

NBA OPENING WEEK 2026

OCTOBER 20-25

KEY MATCHUPS • PREVIEW & PREDICTIONS



CONTENTS

1. | Cover
2. | Contents
3. | Boston Celtics at Detroit Pistons
4. | Philadelphia 76ers at New York Knicks
5. | Oklahoma City Thunder at San Antonio Spurs
6. | Golden State Warriors at Los Angeles Lakers
7. | Dallas Mavericks at Houston Rockets
8. | Minnesota Timberwolves at Miami Heat
9. | Cleveland Cavaliers at Philadelphia 76ers
10. | Denver Nuggets at Oklahoma City Thunder
11. | New York Knicks at Boston Celtics
12. | LA Clippers at Los Angeles Lakers
13. | Houston Rockets at San Antonio Spurs
14. | Milwaukee Bucks at Philadelphia 76ers
15. | San Antonio Spurs at Dallas Mavericks
16. | Golden State Warriors at Phoenix Suns
17. | Los Angeles Lakers at Utah Jazz
18. | LA Clippers at Oklahoma City Thunder
19. | Orlando Magic at New York Knicks
20. | Disclaimer



BOSTON CELTICS AT DETROIT PISTONS

OCTOBER 20, 2026 • 3:00 PM ET

Boston opens the week with more continuity and half-court balance, while Detroit looks to push pace and attack in transition. Shot creation late in possessions and defensive rebounding should shape the result.



PREDICTION:
BOSTON WINS

PROJECTED SCORE:
BOSTON 114 – DETROIT 108

PHILADELPHIA 76ERS AT NEW YORK KNICKS

OCTOBER 20, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET



New York brings emotion and home-crowd energy to opening night, while Philadelphia counters with a fresh-look roster and physical interior play. Composure in the final minutes and three-point shot quality could be the difference.

PREDICTION: NEW YORK WINS
PROJECTED SCORE: NEW YORK 112 – PHILADELPHIA 109

OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER

AT

SAN ANTONIO SPURS

OCTOBER 20, 2026 • 9:30 PM ET



This rematch carries opening-week intensity, with Oklahoma City leaning on continuity and San Antonio bringing length and shot-making upside. Tempo control and late-game execution should decide a close finish.

PREDICTION: OKLAHOMA CITY WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: OKLAHOMA CITY 117 – SAN ANTONIO 113

GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS AT LOS ANGELES LAKERS

OCTOBER 21, 2026 • 10:00 PM ET

Experience and shot creation headline this matchup, with both teams capable of explosive perimeter stretches. Bench scoring and transition defense will be central if the game turns into a shootout.



PREDICTION: LOS ANGELES LAKERS WIN
PROJECTED SCORE: LAKERS 118 – WARRIORS 114

DALLAS MAVERICKS AT HOUSTON ROCKETS

OCTOBER 21, 2026 • 8:30 PM ET



Houston's athletic pressure and home energy make this an early measuring-stick game, while Dallas relies on half-court shot creation and offensive spacing. Whichever side controls the paint and limits turnovers should gain the edge.

PREDICTION: HOUSTON WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: HOUSTON 116 – DALLAS 110

MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES AT MIAMI HEAT

OCTOBER 21, 2026 • 7:30 PM ET



Minnesota's size and defensive pressure meet Miami's disciplined half-court structure in one of the week's most tactical matchups.

Rebounding, physicality, and late-clock execution should matter more than tempo.

PREDICTION: MINNESOTA WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: MINNESOTA 108 – MIAMI 104

CLEVELAND CAVALIERS AT PHILADELPHIA 76ERS

OCTOBER 22, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET

Cleveland's structure and ball pressure provide an early challenge for Philadelphia's offensive rhythm. The matchup may turn on interior finishing, free-throw volume, and which team stays organized in the half court.



