

best triple double in nba history

best triple double in nba history is a topic that fascinates basketball enthusiasts and statisticians alike. A triple double, achieved when a player records double-digit numbers in three statistical categories—typically points, rebounds, and assists—in a single game, represents a benchmark of all-around excellence.

Throughout NBA history, several players have distinguished themselves by consistently posting triple doubles, elevating their teams and setting records. This article explores the most remarkable triple double performances, the players with the highest career triple double totals, and the significance of these achievements within the context of NBA history. Additionally, it delves into how the evolution of playing styles and positional versatility have influenced triple double occurrences. The following sections provide a detailed examination of the best triple double in NBA history, notable players, and key statistical milestones.

- History and Definition of Triple Double
- Top Players with Most Triple Doubles
- Iconic Triple Double Performances
- Impact of Triple Doubles on the Game
- Evolution of the Triple Double in NBA History

History and Definition of Triple Double

The term "triple double" in basketball refers to a single game performance in which a player accumulates at least ten units in three of five statistical categories: points, rebounds, assists, steals, and blocks. Traditionally, the most common triple doubles involve points, rebounds, and assists. The concept dates back to the early days of professional basketball, but it gained widespread recognition in the NBA starting in the mid-20th century. Achieving a triple double is a clear indicator of a player's versatility and ability to contribute significantly across multiple facets of the game.

Origins of the Triple Double

While the NBA did not officially track all relevant statistics in its early years, the triple double became a recognized metric as the league began to emphasize comprehensive statistical analysis. The first widely documented triple double is attributed to Andy Phillip in the 1950s, although Oscar Robertson and later

players brought greater attention to the feat. Over time, the triple double has evolved into a celebrated achievement, often associated with some of the greatest all-around players in NBA history.

Statistical Criteria

To officially record a triple double, a player must reach double digits in three of the following categories within a single game:

- Points
- Rebounds
- Assists
- Steals
- Blocks

Points, rebounds, and assists are by far the most common categories for triple doubles, as accumulating ten or more steals or blocks in a game is exceedingly rare.

Top Players with Most Triple Doubles

Several NBA legends have etched their names in history by accumulating the highest numbers of career triple doubles. These players exemplify the versatility and skill required to impact the game in multiple statistical areas consistently.

Russell Westbrook

Russell Westbrook currently holds the record for the most career triple doubles in NBA history. Known for his explosive athleticism and relentless energy, Westbrook redefined the triple double with his aggressive style of play. He surpassed Oscar Robertson's long-standing record, amassing well over 180 triple doubles during his career. Westbrook's ability to score, rebound, and facilitate offense makes him a triple double machine.

Oscar Robertson

Nicknamed "The Big O," Oscar Robertson was the original triple double pioneer. He was the first player to

average a triple double over an entire season during the 1961-1962 campaign. His all-around skills set the standard for future generations, and he held the career triple double record for decades. Robertson's balanced scoring, passing, and rebounding made him a formidable opponent and a model of consistency.

Magic Johnson

Magic Johnson was a versatile point guard whose size and court vision allowed him to accumulate multiple triple doubles in his career. Known for his leadership and passing prowess, Magic's triple doubles often combined scoring, assists, and rebounds, reflecting his ability to control every facet of the game. His contributions helped the Los Angeles Lakers win multiple championships in the 1980s.

Other Notable Players

Several other players have made significant contributions to the triple double record books, including:

- Jason Kidd
- LeBron James
- James Harden
- Fat Lever
- Draymond Green

Each of these players brought unique skills that allowed them to achieve triple doubles and influence their teams' success.

Iconic Triple Double Performances

Beyond career totals, individual triple double performances can be historic due to the context, records set, or the sheer dominance displayed. Some triple doubles stand out as the best triple double in NBA history because of the player's impact and the circumstances surrounding the game.

Oscar Robertson's 1961-1962 Season

Oscar Robertson's achievement of averaging a triple double over an entire season remains one of the most remarkable feats in NBA history. He averaged 30.8 points, 12.5 rebounds, and 11.4 assists per game,

showcasing unmatched all-around excellence. This milestone set a benchmark that remained unsurpassed for over 50 years.

