



## The Shot Clock

Lately there has been a lot of talk about the rule changes in college basketball. One rule that hasn't changed, and at some point probably will, is the 35 second shot clock. There are many advocates for a shorter shot clock that will speed the game up as well as reduce the turnover%. Now let's take a look at both the NBA and college game to try to get a feel for what a shorter shot clock could mean for college basketball.

The best way to compare the pace of the NBA game with the pace of the college game, given the available statistics, is possessions per game. Before we get into the NBA, let's take a look at pace in college. Division I college basketball teams average 68.8 possessions per 40 minutes. This is up from 65.9 last year. This probably has a lot to do with the fact that more fouls are being called (FT Rate up from 35.9% to 42.7%) which shortens possessions. But there also seems to be more of an emphasis on fast paced offense.

In the NBA the average possessions per 48 minutes is 94.4, which is up from 92.0 in 2012-2013. There have been rule changes in the NBA, but none that would impact the pace in this way, so this increase can be accredited to the emphasis on faster offense.

Now we said we were going to compare the pace in the NBA and pace in college basketball. But since the tempo numbers are measured by different marks (40 minutes and 48 minutes), we put together this chart that will make it easier to compare the two platforms.

League	Possessions per Minute	Possessions per 40 Minutes	Possessions per 48 Minutes
NBA 2013-2014	1.97	78.7	94.4
NCAA Men's Division 1 2013-2014	1.72	68.8	82.6

As you can see the NBA game has .25 more possessions per minute than the college game and is therefore faster. What does this mean? Well we are going to assume that eventually the college shot clock will change. Even though it probably won't drop all the way down to 24 seconds, let's assume that it drops to 30 seconds (currently the women's college shot clock) and take a look at how much that will speed the game up, based on the information above.

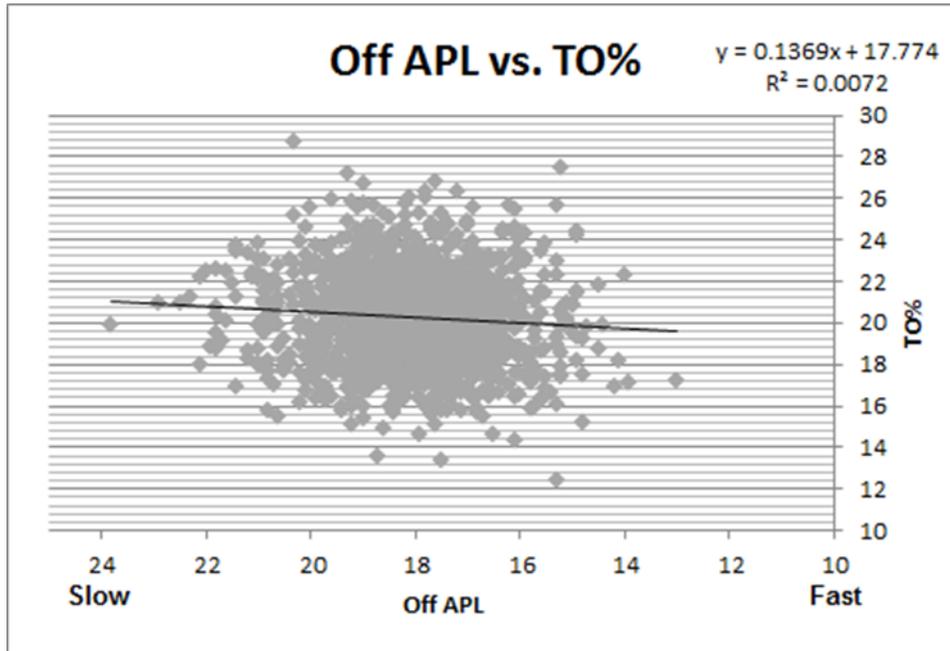
Shot Clock	Possessions per Minute	Possessions per 40 Minutes	Possessions per 48 Minutes
35 Seconds	1.72	68.8	82.6
30 Seconds	1.84	73.7	88.5

This chart gives you an idea of how much faster the game will be with a 30 second shot clock. As for the turnover rate, it is impossible to determine how many fewer turnovers a shorter shot clock would create. The skill level is so high in the NBA there is always going to be less turnovers. This year the TO% in Division 1 is 18.4%, down from 20.0% in 2012-2013. During the previous nine years the Division I TO% ranged from 20.0% to 21.4%. This brings about two questions: 1) Why is the game being played at a quicker rate, and 2) why has the Division I TO%



dropped? Could the faster pace and fewer turnovers be because there are fouls occurring so often that it is shortening possessions and not giving the offense a chance to turn the ball over?

Lastly, take a look at a regression chart from our September Newsletter that showed data from every Division I team over the previous four years. Although slightly, it shows that as a team's pace increases its TO% goes down.



A shorter shot clock has been a hot topic lately, and it is probably just a matter of time before it happens. It will speed the pace of the game up and things like turnovers will be an interesting area to keep an eye on when it happens.

### Early Season Hot Starts

I also wanted to add in a little about a few teams that are off to hot, maybe surprising, starts to their season. All stats and results found in this section are from games up to and including 12/1/2013.

#### Villanova (7-0, 15<sup>th</sup> on Kenpom.com)

The Wildcats are 7-0 and are coming off a Battle 4 Atlantis Championship. In the tournament they took down Kansas (ranked 8<sup>th</sup> on Kenpom.com) and Iowa (ranked 10<sup>th</sup> on Kenpom.com) Villanova can thank their defense for the early season success.

15<sup>th</sup> in the country in defensive points per possession (.897)

46<sup>th</sup> in the country in defensive EFG% (44.4%)

22<sup>nd</sup> in the country in defensive TO% (22.4%)

16<sup>th</sup> in the country in defensive 2P% (40.6%)



## Charlotte (6-1, 76<sup>th</sup> on Kenpom.com)

Alan Major's 49ers started the season ranked 128<sup>th</sup> on Kenpom.com. Since then they have moved up over 50 spots, thanks large in part to a victory over Michigan. They, like Nova, have been excellent on defense allowing only .952 points per possession (51<sup>st</sup>).

75<sup>th</sup> in the country in defensive EFG% (45.8%)

60<sup>th</sup> in the country in defensive FT Rate (32.9%)

## Kent State (8-1, 144<sup>th</sup> on Kenpom.com)

The Golden Flashes have started the season 8-1, with the one loss being a 2-point defeat at Seton Hall. Kent State has thrived on the offensive end of the court, they are scoring 1.174 points per possession (25<sup>th</sup>).

67<sup>th</sup> in the country in offensive EFG% (53.2%)

35<sup>th</sup> in the country in offensive TO% (15.1%)

35<sup>th</sup> in the country in offensive 3P% (40.7%)

33<sup>rd</sup> in the country in offensive FT% (76.2%)

## UCLA (7-0, 21<sup>st</sup> on Kenpom.com)

The Bruins have started the season 7-0 and their offense has been phenomenal. They are scoring 1.254 points per possession (3<sup>rd</sup>).

11<sup>th</sup> in the country in average offensive possession length (14.6 seconds)

3<sup>rd</sup> in the country in offensive EFG% (61.4%)

33<sup>rd</sup> in the country in offensive TO% (15.0%)

10<sup>th</sup> in the country in offensive 3P% (44.1%)

6<sup>th</sup> in the country in offensive 2P% (59.7%)

55<sup>th</sup> in the country in offensive FT% (74.4%)

1<sup>st</sup> in the country in offensive Block% (2.6%)