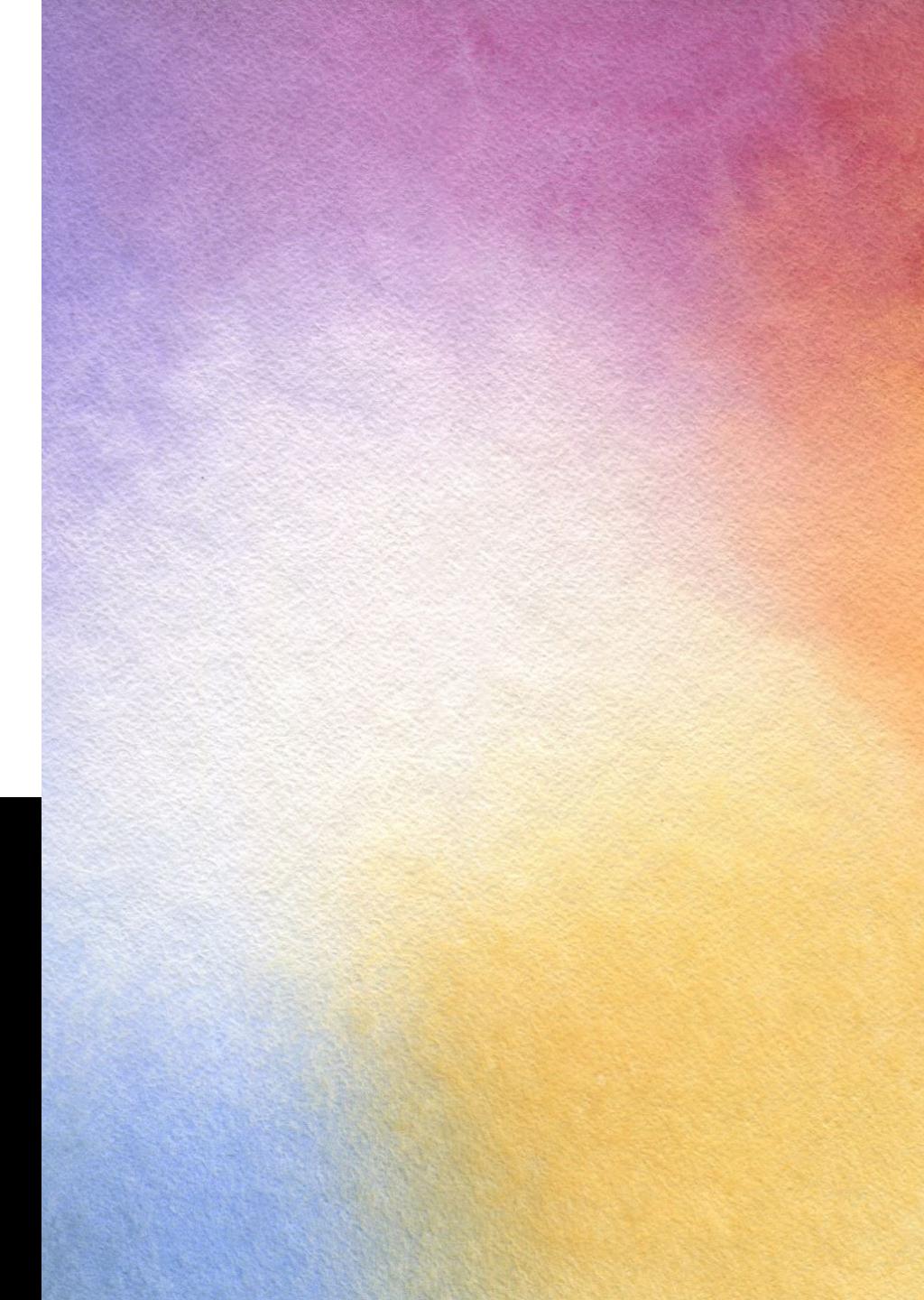


# **THE RISE OF THE THREE POINT SHOT**

Nathan Easley

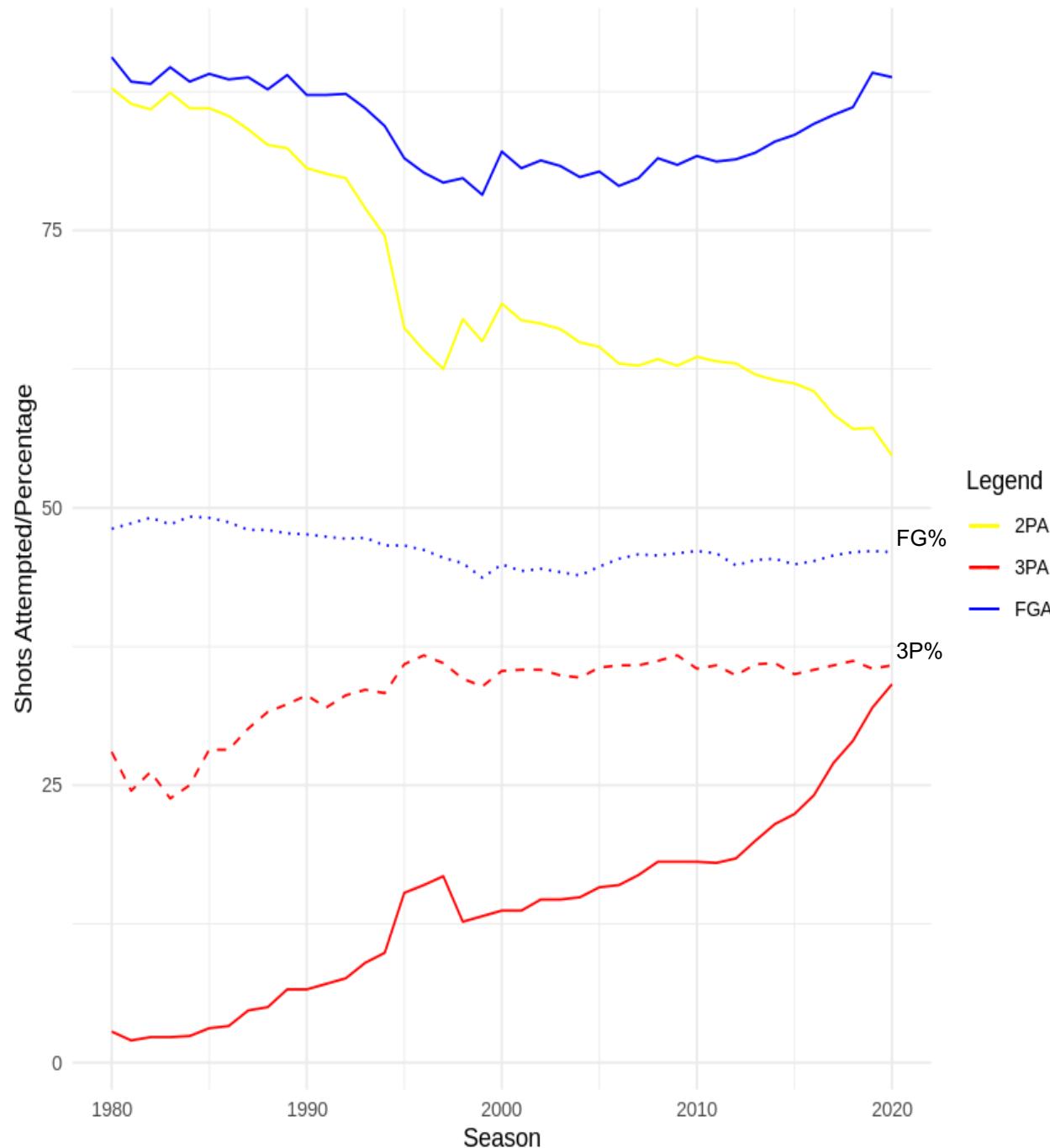


SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE THREE-POINT LINE IN 1979, THERE HAS BEEN A STEADY INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF THREE-POINTERS ATTEMPTED AND MADE IN NBA GAMES. MANY THOUGHT OF THE THREE-POINT LINE AS A GIMMICK, AS SOMETHING THAT TOOK FROM THE GAME, NOT AS SOMETHING THAT ADDED AN ELEMENT OF STRATEGY. WHILE FEW STILL BELIEVE THIS, IT TOOK OVER 20 YEARS FOR COACHES AND PLAYERS TO REALIZE THE SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE THAT THE THREE-POINT LINE GIVES A TEAM.

