

3-Point Shot Revolution and The Influence On The Youth

By PJ Montezuma

The 3-point shot is increasing at an alarming rate among professional NBA players and is influencing the way youth basketball is played.

The 3-point line was introduced in the National Basketball Association (NBA) during the 1979-80 season. Due to the slow start to players taking 3-point shots, no one foresaw the “3-point Revolution” that has been happening in the past decade. Not only is the 3-point shot shifting the way professional NBA players play the game, it is changing the way youth basketball is being played.

During the first season the 3-point line was introduced back in 1979-80, teams took only an average of 2.3 threes per game. There was even a story in *The New York Times* which called the 3-point shot a “gimmick”. Whereas now we know it is in fact not a gimmick but rather a vital part of every team’s offense. According to SportsCharts.com, 20 out of the 30 NBA teams take at least 30 percent of their shot attempts from behind the 3-point arc.

The 3-point shot has skyrocketed over the past few years and there are a few reasons behind it. A big one is due to arguably one of the greatest shooters of all-time Golden State Warriors point guard Stephen Curry. Curry broke Ray Allen’s record (269) for most 3-pointers in a season back in the 2012-13 season with 272 3-pointers. Not only did he beat Allen’s previous record, Curry beat his own record 3 other times. In the 2014-15 season Curry drained 286 3-pointers, then made 324 3-pointers last season. But Curry’s most made 3-pointers in a season came during

the 2015-2016 season in which he drained 402 3-pointers in a season, the most ever by any NBA player.

Curry's 3-point shot was influential to a lot of fellow NBA players over the past few seasons, causing the 3-point shots attempted in the league to be at an all-time high. Three teams last season broke the NBA single-season record of 3-pointers attempted in a season. If that statistic isn't breathtaking, the Houston Rockets finished last season with 3,306 3-pointers attempted, which is an amazing 626 more 3-pointers attempted than the previous record.

This recent 3-point revolution has changed the way Big Men such as Forwards and Centers play the game, causing what is known as "positionless-basketball". Big Men are now able to shoot 3-pointers, whereas former NBA Big Men such as Shaquille O'Neal or Kareem Abdul-Jabbar would never attempt a shot from beyond the arc. The increase in positionless-basketball is causing havoc for NBA coaches, Orlando Magic coach Frank Vogel even admitted that "the game is changing before our eyes," and that the 3-point shot seems "more dramatic than ever."

Not only is the 3-point Revolution changing the NBA and the way these professional athletes play basketball, it is also causing a shift in youth basketball. Salem State Junior Jake Castinetti has played AAU Basketball and even played all four years at St. Mary's High School in Lynn. Castinetti now coaches an 8th graders 14U-team and has noticed a significant change in the way youth basketball. He noticed at an earlier age kids are tossing up more three pointers than those who actually drive the ball to the hoop. Whereas he also noted that when he was that age and playing in the same AAU league that there were nearly as much 3-point shots being taken.

Castinetti expressed that coaching for the first time was an amazing experience and that kids “were not bad players but they had a lot of heart and drive which caused them to play a whole lot better.”

Junior Temitope “Temi” Bailey not only plays basketball for Salem State University, he also spends his weekends coaching a 7th grade AAU basketball team. This was his second season as a youth basketball coach and won the championship with his team this season. Bailey noted that since he began playing basketball at a young age, year by year he has seen a rise in basketball players, college or the youth AAU team, abusing the 3-point shot.

Malden High School Athletic Director Charlie Conefrey was the Freshman basketball coach at Malden High for seven years before becoming the Athletic Director. Conefrey had a first hand look at the recent rise of the 3-point shot right in front of his eyes. He expressed that it is clear the rise of the 3-point shot in the NBA is influencing the youth, however it may not be a bad thing. For instance the MHS basketball team advanced to the Division I playoffs due to an abundance of talented 3-point shooters on the team.

Which goes to show that although the 3-point shot is increasing at an alarming rate among the professional NBA players and is influencing the youth, it may be a beneficial change.