

# An Examination of the Effectiveness of the Elam Ending at TBT2018 and TBT2019

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## BACKGROUND

In basketball, teams often employ late-game strategies designed to manipulate the clock, such as stalling by leading offenses and deliberate fouling by trailing defenses. These strategies result in choppy and passive play, predictable outcomes, and unceremonious endings, which lead fans to walk out or tune out during the final stretch. Most notably used in the 2020 NBA All-Star game, the Elam Ending is designed to preserve a more natural style of play through the end of every game by curtailing late-game clock-manipulating strategies, and to provide more late-game excitement for fans. The Elam Ending calls for most of each game to be played with a game clock, but for the final portion of the game to be played without a game clock. The game ends when a target score is reached, equal to the leading team's score (at the time the game clock is shut off) plus eight. For example, if the score is 65-60 when the clock is shut off, teams would then play first-to-73-wins. The Elam Ending got its start in 2017 with The Basketball Tournament (TBT), a \$2-million-winner-take-all annual event founded in 2014 and broadcast on ESPN.



## METHODS

This study examines 134 games played under the Elam Ending in TBT 2018 and 2019. When possible, direct comparisons are made between the Elam Ending and the traditional format from 63 games in TBT 2017. Data were gathered by viewing online/television broadcasts of the games. The term "final stretch" refers to the untimed portion of the 4th quarter in games where the Elam Ending is used and refers to the final four minutes of regulation and all of overtime in games played under a traditional format.



## FINAL STRETCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

**DELIBERATE FOULS**

- 62** percent of games with deliberate fouling by trailing team under the Traditional Format
- 1** number of wins for the trailing team committing deliberate fouls
- 1** number of times deliberate fouls were committed by trailing team under Elam Ending Format

*Elam Ending eliminates deliberate fouling when leading team is not yet in the bonus*

**OPEN SHOTS**

- 32** uncontested shots were allowed by the leading teams under the Traditional Format
- 2** uncontested shots were allowed by the leading teams under the Elam Ending Format

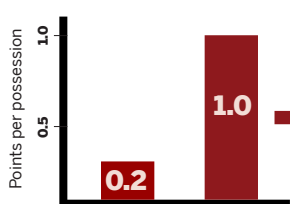
*Elam Ending forces leading teams to contest most shots during the ending of games*

### OFFENSIVE STRATEGY

**STALLING**

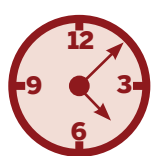
- 99** percent of games with offensive time-wasting under the Traditional Format
- 37** percent of games with offensive time-wasting under the Elam Ending Format

*Elam Ending forces leading teams to attack and score points in the majority of games*



*The Elam Ending increases offensive proficiency from 0.2 to 1.0 points per possession during buzzer-beater attempts*

## OFFICIATING & CONTROVERSY

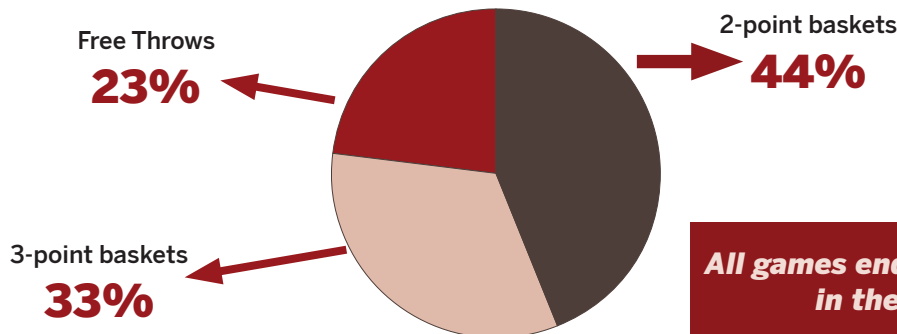


*21 percent of Traditional Format games were stopped for clock controversy, errors, and reviews ... Elam Ending eliminates this*

## GAME ENDINGS



*71 percent of games ended with trailing teams conceding under the Traditional Format ... Elam Ending featured ZERO*



*All games end with a made basket in the Elam Ending*

PROVIDE HOPE FOR LATE COMEBACKS	TRADITIONAL	ELAM ENDING
<b>6.3</b> percent of games won by trailing team at the start of the final stretch		
<b>2</b> average point deficit overcome in the final stretch		
<b>7.9</b> percent of games won by trailing team at the start of the final stretch		
<b>3</b> average point deficit overcome in the final stretch		

## DRAWN-OUT FINAL STRETCHES

With the Elam Ending, there is a **MODERATE NEGATIVE CORRELATION** between theoretical game time elapsed and margin of victory

**CLOSE GAMES LAST LONGER AND LOPSIDED GAMES END SOONER**

## CONCLUSION

These results serve to support the Elam Ending's increased implementation in grassroots-level leagues/events throughout the United States and abroad into 2020, and at the 2020 NBA All-Star Game, and call for serious consideration for implementation in additional leagues/events in the future.