fan, this is an essential read of the 1971-72 year...a year, and a win-streak, that will never be repeated!

I enjoyed this book. It covers an early part of NBA history after the Celtics had established a dynasty and just as the Lakers were heading in the same direction. There is great insight into the play and personalities of many early stars such as Wilt Chamberlain and Jerry West. I am a Lakers fan and particulary enjoyed it for that reason.

This is an extremely well written account of the very first Los Angeles Laker NBA Championship. Very detailed; this book has all the day to day minutiae of the full season. I have been a fan of the team since the end of the 1960s, but still found a lot of fun facts that I didn't know. I discovered and checked this book put of a local library in February and quickly decided that I wanted to own a copy. A must have for any true LAL fan.

On page 14 is where the author lost it. Describing Game 7 of the 1969 Finals as "the Lakers having firm command of the game" and the Celtics "relentlessly eating into the Lakers' lead".....THE LAKERS NEVER LED IN THIS CONTEST!...They finally tied it at 60 early in 3rd period and then Boston pushed out to a 71-60 lead that became 91-76 at the end of the 3rd quarter. It was L.A. that stormed back to cut a 21 point lead down to 103-102 before Don Nelson's crap shot. Either way, my Lakers lost....but really Charley? Otherwise a good read about a great season.

Unfortunately the author covers some hallowed territory with the legendary 1971-72 Lakers team and plays fast and lies as he dispenses his bias against Wilt Chamberlain who was the missing ingredient who basically brought the Championship to L.A.. All the author need do is ask Jerry West if they could have won it without El Foldo, you know, the most dominating force to ever play professional basketball? Oh yeah, and somehow he attempts to grind down the truth by restating the old line that Wilt Chamberlain was a 'selfish' player. Yeah, okay, does the author realize this is the same Wilt Chamberlain who led the league in assists? The only center to ever do so IN THE HISTORY OF THE GAME?! I mean to lead the league in assists in Rosen's mind is likely just Wilt being selfish again and going for personal records...even though his coach asked him to pass more that season. As for the MVP of those finals...yep, good old El Foldo himself...Rosen's writing and research is a joke and so is this book. Buy "TALL TALES" by Terry Pluto instead.

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