



Let's face it. For a while there, the NBA's once electrifying All-Star Weekend festivities were starting to get pretty damn stale. The dunk had become passé, the 3-point shootout was a brick toss amongst bench jockeys, and the Legends game was scrapped due to the uptick in old fat guys shattering their fibulas. It wasn't until 2003 that the NBA finally found the solution to its All-Star woes. They called it the Skills Challenge, but I like to call it the most exciting half hour in sports.

Suffice it to say, anticipation is at an all-time high for the 2011 Taco Bell Skills Challenge. I mean, just look at the field: rookie sensation John Wall, MVP candidate Derrick Rose, elite point guards Chris Paul and Russell Westbrook, and sharpshooter Stephen Curry, who's from Akron. Yeah, I didn't know that either. Man, now I'm even more excited!

So, we've got five of the most talented young players on the planet going head to head in their very own All-Star Saturday showdown. Sounds amazing. But perhaps you're wondering, "hey, what exactly is this Skills Challenge thing again? I have no recollection of this event whatsoever and I'm pretty sure I've watched All-Star Saturday the past few years."

Ok, well that's obviously a really stupid, ignorant question, but I'll play along anyway. What is the Taco Bell NBA All-Star Weekend Skills Challenge, you ask? Well, first of all, it's presented by Taco Bell. That's pretty important. Second of all, it's the single most ingenious test of speed, endurance, athleticism, courage, wisdom, manliness, and dribbling that's ever been devised. To put it another way, the NBA Skills Challenge is an obstacle course of the human spirit, and it goes something like this...

1. Player must make a lay-up.
2. Player must dribble the ball around some orange cones.
3. Player must pass the ball through a large inner tube.
4. Player must bounce-pass the ball through a second large inner tube.
5. Player must make a mid range jumper.
6. Player must pass ball through a further away inner tube.
7. Player must dribble through more cones.
8. Player must make another lay-up.

If your mind's not blown already, consider this... It's All Timed! So it's not just guys dribbling back and forth and bouncing the ball through circles. F%[^]k no! It's guys dribbling back and forth and bouncing the ball through circles in a hurry! Usually, anyway. Sometimes when they screw up the bounce-pass part or something, they just stroll through the rest of the course since they know they're out of it. But still, it's riveting television. So much dribbling and bouncing and uncontested leisurely shooting— it's like the Home Run Derby's back on steroids again!

