Exclusive Interview: Wilt Chamberlain

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Law News staffer John Gee shoots the breeze with Lakers' star Wilt Chamberlain last Sunday. After talking with Gee, Pete Winbrow, and Rick Grimes, Chamberlain led the Lakers to victory over the Baltimore Bullets 125-115. Immediately upon conclusion of the game they returned to the locker room where Sports Editor Winbrow congratulated Wilt. Wilt facetiously snapped, "You haven't anything to do with Bill Russell or the NBA!"

The Law News journalists were then forced to sit through one hell of an exhibition of fast-break basketball by the Lakers, who prevailed over the Baltimore Bullets 125-115. Immediately upon conclusion of the game they returned to the locker room where Sports Editor Winbrow congratulated Wilt. Wilt facetiously snapped, "You haven't anything to do with Bill Russell or the NBA!"

Text of Chamberlain-Law News Interview

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Law News: Why do centers in the NBA allow Bill Russell to come into the low post without contest? 
Wilt: A center who did contest the pass would draw defensive fouls. The ideal way to play defense in the low post is for the offensive center to be unaware of where the defensive center is. On offense an offensive center is aware of the tackler he is going to see the other center into fouls. Finally, the defensive center cannot afford to gamble because if he loses the result is an easy layup.

Law News: What is your opinion of the reserve clause? 
Wilt: Horrible!

Law News: When did you learn the finger roll? 
Wilt: I started using it 7-8 years ago because my knees were extremely painful and were sap ing my strength and preventing me from going to the hoop. The finger roll compensates for lack of body strength. It's a method of getting the ball close to the basket when the body can't make it.

Law News: Why don't you use your hook shot, which is more than adequate? 
Wilt: I'm not comfortable taking the hook. I learned the hook as a kid but became the victim of the trend to jump shots. The jump shot compensates for lack of body strength. It's a method of getting the ball close to the basket when the body can't make it.

Law News: What type of coach would you be? 
Wilt: I'd rather play than coach. But if I were a coach I would analyze the type of game that I have and coach accordingly. I would like to cut down on some of the unnecessary regimentation. For example on veteran teams one could give you the players a little more freedom.

Law News: Do you still weight train? Has it allowed your affect your play? 
Wilt: I still work out during the summer but lift light, you know, so I'm not sure about that.

Law News: Do you think the ABA will ever reach parity with the NBA? 
Wilt: Never. Three or four years ago the ABA had a chance but they blew it by letting good players go to the NBA to start.

Law News: Do the officials still let the other centers jump in your face? 
Wilt: They, yes, they still do. But now I handle it a bit better. Kareem has the same problem. In fact the official seems to let Kareem get a lot more center time in the league. Teller, I don't appreciate the showing.

Law News: Will Hap Harmon be back for the playoff run? Can you give him any tips from your previous recovery? 
Wilt: I don't know if he'll be back in time. He's getting a new cast next week. His injury is different from mine. He has a cartilage injury like Jerry (West) and Keith Erickson had. My injury was a tendon. Whether he recovers depends on how motivated he is, and how hard he practices. It's the hardest of all the injuries. Practice will tell. It's the hardest of all the injuries.

Law News: Why do you fake shot before shooting a free throw? 
Wilt: To avoid the offensive foul.

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