NBA Tosses Out New Basketball

Shaquille O'Neal is happy, and it's not because he made a free throw. The basketball star is thrilled that the National Basketball Association (NBA) brought back the leather ball on January 1.

For the past few months, players had to use a ball covered with a synthetic, or human-made, material. Many players, including O'Neal, complained the plastic coated basketball was a bad decision. They said the new ball didn't bounce as well as the leather ball. The new ball also cut their hands. "The new ball is terrible," O'Neal, the Miami Heat center, says.

Scientists at the University of Texas at Arlington ran experiments comparing the synthetic and leather balls. The biggest difference they found was in the way the new ball absorbs moisture.

The synthetic ball soaks up less moisture than the leather ball does. That means the synthetic ball doesn't become heavier when it comes in contact with players' sweat. It also means the synthetic ball can become slippery because moisture stays on its surface, scientist Kaushik De, who helped conduct the study, told WR News.

The return of the leather ball has many NBA players jumping for joy. "For the league to be successful, obviously, the players have to be happy," says LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers. "The basketball is the most important thing to us."
“NBA Tosses Out New Basketball” Questions

1. A detail from this passage is
   a. the new ball cut the players hands.
   b. the new ball did not bounce as well.
   c. the new ball was not liked by the athletes.
   d. all of the above.

2. The main idea of this passage is
   a. the players prefer a leather ball to a plastic one.
   b. the new ball did not absorb sweat well.
   c. the new ball was often slippery.
   d. basketball is a fun sport.

3. A detail from the passage is
   a. the synthetic ball was made of leather.
   b. O’Neil likes the synthetic ball.
   c. the synthetic ball was covered in plastic.
   d. the synthetic ball was not slippery.

4. A conclusion one can draw from this article is that
   a. items made from synthetic materials are better than those made from natural materials.
   b. the NBA responds to the needs of professional basketball players.
   c. footballs should be made out of leather.
   d. none of the above.

5. What does synthetic mean?

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“NBA Tosses Out New Basketball” Answer Sheet

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**MI** 2. The main idea of this passage is
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   c. footballs should be made out of leather.
   d. none of the above.

**ViC** 5. What does synthetic mean?

   Answers will vary, but students might mention that synthetic is a man-made material that does not occur naturally.

*Additional Suggested Vocabulary: experiment, absorb, moisture, obvious*