

# How the three-point shot has changed in NBA over the past 26 years

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# Purpose

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I study how the three-point shot has changed in basketball tactics over the past 26 years (1997-2022) in the NBA. There are many teams in the NBA (29 teams from 1995 to 2001, and 30 teams since then), each team has a different style, even if the same team will change due to team management, coaches Team changes, player changes and other reasons to change its tactics and style. I select the champion of the finals in each season (a calendar year spanning across years) as the data source. Each season's championship team often represents the direction of successful tactics and tactical changes that season.

I sampled the data of the regular season. The long season (except 50 games in 1998-1999, 71 games in 2019-2020 and 72 games in 2020-2021, all of which are 82 games) has eliminated all kinds of ups and downs and can truly reflect The team's average for the season. The data comes from the official NBA statistics (<https://www.nba.com/stats>). The official NBA team statistics all start from the 1996-1997 season, so my data citations and analysis also start from that season. Data sources for each season are linked below.

# Data Source

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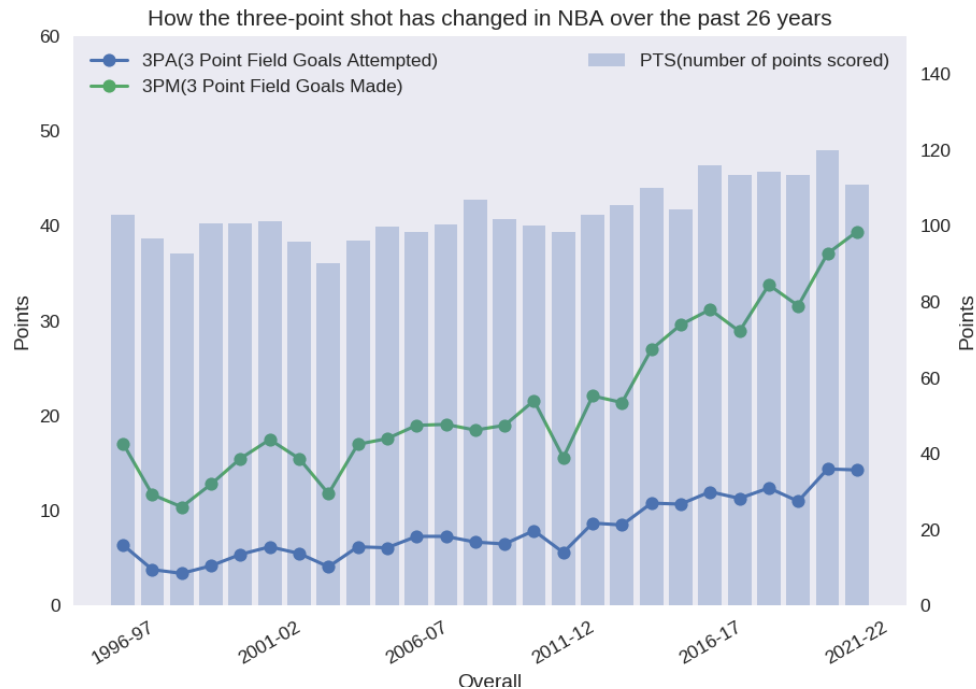
<https://www.nba.com/stats/team/1610612744/traditional/?Season=2021-22&SeasonType=Regular%20Season>  
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<https://www.nba.com/stats/team/1610612759/traditional/?Season=2004-05&SeasonType=Regular%20Season>  
<https://www.nba.com/stats/team/1610612765/traditional/?Season=2003-04&SeasonType=Regular%20Season>  
<https://www.nba.com/stats/team/1610612759/traditional/?Season=2002-03&SeasonType=Regular%20Season>  
<https://www.nba.com/stats/team/1610612747/traditional/?Season=2001-02&SeasonType=Regular%20Season>  
<https://www.nba.com/stats/team/1610612747/traditional/?Season=2000-01&SeasonType=Regular%20Season>  
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<https://www.nba.com/stats/team/1610612741/traditional/?Season=1996-97&SeasonType=Regular%20Season>

# States for 3-Points

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I extracted the following three items of data (names and definitions from <https://www.nba.com/stats/help/glossary/>):

1. 3PA Name: 3 Point Field Goals Attempted Definition: The number of 3-point field goals that a player or team has attempted.
2. 3PM Name: 3 Point Field Goals Made Definition: The number of 3-point field goals that a player or team has made.
3. PTS Name Points Definition The number of points scored



# Conclusion

We can see that over the past 26 years, the number of 3-pointers attempted (3PA) and points scored (3PM) has increased year by year. For 3PA, the 2021-2022 season (Golden State Warriors, 39.1) is 2.3 times the 1996-1997 (Chicago Bulls, 17.1). For 3PM, the 2021-2022 season (Golden State Warriors, 14.3) is 2.23 times the 1996-1997 (Chicago Bulls, 6.4). The above data changes coincide with the concept of modern basketball in the NBA: increase the speed of shots, especially the number of 3-point shots, in each offensive possession, in order to seek more offensive possessions, and gain (than the opponent) more points (more 3-pointers per shot than 2-pointers and free throws).

Also, I added how the PTS has changed over the past 26 years. Although the importance of the three-point shot in NBA basketball tactics has increased year by year, this tactical change has not resulted in the same rate of change in game scoring. The 2021-2022 Golden State Warriors' season scoring average (111.0) is only 1.08 times the 1996-1997 Chicago Bulls' average of 103.1.