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A View from the Bench

Red Holzman



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What does a professional basketball coach see when he watches a game? What does he look for in the matchup of players such as Willis Reed vs. Kareem Abdul Jabbar? In this book, Red Holzman, one of the master strategists of the game, shares with us the insights of thirty years as a player, scout, coach, and general manager in the NBA.

Holzman has seen all the great ones in action, and here he discusses the unique contributions of such superstars as Jerry West, Oscar Robertson, Bob Cousy, Julius Erving, Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain, and others. These are the names that changed the way the game is played today.

The heart of the book is Holzman's appraisal of the great matchups, those individual rivalries that have often decided championship series. The model here is Russell, who brought back the concept of defense, against Chamberlain, the greatest offensive force the game has known and virtual owner of the record book. Other matchups such as Bradley vs. Havlicek are chosen to illustrate Holzman's concept of team play. In each case he breaks down the matchup into its physical and psychological aspects, with plenty of anecdotal spinoffs that reflect the intensity of the rivalry.

Reading this book is like sitting beside Red Holzman on the bench. His uncensored observations give a whole new perspective on how the game is played by the pros and what to watch for.

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