

Name _____

Slam Dunking Through History: The National Basketball Association (NBA)

Short Answer Key

1. The rivalry between Magic Johnson and Larry Bird in the 1980s helped popularize the NBA and elevate it to new heights. Their contrasting playing styles, Magic's flashy playmaking and Bird's deadly shooting, created intense competition and captivated fans.
2. The merger with the American Basketball Association (ABA) in 1976 expanded the NBA by absorbing several ABA teams, including the Indiana Pacers and Denver Nuggets. It introduced innovations like the three-point line, which has since become a fundamental part of the game.
3. One international NBA player is Dirk Nowitzki from Germany, who had a significant impact on the league. Nowitzki's unique skills as a seven-foot-tall forward who could shoot three-pointers helped transform the power forward position and influenced future generations of players.
4. The "Dream Team" in 1992, featuring NBA stars like Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, and Larry Bird, showcased the league's talent on the international stage during the Olympics. Their dominance and charisma introduced basketball to a global audience, contributing to the NBA's global recognition.
5. Memorable moments in the modern NBA era include the Golden State Warriors' record-breaking season in 2015-2016 and the Toronto Raptors' historic championship win in 2019. These moments stand out due to their impact on the league's history and the excitement they generated among fans.