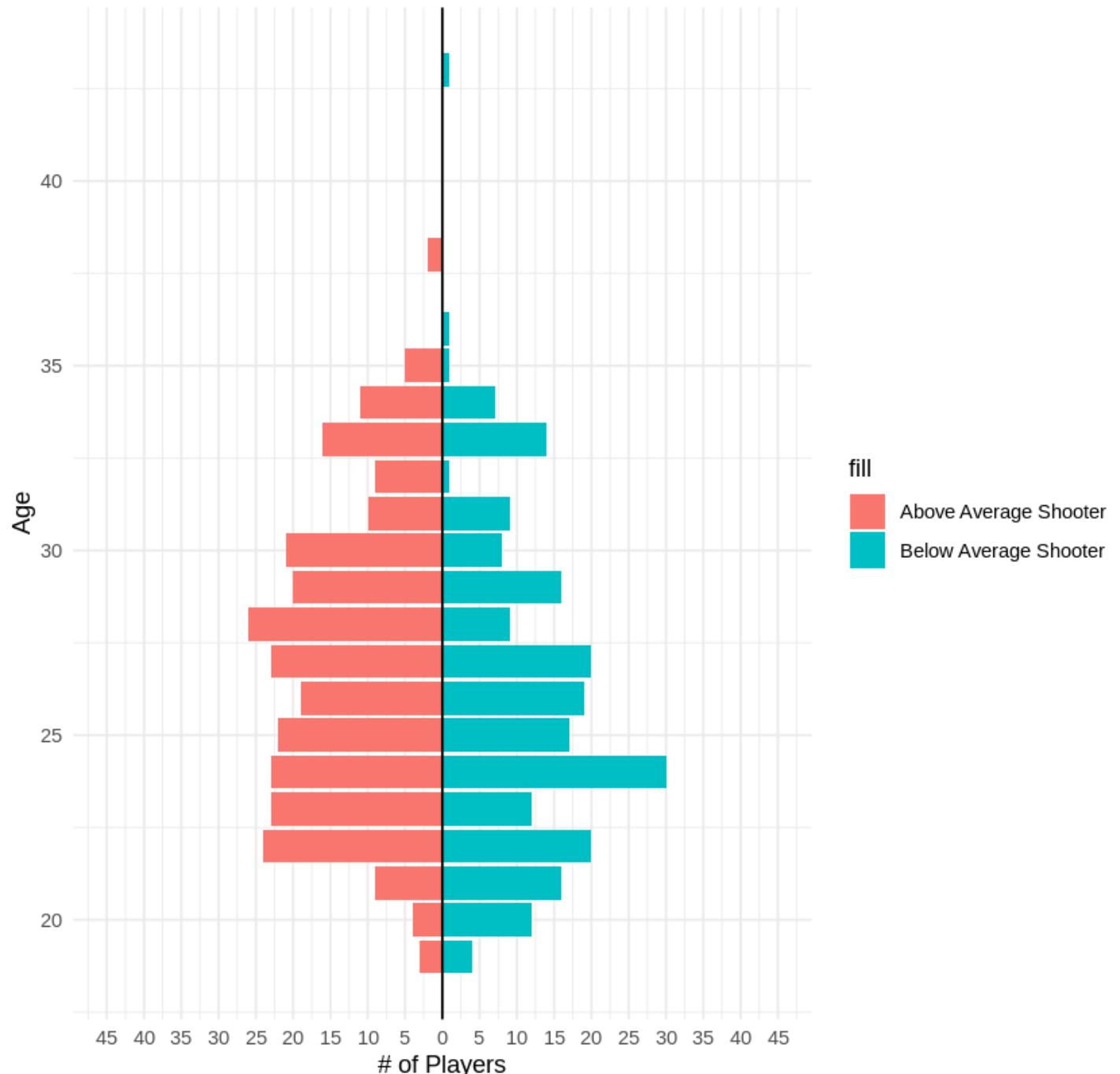
DURING THE '80S, THREE-POINTERS WERE MOSTLY SHOT WHEN TEAMS WERE TRAILING OR WHEN THE SHOT CLOCK WAS ENDING AS A LAST-DITCH EFFORT. SINCE PLAYERS HAD NOT PRACTICED THIS SHOT, THEIR FIELD GOAL PERCENTAGE WAS EXTREMELY LOW. NOW, YOU ARE SEEING PLAYERS LIKE TRAE YOUNG AND DUNCAN ROBINSON WHO HAVE BEEN PRACTICING THREE-POINTERS SINCE THEY STARTED PLAYING BASKETBALL. AS THESE TYPES OF PLAYERS KEEP COMING INTO THE NBA, WE WILL LIKELY SEE THE NUMBER OF THREE-POINTERS PER GAME RISE WHILE STAYING AROUND THE SAME THREE-POINT PERCENTAGE.