Russell Westbrook's 2016-2017 MVP Season

Westbrook's 2016-2017 campaign revitalized the triple double conversation by breaking Robertson's record for most triple doubles in a single season with 42. He also became the second player to average a triple double for a season, with 31.6 points, 10.7 rebounds, and 10.4 assists per game. His performances were marked by relentless energy and clutch plays.

Other Memorable Games

Several individual games are often cited among the best triple double performances, including:

1. Magic Johnson's 42-point, 15-rebound, 15-assist game in the 1982 NBA Finals
2. LeBron James' 51-point, 16-rebound, 10-assist game against the Warriors in 2018
3. James Harden's 60-point, 10-rebound, 11-assist game in 2018

These performances highlight the diversity and impact of triple doubles in high-stakes situations.

Impact of Triple Doubles on the Game

The best triple double in NBA history is not just a statistical curiosity; it has a significant impact on how basketball is played and perceived. Players capable of triple doubles demonstrate versatility, which can influence team strategies and player development.

Team Dynamics and Strategy

Players who regularly achieve triple doubles often become focal points of their team's offense and defense. Their ability to distribute the ball, score, and rebound improves team efficiency and flexibility. Coaches may design plays to maximize these players' strengths, knowing they can contribute in multiple ways.

Player Recognition and Awards

Triple doubles often correlate with individual accolades such as MVP awards, All-NBA selections, and Hall

of Fame induction. The ability to impact multiple statistical categories elevates a player's status among peers, media, and fans.

Encouraging Versatility

The prominence of triple doubles has encouraged players to develop well-rounded skill sets. Modern NBA training emphasizes versatility, enabling guards to rebound and forwards to pass effectively, increasing triple double occurrences.

Evolution of the Triple Double in NBA History

The frequency and nature of triple doubles have evolved alongside changes in the NBA's style of play, rules, and player roles. This evolution reflects broader trends in basketball and the increasing athleticism of players.

Early NBA Era

In the early decades of the NBA, triple doubles were rare due to the slower pace and limited statistical tracking. Players like Oscar Robertson helped popularize the triple double as a meaningful measure of performance.

Modern NBA Trends

The pace of play has increased, with teams emphasizing fast breaks and higher scoring. This shift has led to more opportunities for players to accumulate assists and rebounds, contributing to a rise in triple double occurrences. Additionally, the rise of positionless basketball has blurred traditional roles, enabling more players to achieve triple doubles.

Statistical Advances and Recognition

Improved data collection and analytics have heightened awareness of triple doubles. Media coverage and fan interest have also elevated the triple double as a key highlight metric, motivating players to pursue this accomplishment.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who holds the record for the most triple-doubles in NBA history?

Russell Westbrook holds the record for the most triple-doubles in NBA history, surpassing Oscar Robertson's longstanding record.

What is considered the best triple-double performance in NBA history?

One of the best triple-double performances is by Russell Westbrook on April 9, 2019, when he recorded 20 points, 20 rebounds, and 21 assists, making him the first player in NBA history to have a 20-20-20 triple-double.

Why is Oscar Robertson's triple-double record significant?

Oscar Robertson was the first player to average a triple-double for an entire season (1961-62) and held the record for the most career triple-doubles for decades, showcasing his all-around dominance.

Which player has the highest points in a triple-double game?

James Harden scored 60 points along with 11 rebounds and 10 assists in a triple-double game, making it one of the highest-scoring triple-doubles in NBA history.

How have triple-doubles evolved over NBA history?

Triple-doubles have become more common in recent years due to changes in playing style emphasizing versatility, with players like Russell Westbrook and Nikola Jokic frequently recording them.

What makes a triple-double 'the best' in NBA history?

The 'best' triple-double is often judged by the statistical dominance across points, rebounds, and assists, the impact on the game's outcome, and historical significance, such as Russell Westbrook's 20-20-20 game.

Additional Resources

1. *Triple Double Titans: The Greatest NBA All-Around Performers*

This book explores the careers of the NBA's most prolific triple-double achievers, highlighting their impact on the game and their teams. It provides in-depth analysis of their playing styles, key moments, and statistical milestones. Readers gain a greater appreciation for the versatility and skill required to dominate in multiple facets of basketball.

