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Boxscore	4th 7:47	Boxscore	4th 5:23	Boxscore	3rd 7:16	Boxscore	2nd 2:22	Boxscore	2nd 1:46	Boxscore	2nd 1:37	Boxscore	1st 0:02

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Friday, December 30th, 2011 at 11:58 am | one response

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## Stack's Stats: Christmas Day Feats

The NBA's first week kicks off with several Christmas Day milestones.

by Kyle Stack / @KyleStack

Nearly a week into this crazy 66-game NBA season and already there is unpredictability bursting out everywhere. The Dallas Mavericks 0-3? New Orleans 2-0? Portland still trudging forward at 3-0, despite another Greg Oden-less season? Boris Diaw averaging a near triple-double?

As this comes out on a Friday, surely many of the achievements so far will gain a measure of perspective. More games, thus more chances for players and teams to come down to Earth or to correct themselves, will do that. However, there have been plenty of oddball stats, beginning with Christmas Day. Let's check it out.

### The Main Dish

#### Merry Christmas, Rondo

Could the Celtics benefit from Rajon Rondo being tossed around in more reported trade negotiations? After being ensconced in rumors of the Celtics looking to deal Rondo in order to get Chris Paul, Rondo began the season with a bang – 31 points, 13 assists, five rebounds and five steals. (Nevermind the five turnovers.) How good was that stat line on Christmas?



According to basketball-reference.com's box scores that date back to 1985-86, it had never been done since at least Christmas Day '85. (Sorry, folks, Stack's Stats' \$0 budget doesn't allow us access to box scores from previous years that other places can reference.) And by that I mean no NBAer had attained a 30/10/5/5 game on the holiday.

A slew of players had done the 30/10/5 thing, with Kobe Bryant recently putting up 35 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists on Christmas Day '09 against the Cavaliers, although just one steal and one block in the effort left him out of the 30/10/5/5 club. The closest Stack's Stats found was Dwyane Wade, who put up a ridiculous 40 points, 11 assists and four rebounds, steals and blocks, apiece, in an '06 Christmas game versus the Lakers.

Alas, it was an unhappy Christmas for Rondo, whose Celtics lost to the Knicks...and then the Heat and the Hornets to join the Mavericks as the NBA's only 0-3 teams through the first Friday of the season.

#### You too, Bass

The Celtics' acquisition of Brandon Bass from Orlando for Big Baby Davis might have surprised some, while others probably expected the cantankerous Davis to eventually find his way out of Beantown. The C's must be happy that worked out how it did.

Bass fit in immediately by posting 20 points and 11 rebounds on Christmas Day. That was the power forward's first 20/10 game of a NBA career that is now in its seventh season. And it was just the 11th time in his NBA life he even wrapped up a double-double.

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But Bass fills a necessary role for a Celtics team that is dangerously thin along the front line, given that they depend on the notoriously injury-prone Jermaine O'Neal. As one Eastern Conference front office executive put it, Bass' offensive versatility is just what they need, especially with Jeff Green out for the year with a heart ailment.

"He's gonna be able to knock down shots," the exec said of Bass. "He's athletic, so he'll be able to hit the offensive 'boards, run out in transition and get ahead."

#### Happy birthday, Bron Bron

It's on LeBron James' 27th birthday that we look back on all he's given us NBA fans in his first three games this season – one *bad* game and zero three-pointers. We're kidding, of course. LeBron was *bad*, in a good way, through his first three contests.



The 37, 26 and 35 points he posted made it the first time he's scored 25-plus in each of his first three games of a regular season. It's also the first time Bron has gone for 30-plus in two of his first three games since 2005-06, when he dropped 31 Opening Night against the Hornets and followed it up two games later with 36 versus the Grizzlies.

Of course, that is by no means the end to LeBron's interesting stat nuggets. Yahoo! Sports noted that King James' Christmas Day line (37 points, 10 rebounds, 6 assists, 2 steals/blocks) made he and Hakeem Olajuwon the only players since 1986 to accrue a 37/10/6/2/2 line six times.

Also from Yahoo!, this time via J.E. Skeets, in a statistic that has been observed by many outlets: LeBron and Dwyane Wade didn't attempt a three-pointer through their first three contests.

The last time LeBron went three straight games without attempting a Ray Allen (might as well just call it that, right?) was February 18-22, 2004. That was his rookie season, for those of you bad at NBA history. While Mr. LeBron had plenty of nights in his first couple seasons in which he didn't attempt a three-pointer, that obscurity has become quite rare since then.

Beginning with the 2005-06 season and ending through last season, James went just six games without attempting a three. That's six games out of 560, including the Playoffs.

Wade, on the other hand, has not showed the same kind of discipline (or odd luck) as Bron in not attempting a three-pointer for three consecutive games. His last three-contest streak without an attempt from downtown dated back to January 8-16, 2008, in which he went four matchups without an attempt.

#### Stop crying, Mavs fans

The Mavericks are the first defending champion to begin a season 0-3 since the 1969-70 Celtics, who started 0-4. Their excuse was they lost Bill Russell and Sam Jones to retirement following the '68-69 season, which ended with the club's 11th title in 13 seasons. No matter how valuable Chandler, J.J. Barea, Caron Butler and DeShawn Stevenson were to the Mavs last season, they were no Russell or Jones.