LASTLY, TEAMS HAVE CREATED ENTIRE STRATEGIES AROUND CREATING OPEN THREE-POINT SHOTS: 'PICK AND POP', 'DRIVE AND KICK', 'PICK AND PULL'. THESE STRATEGIES HAVE ALLOWED OFFENSES TO CREATE BETTER SHOTS, INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF 3 POINTERS THEY CAN TAKE WHILE NOT DECREASING THEIR EFFICIENCY.

Rise of the 3 Pointer



## Shooting Ability by Age: How shooting can extend careers

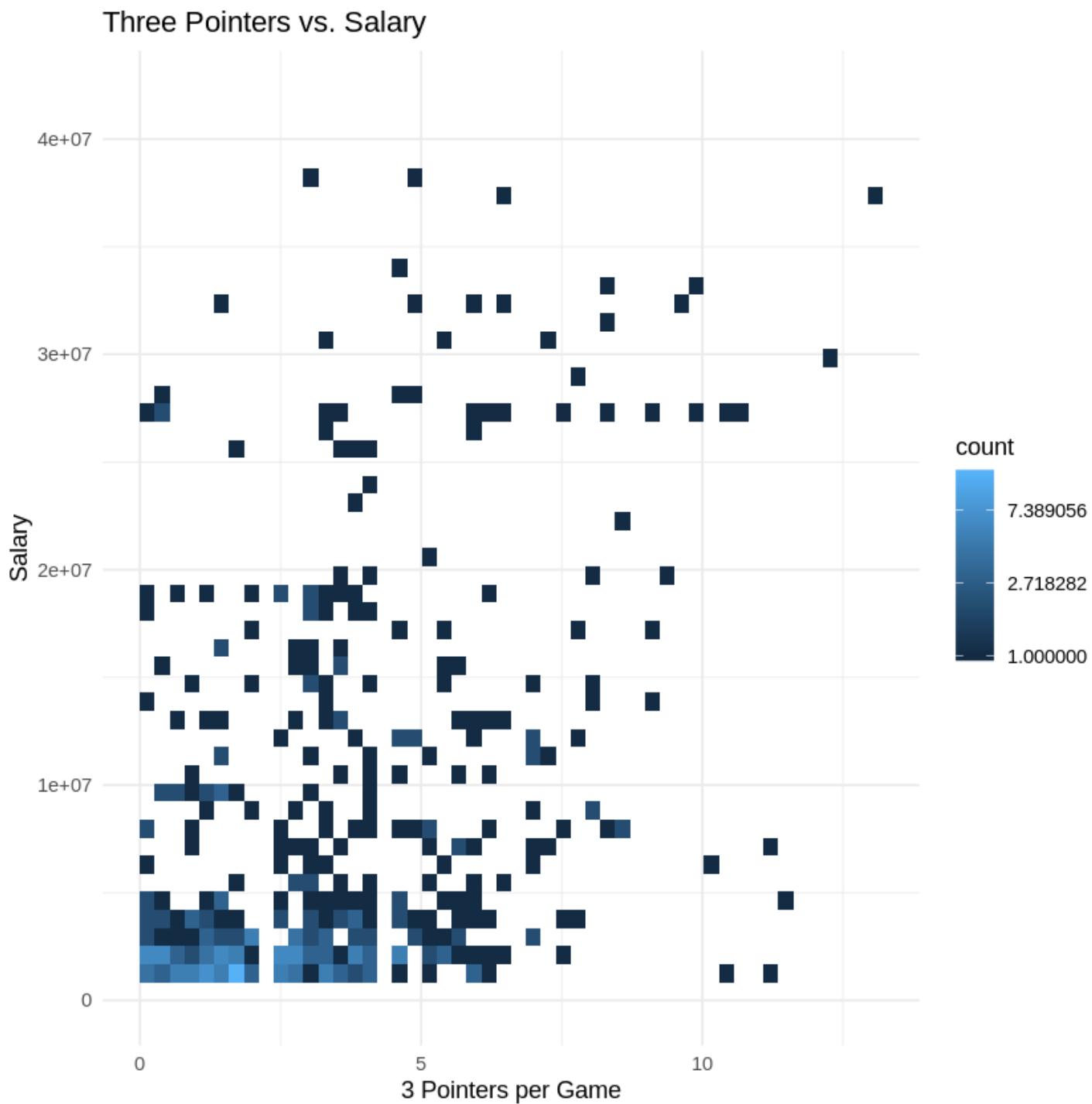


NOW, WE WILL LOOK AT HOW BECOMING AN ABOVE-AVERAGE SHOOTER CAN HELP EXTEND PLAYERS' CAREERS. ALTHOUGH THE DIFFERENCE IS NOT JARRING, ONE CAN SEE THAT AFTER TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS OLD THE DROP OFF FOR BELOW-AVERAGE SHOOTERS IS MORE DRAMATIC. AS ELITE SHOOTERS LIKE STEPHEN CURRY AND JAMES HARDEN AGE THROUGH THEIR THIRTIES, EXPECT TO SEE ELITE SHOOTERS STAY IN THE GAME LONG AFTER THEIR PHYSICAL ABILITIES WOULD HAVE ALLOWED THEM TO IN THE PAST.