2. *Magic, LeBron, and the Art of the Triple Double*

Focusing on legends like Magic Johnson and LeBron James, this book delves into how these players revolutionized the triple-double. It combines biographical details with game-by-game breakdowns to showcase their unique abilities. The narrative also discusses how the triple-double has evolved over different basketball eras.

3. *Triple Double Kings: The Story of Russell Westbrook and NBA Records*

This book chronicles Russell Westbrook's journey to breaking the triple-double record, capturing his relentless energy and competitive spirit. It highlights his record-setting seasons and the debates surrounding his playing style. Fans of modern NBA will find this an engaging tribute to one of the game's most dynamic players.

4. *The Triple Double Blueprint: How to Dominate the Court Like NBA's Best*

A guide for aspiring players and fans, this book breaks down the skills and mindset necessary to achieve triple-doubles. It includes training tips, strategic insights, and examples from NBA greats. The book serves as both an instructional manual and a celebration of all-around basketball excellence.

5. *Oscar Robertson and the Dawn of the Triple Double Era*

This historical account focuses on Oscar Robertson, the first player to average a triple-double for an entire season. It contextualizes his achievements within the 1960s NBA and explores how he set the standard for future generations. The book also covers his influence on the game's evolution and civil rights activism.

6. *Triple Double Showdowns: Iconic Games in NBA History*

Highlighting some of the most thrilling triple-double performances, this book recounts unforgettable games featuring iconic NBA stars. Each chapter presents a detailed narrative of the game's stakes, player stats, and turning points. It's a thrilling read for fans who love basketball's dramatic moments.

7. *Versatility on the Hardwood: The Rise of the Modern Triple Double*

Examining how the role of versatile players has expanded in recent decades, this book discusses trends that have increased triple-double occurrences. It profiles players who excel in scoring, rebounding, and assisting, and analyzes changes in coaching strategies. The book offers insights into the modern NBA's emphasis on multi-dimensional talent.

8. *Triple Double Rivalries: The Battles That Defined NBA Greatness*

This book explores intense rivalries where triple-double performances played a key role in defining player legacies. From head-to-head matchups to playoff showdowns, it captures the competitive spirit that drives elite athletes. Readers will enjoy the rich storytelling and competitive drama behind these historic clashes.

9. *Beyond the Numbers: The Impact of Triple Doubles on NBA Culture*

Going beyond stats, this book investigates how triple doubles influence team dynamics, fan engagement, and media coverage. It features interviews with players, coaches, and analysts who share perspectives on the significance of all-around excellence. The book reveals the cultural and psychological dimensions of achieving triple doubles in professional basketball.

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best triple double in nba history: 50 of the Best Basketball Players of All Time Dan Willsington, 2024-01-22 Dive into the exhilarating world of basketball greatness with *Legends of the Court: The Best Basketball Players of All Time*. This meticulously curated book is a celebration of the athletes who have left an indelible mark on the sport, showcasing their unparalleled skills, tenacity, and lasting impact on the game. From the iconic Michael Jordan, whose gravity-defying dunks and clutch performances defined an era, to the versatile LeBron James, a modern-day force rewriting the record books, each chapter introduces you to the legends who elevated basketball to an art form. Explore the dynamic careers of players like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Magic Johnson, and Larry Bird, whose rivalry redefined the NBA landscape in the 1980s. *Legends of the Court* doesn't stop at the superstars; it delves into the stories of unsung heroes, like the dominant big man Hakeem Olajuwon and the sharpshooting Reggie Miller, whose contributions shaped the game in ways that resonate to this day. This book goes beyond statistics, offering a deep dive into the personal and professional journeys of these extraordinary athletes. Learn about the challenges they overcame, the iconic moments that became sports history, and the lasting legacies they've left for aspiring players worldwide. Discover the unique playing styles that defined eras, from the dominating post moves of Shaquille O'Neal to the mesmerizing ball-handling skills of Allen Iverson. *Legends of the Court* provides a comprehensive overview of the players who have not only achieved greatness but have become cultural icons, influencing fashion, music, and the global sports landscape. Whether you're a lifelong basketball enthusiast or a newcomer eager to learn about the sport's greatest contributors, this book is a captivating journey through the annals of basketball history. Engaging narratives, vivid anecdotes, and stunning visuals come together to paint a vivid portrait of the individuals who have made the hardwood their canvas and the basketball court their stage. *Legends of the Court* is not just a tribute; it's an immersive experience that will leave you inspired, nostalgic, and with a newfound appreciation for the legends who transformed a simple game into a global phenomenon. Get ready to embark on a thrilling odyssey through the highs, lows, and unforgettable moments of the best basketball players of all time.

