Name: _____ Date: _____

How Does Dude Perfect Plan a Trick Shot?

Reading level 10 (6th grade) · 1178 words

How does a trick-shot team plan a shot that looks impossible? Dude Perfect has been working on that question on YouTube since 2009. The group is made of five friends. They met as roommates at Texas A&M University. Now they work in Frisco, Texas. In autumn 2026, more than 62 million people followed the main channel. This book follows the steps that reports describe: the bets, the many tries, the weather, the judges and the editing room.

In 2008, roommates at Texas A&M put up a hoop in a backyard in College Station, Texas. They bet each other sandwiches that they could make hard shots. Another student filmed them, and the shots kept getting harder. One of the five later said they started it all "just for fun." In April 2009, the group posted a trick-shot video. Texas Monthly reported that the name came from a comment the filming friend made on one video: "Dude, perfect."

In September 2009, one of the five stood on the third deck of Kyle Field, the Texas A&M football stadium. "Welcome to Aggieland," he told the camera. "This is the world's longest basketball shot." The ball dropped through the net down on the field. The other four cheered. The video went viral and led to interviews on ABC and CBS. By August 2017, Texas Monthly reported, the channel had 20 million subscribers.

Making a shot look easy takes work. Texas Monthly wrote in 2017 that the videos need "a great deal of preparation and discipline on the front end." For years the friends had other jobs, so they filmed after work. In 2014, all five made the channel their full-time work. They met in a Dallas bakery to brainstorm bigger shots. In April 2016, their television series, The Dude Perfect Show, began on the cable channel CMT.

A shot from a blimp shows how many tries a trick can take. On Saturday, March 24, 2012, the group made its first shot from a blimp. The weather left that video almost unusable. The final video was shot the next Tuesday. The crew made several passes at the basket. Each pass had a slightly different approach and height. One of the five said he did not know how many shots they tried. While they waited for better weather, they tried trick shots inside the hangar.

Some shots become records, and records need a witness. In 2016, an official judge from Guinness World Records watched the group's basketball tries. That was at a university in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 30 and 31. The group earned titles such as the farthest bounce shot, 27.79 meters (91 feet 2 inches). Guinness said no one had claimed that title before. Other titles were for shots made with the head, shots made blindfolded, and shots made while sitting on the court.

The height record had to wait for the weather. Severe thunderstorms postponed the try, so the team moved to Oklahoma City. On April 28, 2016, Tyler Toney shot a basketball from the top

of a 36-story building, the Cotter Ranch Tower. Guinness gave the height as 162.458 meters (533 feet) above the hoop. It beat the old mark by 35.95 meters. With that shot, Guinness counted eleven new basketball titles for the group that spring.

Small records follow the same method. For the show Overtime, the group tried a pea-blowing record. The Guinness judge set a target of 24 feet 7.6 inches. Tyler Toney said the group "picked the most spherical pea we could find." In May 2018, Guinness reported that Coby Cotton blew the pea 8.8 meters (28 feet 10.45 inches), a new record. On a 2019 episode of The Dude Perfect Show, a Swiss-ball distance title came on the third try. Picking the right equipment, and trying again, is part of the plan.

Physics explains why tall towers help. Once a ball leaves the hand, gravity is the only force on it, if you ignore the air. Its path is a curve called a parabola. A hoop is 18 inches wide, and a men's basketball is about 9.5 inches wide. So the ball needs room to spare. A 2010 Washington Post article on basketball physics found that a ball coming straight down has 4.25 inches of free space on every side. A 45-degree shot has only 1.5 inches.

In 2023, the group chose a tower in Las Vegas called the STRAT. A shot there would fall about 856 feet, and reports gave heights from 854 to 856. A report said staff met regularly to settle the plan and the safety rules. The resort said the work took 22 hours over three days. One report said the group made the shot in the last hour of filming. Before the try, a news report said Guinness listed the highest basketball shot at about 660 feet.

Sports Illustrated reported that one of the five, known as Beardo, dropped the ball and that it "swerved its way into the hoop." The resort said it banked off the backboard. How long was it in the air? By this book's arithmetic, a ball falling 856 feet with no air would take about 7.3 seconds. Real air pushes back so hard that the fall may take about twice as long. A falling ball stops speeding up when the drag of the air equals its weight. That speed is called terminal velocity.

Records change, so every number needs a date. Even a record can be passed within months. In November 2016, Guinness reported that another team had shot from 593.73 feet at a dam in Switzerland. That passed the group's 533 feet. In May 2023, reports said Dude Perfect was waiting for Guinness to confirm the 856-foot shot. In November 2026, Guinness's page for this record still named a 2018 shot of about 660 feet. Guinness reported in May 2018 that the group held 25 titles, 14 in football and 11 in basketball. Texas A&M's magazine said "more than 30" in September 2025. Guinness's own site shows who holds a record today.

The shots are filmed and edited in Frisco. In 2017, Texas Monthly described a 25,000-square-foot warehouse. It held a basketball court, a putting green and a wall of framed Guinness certificates. In March 2024, an executive said three editors shared a room that was 10 feet by 10 feet. The company planned a bigger building where production, editing and social media each had an area. In early 2025, the group showed its third headquarters. It has

a full-size court and extra moving hoops on the wall.

In autumn 2026, the main channel had more than 62 million subscribers. A subscriber is a person who follows a channel. The growth is easy to see in three dated numbers: 20 million in August 2017, about 60 million in March 2024, and more than 62 million in autumn 2026. Each number counts people who chose to follow. The first shots had no such crowd. They had a backyard hoop and a bet about sandwiches. That is where the work of every later shot began.

Questions

1. Why was the 2016 height attempt moved to Oklahoma City?

A. A judge asked to see it
B. Thunderstorms postponed the attempt
C. The tower was too short

2. What did the Guinness judge do at the 2016 basketball tries?

A. Edited the video
B. Built the sets
C. Watched the tries

3. Why do tall-tower shots, dropped nearly straight down, suit a basketball hoop?

A. The ball weighs less when it is up high
B. A steep ball has more room
C. Towers have their own built-in hoops

4. In "Texas Monthly wrote that the videos need a great deal of preparation," what does preparation mean?

A. Getting ready beforehand
B. Cleaning up afterward
C. Counting the views

5. Why does the book call 7.3 seconds only a starting point?

A. Gravity changes with height
B. Air slows a real fall
C. The ball is thrown up first

6. How high above the hoop was the 2016 Oklahoma City shot?

A. 216 feet
B. 856 feet
C. 533 feet

Words to know

drag: air resistance
viral: widely shared
parabola: curved path
postponed: put off
subscribers: followers

Answer key: How Does Dude Perfect Plan a Trick Shot?

1. B. Thunderstorms postponed the attempt
2. C. Watched the tries
3. B. A steep ball has more room
4. A. Getting ready beforehand
5. B. Air slows a real fall
6. C. 533 feet