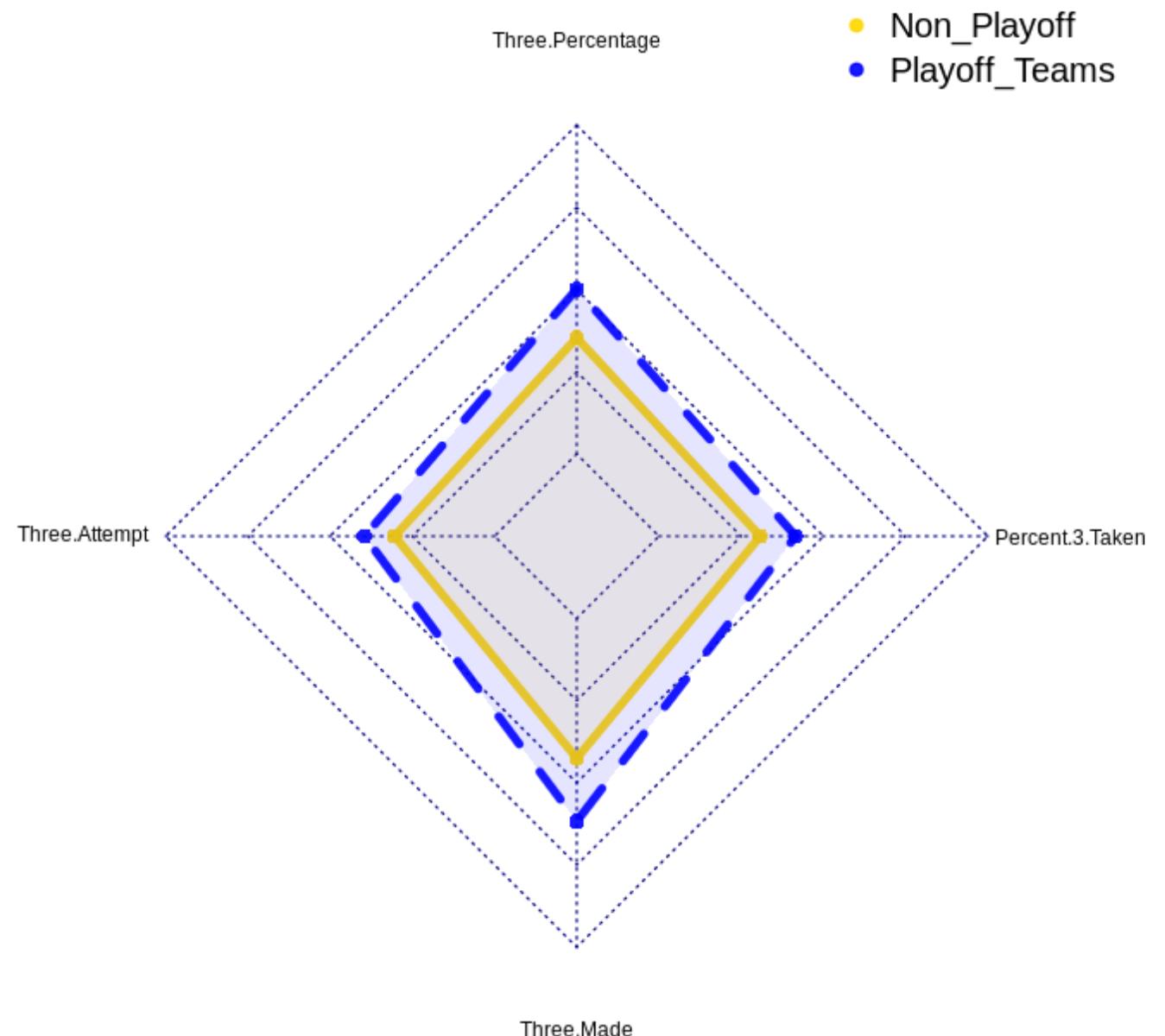
NOW, LET'S LOOK AT HOW SHOOTING CAN AFFECT THE SALARY OF NBA PLAYERS. ON THE X-AXIS, WE SEE HOW MANY POINTS A PLAYER IS SCORING BY THREE-POINTERS IN A SINGLE GAME. THIS IS A BETTER STATISTIC BECAUSE IT CONSIDERS THE FREQUENCY AND THE EFFICIENCY AT WHICH ONE SHOOTS. THREE-POINT PERCENTAGE COULD BE MISLEADING BECAUSE CERTAIN PLAYERS SHOOT INFREQUENTLY AND ONLY WHEN THEY ARE INCREDIBLY WIDE OPEN. THIS LOW SAMPLE SIZE WOULD MAKE THEM LOOK AS IF THEY ARE BETTER SHOOTERS THAN THEY ARE.

THERE IS A STRONG CORRELATION BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF POINTS SCORED BY THREE-POINTERS AND THE SALARY OF THE PLAYER. WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE MONEY WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO SHOOT THREE-POINTERS (CENTERS AND POWER FORWARDS), THERE ARE VERY FEW EXAMPLES OF GREAT SHOOTERS WHO DO NOT MAKE OVER \$10 MILLION.

THIS INFORMATION ALONG WITH THE PREVIOUS AGE PYRAMID CONVEYS THAT BEING A GREAT THREE-POINT SHOOTER CAN EARN A PLAYER A LOT MORE MONEY.



## Playoffs Teams vs Non Playoff Teams



SO FAR, WE'VE SEEN THE POSITIVE EFFECT THAT SHOOTING THREE-POINTERS CAN HAVE ON PLAYERS' CAREERS AND EARNINGS, BUT THE END GOAL OF BASKETBALL IS TO WIN. WHAT ROLE DOES THREE-POINT SHOOTING HAVE ON THE ABILITY OF THEIR TEAM TO WIN GAMES? A LOT, AS IT TURNS OUT. PLAYOFF AND NON-PLAYOFF TEAMS ARE GRAPHED TO THE LEFT. WHAT WE SEE IS THAT FOR EVERY MAJOR THREE-POINT SHOOTING STATISTIC, THE TOP 16 TEAMS IN THE LEAGUE SWEEP THE OTHER TEAMS IN THE LEAGUE HANDILY.