best triple double in nba history: *Basketball Championships' Most Wanted™* David L. Hudson, David L. Hudson Jr., 2007-03-31 Two books on hoops weren't enough, so now there's a third: *Basketball Championships' Most Wanted™*, focusing on the best, worst, greatest, and most amusing from basketball's long history of championships in college and the pros—mens' and womens', ABA and CBA, and the Olympics as well! March Madness is one of the most exciting times of year, when anything can happen and Cinderella looks for her prince, sometimes even finding him. And when May and June roll around and the NBA playoffs are in full swing, the intensity ratchets up as the professionals take center stage. *Basketball Championships' Most Wanted™* celebrates both of these and more, with fifty top-ten lists on topics like unlikely heroes and fantastic freshmen in the NCAA tournament, some of the best long-range gunners in play-off history, players who stepped up big-time with a triple-double in important games, the best buzzer-beaters of all time, and even teams that excelled in the regular season but withered in the pressure cooker. The championship hunt is the most thrilling and action-packed time of the year in basketball, and now you can relive all the excitement. Get in on all the "hoopla" with *Basketball Championships' Most Wanted™: The Top 10 Book of March Mayhem, Playoff Performances, and Tournament Oddities*.

best triple double in nba history: *Focus On: 100 Most Popular National Basketball*

Association All-Stars Wikipedia contributors,

best triple double in nba history: Basketball Beyond Paper Dean Oliver, 2024-11 A pioneer in the field of basketball analytics, Dean Oliver introduced a framework to understand basketball through the use of statistics in his book *Basketball on Paper*. In his follow-up, *Basketball beyond Paper*, Oliver lays out both the technical and personal aspects of his twenty-year experience in the NBA as he helped build the analytics that changed the game. He also looks at the people and technology that pushed those analytics forward. Oliver tells stories of how the insights came about, whether studying other teams or witnessing events with players, coaches, and management of his own teams. He highlights how great LeBron James and Steph Curry have been but also how critical “middle-class” or “glue” players such as Shane Battier, Andre Iguodala, and JJ Redick were to their teams. Oliver illustrates the paths taken by Most Improved Player Award winners such as Lauri Markkanen, Julius Randle, and Brandon Ingram. *Basketball beyond Paper* tells the stories of how analytics have helped basketball players, coaches, and management—and changed the game.

best triple double in nba history: Focus On: 100 Most Popular Shooting Guards Wikipedia contributors,

best triple double in nba history: Focus On: 100 Most Popular United States Men's National Basketball Team Players Wikipedia contributors,

best triple double in nba history: 40 Greatest Players in Boston Celtics Basketball History Robert W. Cohen, 2017-08 Biographical profiles and stats of forty prominent Boston Celtics players.

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best triple double in nba history: Basketball For Dummies Richard Phelps, 2011-10-11 The easy way to get the ins, outs, and intrigue on this beloved sport The National Basketball Association (NBA), with 30 teams and an average attendance of more than 17,000 spectators per game, is the richest and most popular basketball league — and arguably the most viewed American sport — in the world. This new edition of *Basketball For Dummies* not only covers the rules and regulations of the NBA, but offers coverage on the WNBA, NCAA, and international basketball leagues. *Basketball For Dummies* is a valuable resource to the many fans of this beloved sport, covering everything from players and personalities in the game to rules, regulations, and equipment. Completely updated with information and intrigue that's occurred in the sport since publication of the previous edition, *Basketball For Dummies* gets you up to speed on everything from NCAA Tournament brackets to college players en route to the NBA. Coverage of the rules and regulations of the NBA Interesting topics like LeBron the Phenom, ESPN'S influence on the NBA, and the UCONN women's basketball dynasty Digger's take on John Wooden Whether you're a basketball player or a courtside spectator, *Basketball For Dummies* is a slam-dunk of information and intrigue for anyone who loves the sport.