PREDICTION: CLEVELAND WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: CLEVELAND 112 – PHILADELPHIA 107

DENVER NUGGETS AT OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER

OCTOBER 22, 2026 • 9:30 PM ET

This is one of opening week's sharpest tests, pairing Denver's execution and size against Oklahoma City's pace, spacing, and perimeter pressure. Whichever team controls the glass and wins the late-game possessions should come out on top.



PREDICTION:
OKLAHOMA CITY WINS

PROJECTED SCORE:
OKLAHOMA CITY 119 – DENVER 114

NEW YORK KNICKS AT BOSTON CELTICS

OCTOBER 23, 2026 • 7:30 PM ET



Boston's continuity and home-court edge make them a tough opponent, while New York's improved shot creation and pace keep this matchup close. The Celtics' balance and execution give them the late advantage.

PREDICTION: BOSTON WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: BOSTON 113 — NEW YORK 109

LA CLIPPERS AT LOS ANGELES LAKERS

OCTOBER 23, 2026 • 7:30 PM ET



The Lakers bring home-court scoring pressure and a transition edge, while the Clippers rely on perimeter shot-making and wing depth to keep the game tight. Expect a competitive battle, but the Lakers' pace and offensive firepower should make the difference.

PREDICTION: LAKERS WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: LAKERS 112 — CLIPPERS 108

HOUSTON ROCKETS AT SAN ANTONIO SPURS

OCTOBER 23, 2026 • 7:30 PM ET



Houston's aggressive pace and shot creation put constant pressure on defenses, while San Antonio's size, composure, and half-court execution make them a difficult out, especially in a tightly contested opener.

PREDICTION: SPURS WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: SPURS 110 — HOUSTON 107

MILWAUKEE BUCKS AT PHILADELPHIA 76ERS

OCTOBER 24, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET



Milwaukee's interior power and transition efficiency meet Philadelphia's shot creation and home-court energy in a compelling Eastern Conference matchup to close the opening week.

PREDICTION: BUCKS WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: BUCKS 116 — PHILADELPHIA 111

SAN ANTONIO SPURS AT DALLAS MAVERICKS

OCTOBER 24, 2026 • 7:30 PM ET



Dallas can stretch the floor and control tempo, while San Antonio brings discipline and length. Spacing, ball movement, and transition defense could determine which team sets the tone early.

PREDICTION: MAVERICKS WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: DALLAS 118 — SAN ANTONIO 112

GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS AT PHOENIX SUNS

OCTOBER 24, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET



Golden State's movement shooting and spacing create constant pressure, while Phoenix leans on its shot creation and scoring balance to control the pace.

A tight matchup with momentum swings could come down to late-game execution.

PREDICTION: SUNS WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: PHOENIX 117 — GOLDEN STATE 114

LOS ANGELES LAKERS AT UTAH JAZZ

OCTOBER 25, 2026 • 9:00 PM ET



The Lakers bring star power and rim pressure, while Utah counters with movement, energy, and home intensity. Expect a competitive battle with momentum swings and strong defensive stretches from both sides.

PREDICTION: LAKERS WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: LAKERS 115 — UTAH 109

LA CLIPPERS AT OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER

OCTOBER 25, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET



Oklahoma City's speed and offensive burst test the Clippers' physical wings and half-court execution. The Thunder's transition game and shot creation could be the difference in a tightly contested opener.

PREDICTION: THUNDER WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: OKLAHOMA CITY 119 — CLIPPERS 111

ORLANDO MAGIC AT NEW YORK KNICKS

OCTOBER 25, 2026 • 7:00 PM ET



Orlando's length and defensive activity will test New York's offensive rhythm, as the Knicks look to use their crowd energy and ball movement to create high-quality looks and control the pace at home.

PREDICTION: KNICKS WINS

PROJECTED SCORE: NEW YORK 114 — ORLANDO 105

DISCLAIMER

This feature is intended for editorial and entertainment purposes only. Schedules, rosters, injuries, and game conditions may change before tip-off. All previews, opinions, and projected scores reflect independent analysis and are not guarantees of any result.

