

# Basketball

Nobody asked but ...

I love basketball. I love it from the women's grade school level, in which I used to coach, to the Olympic level with NBA and other international superstars. Why? I love it for the same reason as I do rugby. The games are models of chaos. They are models of life. They are models of anarchy.

A great deal of hoopla has been raised about the end of the semi-final NCAA Tournament game between Auburn and Virginia. Of course, the Final four weekend is attended by a mob of muckrakers, gamblers, and self-appointed analysts. This gaggle of elites sweep through the sporting meccas on an annual circuit, this week in Minneapolis for the Final Four, next week in Augusta for the Masters. They will cram the after-contest tavern scene, shouting observations over one another. The topic *du jour* is a couple of calls made or not made by referees.

The thing we forget here is that basketball is chaos. Certainly it has rules and hierarchy and officials, but these exist only to define the confines of the chaos — and sometimes, as in the case of dribbling, to induce chaos. They are fundamental, just as are the dimensions of the court or pitch. But nevertheless it is chaos. If basketball were not chaotic, who would watch? It is because the unexpected can happen that we *aficianados* are hooked. In a basketball game there are a conglomeration of convoluted, complex, confounding collisions of chance encounters. There is free will and determinism. The stochastics of ten players, three referees, two coaching cohorts, and a howling spectatorship, cannot be fully described. Each of the entities is operating both dependently and independently. Each of the entities has competencies and incompetencies, and each property for each entity varies with time.

Was there a double dribble? Probably. Such a thing happens throughout a game. Did events occur before, after, and during the double dribble, dependently and independently? Most certainly. Was there a double dribble, in appearance or in fact? Historians will disagree.

— Kilgore Forelle