best triple double in nba history: The 50 Greatest Players in Boston Celtics History Robert W. Cohen, 2023-10 This book ranks, from 1 to 50, the top 50 players in Boston Celtics team history, using as measuring sticks the degree to which they impacted the fortunes of the team, the extent to which they added to the Celtics legacy, and the levels of statistical compilation and overall dominance they attained while wearing a Celtics uniform.

best triple double in nba history: Basketball: The Ultimate Guide to Basketball Skills, Strategies, and Performance Marcus B. Cole, 2023-01-01 Unlock your full potential on the court with *Basketball: The Ultimate Guide to Basketball Skills, Strategies, and Performance* that will elevate your game and inspire greatness. *Basketball: The Ultimate Guide to Basketball Skills, Strategies, and Performance* is the ultimate resource for basketball players at all levels, from beginners to seasoned pros. This comprehensive guide covers everything a player needs to know in order to master the game of basketball, from the basics of the game to advanced skills, mental preparation, and fitness. The book begins with an explanation of basketball, including its history and how it is played. It then dives into the importance of understanding the game, covering the basic skills of dribbling, passing, shooting, and rebounding. The rules and regulations of basketball are also discussed in detail, along with the court layout and dimensions, and equipment needed to play. The offensive and defensive sections of the book are packed with valuable information, including

offensive techniques, strategies, and drills, as well as individual defensive techniques, team defensive techniques, and defensive strategies. Tips for effective defense, defensive metrics and analytics, scouting and game planning, and building a defensive culture are also covered. The individual skills chapter covers ball-handling techniques, footwork, and shooting form tips, along with drills for improving these skills. Additional tips for improving individual skills are also provided. Teamwork and communication are crucial for successful basketball teams, and the book covers the importance of these skills, along with strategies for developing and improving them. Team-building exercises, as well as the different positions in basketball and famous players in each position, are also discussed. The advanced skills chapter covers game strategy, mental preparation, coaching techniques, developing a practice plan, and playing at different levels, from youth leagues to professional basketball. The book also covers the importance of nutrition and fitness for basketball players, with detailed information on macronutrients, hydration, vitamins and minerals, pre- and post-game nutrition, and strength and conditioning exercises. Injury prevention and treatment are also discussed to help players stay healthy and active on the court. Discover the secrets to basketball success with this comprehensive and engaging guide, designed to help players, coaches, and fans alike elevate their game to new heights. This basketball guide covers every aspect of basketball, from fundamental skills to advanced techniques and strategies. Whether you're a beginner just starting your basketball journey or an experienced player looking to refine your skills, this guide is your roadmap to basketball excellence.

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best triple double in nba history: Greatest Sports Heroes of All Times Paul J. Christopher, Alicia Marie Smith, 2006-08 Hold it! You really think we can come up with 50 greatest sports heroes? Well, we can and we have. Our heroes are not simply limited to the most popular spectator sports. On occasion our heroes go back several generations, not just to the names in the papers or the sports talk shows. Who are they? Well, certainly Jordan, Woods and Ming...but are you old enough to remember Max Schmeling or George Best? There are a lot more where they come from...skiers, cyclists, golfers and runners-all the best and more. What did they do and why are they great? The book offers: a quick, personal biography of each of our famous athletes; summary statistics of some of the most important successes; the good, the bad and the ugly of their sports careers; why these individuals went on to influence their sport; and trivia questions to challenge your knowledge and more.

best triple double in nba history: *Magic Johnson: Basketball Star & Entrepreneur* J. Chris Roselius, 2011-01-01 Legendary Athletes introduces readers to the people who have made significant impacts both athletically and socially. Magic Johnson: Basketball Star & Entrepreneur highlights Magic Johnson's childhood and rise to fame. Career highlights, battles along the way, and humanitarian contributions are also discussed. The basketball star's lasting legacy is told through informative sidebars, captivating photos, and engaging text. SportsZone is an imprint of ABDO Publishing Company.