The '02-03 Lakers, three-time defending champs at the time, began their campaign 0-2, then 2-6, then 3-9. They played those first 12 games without Shaquille O'Neal, who had waited until mid-September of '02 to have bone spurs cleaned out of his arthritic right big toe.

The '98 Bulls, fresh off their second three-peat of the '90s, came out of the gates with a 1-1 record, although they dropped their subsequent seven games. You might remember that was a Bulls franchise stripped to the bone—no Jordan, no Pippen, no Rodman, no Phil Jackson.

So, while Mavericks fans can bellyache about losing some of their significant players from last season—and Chandler certainly was a big piece—they're still in a better position to start the season than some other defending champs of the past.

#### Odds and Ends

—Norris Cole's 20 points for the Heat December 27 against the Celtics came out of nowhere for the rookie point guard from Cleveland State. And the Heat must have been majorly thankful for that, for any scoring outburst from someone not named James, Wade or Bosh alleviates the pressure on those three to carry the offense. That type of production from a guard was rare last season.

Eddie House scored 20 points November 11, 2010 against the Grizzlies, then scorched the Raptors for 35 in the last game of the '10-11 season. Mike Bibby hit up the Cavaliers for 23 points last March 29. Those are the three games last year in which a guard aside from Wade or James (if you consider him a guard, which he is, at times) dropped 20-plus for the Heat. Cole did it in Miami's second game this season.

The exec who commented on Bass also had kind words for Cole: "I was a big fan of him coming out of the draft. I liked his intangibles; he's a tough kid, good athlete. He's headstrong. You can tell he played college four

5 Plays From Tuesday!

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years."

—A Pacific Division front office executive on Chauncey Billups' foray with the Clippers: "I think Billups will fit in fine. It will be interesting to see him guard 2's. I think they will be fine because he is so smart and strong. They really need a big two to bring off the bench, though."

—Would you like to know two other stats which hadn't been recorded on Christmas Day '85? (Again, those box scores go back only so long.) Not since that day had a player made six or more three-pointers on the holiday. Ryan Anderson said 'sayonara' to that one with his six threes that led to 25 points for the Magic against the Thunder.

Another stat which hadn't been accomplished since at least Christmas '85: six or more blocks from one player in a game. That happened twice this past Christmas—six from the Knicks' Tyson Chandler and eight via DeAndre Jordan on the Clippers. Call them the anti-Santa's.

—You will love this statistic. Boris Diaw nearly accumulated back-to-back triple-doubles in the Bobcats' first two games. We may get controversial here. I consider a 'near triple-double' to be when a player has at least eight points, rebounds and/or assists. Others might disagree. Let Diaw's two stat lines serve as examples for my outlook.

On December 26 against the Bucks, the Frenchman served 9 points, 11 rebounds and 9 assists. That's close. Two nights later versus the Heat, Diaw produced 16 points, 16 rebounds and 8 assists. Close, again.

What was significant about that is Diaw, who has 18 such 'near' triple-doubles and seven triple-doubles, including playoffs, has gone back-to-back 'near' TD's just twice in his career. (He also once had a 'near' TD then a real one back-to-back and then had the old-fashioned back-to-back triple-double once.) Confused? I'll clear this up with one concise point.

The Charlotte Bobcats have never had a player record a back-to-back 'near' triple double. They've been around since 2003-04, which should give you some rich context into how well big ol' Boris started this 66-game campaign.

### NBA Schedule Quirk of the Week (The team arguably most screwed for the next week)

Atlanta Hawks – Five games in seven days

Three of their games are on the road. The schedule starts out innocently enough with a home game against the Nets December 30. Yet the Hawks fly to Houston for a game the following night, then to Miami for a January 2 tilt, then to Chicago the next night and back home January 5 against Miami again. OUCH. Can everybody hear Tracy McGrady and Jerry Stackhouse's knees explode?

Honorable mention: Sacramento Kings. They play five games in six days from December 31-January 5. They host the Knicks on the 31st and New Orleans on the 1st, then play at Memphis on the 3rd, at Denver the next night and complete a back-to-back-to-back the following night versus Milwaukee.

### Insightful NBA Player Tweets of the Week (Tweets unedited from how they were originally written)

DeJuan Blair, San Antonio Spurs (@DeJuan45)

"I see myself like a crayon: I may not be your favorite color, but I know someday; you will need me to complete your picture."

Roy Hibbert, Indiana Pacers (@Hoya2aPacer)

"I am not feeling Siri right now. She is like me when I was a kid. Didn't listen n did the opposite of whatever someone told me to do!"

Shane Battier, Miami Heat (@ShaneBattier)

"Stylist: I know you want 3 collars popped, but you only get 2. Me:But... S:Hush! Me: Fine.... S:Thanks Shawn. M: It's Shane S: Whatever..."

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### One Response to "Stack's Stats: Christmas Day Feats"

[Enigmatic](#) Posted: Dec.30 at 2:32 pm

This is quickly becoming my second favorite column behind The Post Up.

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