



The Physics of Basketball

John J. Fontanella

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Forget Newton's apple. It's a basketball that provides the ideal focus for physics. Layups, stuff shots, treys, hang time--the entire wonderful game of hoops yields its kinetic secrets to Fontanella's careful but entertaining application of mathematical science. Whether looking at a Steve Nash bounce pass, a Peja Stojakovich jump shot, or a Gus Johnson slam, Fontanella teases out explanatory formulas and geometry. Sometimes the analyses serve a chiefly theoretical interest: by probing the dynamics of microcracks, for instance, Fontanella explains when and why a backboard will shatter. But as a former college player himself, Fontanella recognizes the value of science that translates into on-court techniques. Anyone who wants to get better at launching treys or shooting free throws will find finely calibrated advice here. Some readers may find the mathematics a bit stiff, but all will relish the piquant anecdotes that accompany the numbers. What fan doesn't enjoy revisiting Michael Jordan's 1982 nothing-but-net game winner against Georgetown? An unusual book, certain to attract both the sports fan and the armchair scientist. Bryce Christensen

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