best triple double in nba history: *Basketball Biographies for Kids* Matt Chandler, 2022-04-26

Get to know the game with inspiring basketball player biographies for ages 8 to 12 Basketball is filled with inspiring stories of world-class athletes working hard and overcoming challenges to shine on the court. Discover the most talented players from each position with Basketball Biographies for Kids! This lineup shows you what it takes to be a WNBA or NBA superstar with the amazing stories, stats, and achievements of the best players from the last 60 years. Legends of the leagues — Learn about the players who changed the game, like LeBron James, Kawhi Leonard, and Sue Bird. Key career stats — Each biography covers the player's history, as well as important info like games played, points, rebounds, assists, and blocks. Draft your own all-star team — Evaluate the statistics and create your ideal team by filling out the starting lineup sheet at the back of the book. Brush up on your basketball knowledge with the ultimate, slam-dunk collection of sports biographies!

best triple double in nba history: *Dynasty* Lew Freedman, 2008

best triple double in nba history: *Focus On: 100 Most Popular Centers (Basketball)*

Wikipedia contributors,

best triple double in nba history: *Introduction to LeBron James* Gilad James, PhD, LeBron James is a professional basketball player who currently plays for the Los Angeles Lakers in the NBA. He was born on December 30, 1984, in Akron, Ohio. James was raised by his mother who struggled to raise him as a single parent in poverty. He started playing basketball at a young age and quickly developed a love for the game. During his high school career, James was considered one of the best players in the country and was heavily scouted by college and NBA coaches. James was selected as the first overall pick in the 2003 NBA draft by the Cleveland Cavaliers. He quickly established himself as a dominant player in the league, winning the Rookie of the Year award in his first season. James spent the first seven years of his career with the Cavaliers, leading them to the NBA Finals in 2007 but ultimately falling short. In 2010, James left Cleveland to join the Miami Heat, where he won two NBA championships in his four years there. He returned to Cleveland in 2014 and brought the city their first NBA championship in 2016 after a historic comeback in the Finals. James has been named the NBA MVP four times and is regarded as one of the greatest basketball players of all time. In this book we discuss topics such as: Introduction: Definition of LeBron James, Brief history, Importance in Sports Early Life: Childhood, Background, Family High School Career: Career highlights, Accomplishments, Accolades College Education (if applicable): College life experience, Career highlights, Accomplishments Professional Career: NBA Draft 2003, Cleveland Cavaliers, Miami Heat, Cleveland Cavaliers 2.0, Los Angeles Lakers Accomplishments and Honors: NBA Championships, MVP Awards, All-Star Game Awards, Olympic Medals Off-court Life and Philanthropy: Business Ventures, Endorsements, Philanthropy Controversies and Criticisms: The Decision, Relationship with Sports Media, Criticisms on Game, Legal Issues Legacy and Impact: Impact on Basketball, Role Model for Young Athletes, Influence on Pop Culture Conclusion: Overall Summary of LeBron James' Life and Career and Impressions and Insights. Quizzes are provided at the end of each section.

best triple double in nba history: *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2018* Sarah Janssen, 2017-12-05 The 150th Anniversary special edition of the best-selling reference book of all time! The ebook format allows curious readers to keep millions of searchable facts at their fingertips. The World Almanac® and Book of Facts is America's top-selling reference book of all time, with more than 82 million copies sold. Since 1868, this compendium of information has been the authoritative source for all your entertainment, reference, and learning needs. The 150th anniversary edition celebrates its illustrious history while keeping an eye on the future. Praised as a treasure trove of political, economic, scientific and educational statistics and information by The Wall Street Journal, The World Almanac and Book of Facts will answer all of your trivia needs—from history and sports to geography, pop culture, and much more. Features include: 150 Years of The World Almanac: A special feature celebrating The World Almanac's historic run includes highlights from its distinguished past and some old-fashioned facts, illustrating how its defining mission has changed with the times. Historical Anniversaries: The World Almanac's recurring feature expands to

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