



The Championship Trophy Caper

Grade 9 math · Two-step equations, Exponents, Square roots, Integers · Reading level grades 5-6

Detective: _____ Date: _____

Right before the final buzzer of the state tournament, someone swiped the golden championship trophy from center court! The detective team must analyze player stats, match gear, and solve court clues to find the bandit.

1. Solve each math problem. The answer is a number, and the letter beside it is what that number stands for.
2. In the clue boxes, write that letter in every box showing the same number, then read the secret clue.
3. Use each clue to cross suspects off the list. The one suspect left at the end is the culprit!

My answer: the trophy bandit is _____

Possible suspects

Cross off a row as each clue rules it out. The one left at the end is the culprit.

NAME	SIGNATURE MOVE	GEAR ITEM	DOMINANT HAND	HEADWEAR	GAME FLAW
Kevin Durant	Windmill Dunk	Ankle Braces	Right Handed	Black Bandana	Strict Foot Faults
Anthony Davis	Sky Hook	Glow Wristband	Left Handed	Gold Visor	Bad Free Throws
Maya Moore	No Look Pass	Padded Sleeve	Left Handed	Black Bandana	Strict Foot Faults
Breanna Stewart	Windmill Dunk	Ankle Braces	Left Handed	Red Cap	Bad Free Throws
Magic Johnson	Fadeaway Jumper	High Top Sneakers	Right Handed	Gold Visor	Strict Foot Faults
Steph Curry	Sky Hook	Neon Headband	Right Handed	Black Bandana	Strict Foot Faults
Chris Paul	Crossover Dribble	High Top Sneakers	Right Handed	Gold Visor	Bad Free Throws
Steve Nash	Windmill Dunk	High Top Sneakers	Left Handed	Black Bandana	Strict Foot Faults
Nikola Jokic	Crossover Dribble	Ankle Braces	Left Handed	Black Bandana	Bad Free Throws
Diana Taurasi	Crossover Dribble	Ankle Braces	Right Handed	Black Bandana	Strict Foot Faults
Aja Wilson	Crossover Dribble	Padded Sleeve	Right Handed	Black Bandana	Frequent Travels
Lisa Leslie	Windmill Dunk	Ankle Braces	Right Handed	Black Bandana	Bad Free Throws
Luka Doncic	No Look Pass	Neon Headband	Left Handed	Red Cap	Bad Free Throws
Kelsey Plum	Crossover Dribble	High Top Sneakers	Left Handed	Black Bandana	Strict Foot Faults
Elena Delle Donne	No Look Pass	Ankle Braces	Right Handed	Black Bandana	Strict Foot Faults
Shaquille ONeal	No Look Pass	Glow Wristband	Left Handed	Black Bandana	Bad Free Throws
LeBron James	No Look Pass	Ankle Braces	Left Handed	Black Bandana	Bad Free Throws
Giannis Antetokounmpo	Windmill Dunk	Padded Sleeve	Left Handed	Red Cap	Bad Free Throws
Sue Bird	Sky Hook	Neon Headband	Right Handed	Red Cap	Strict Foot Faults
Devin Booker	Crossover Dribble	Glow Wristband	Right Handed	Black Bandana	Strict Foot Faults
Dirk Nowitzki	Windmill Dunk	Padded Sleeve	Right Handed	Gold Visor	Strict Foot Faults

CLUE 1

Two-step equations

Coach Mia balanced the team points setup to crack open the locker code.

Solve each problem, then write its letter in every clue box that shows the same number.

T									T								T
21	22	7	17	12	17	2	7	8	21	16	14	7	17	18	14	21	
														T			
5	7	6	10	6	9	4	14	5	5	10	13	17	21	15	6	18	16

$4x + 2 = 86, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{T}}$

$7x + 11 = 137, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{N}}$

$9x + 4 = 148, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{D}}$

$4x + 9 = 65, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{O}}$

$8x + 6 = 70, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{C}}$

$9x + 7 = 52, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{W}}$

$6x + 11 = 71, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{R}}$

$5x + 3 = 23, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{L}}$

$6x + 2 = 44, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{E}}$

$3x + 10 = 76, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{H}}$

$7x + 6 = 20, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{P}}$

$8x + 9 = 129, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{B}}$

$7x + 3 = 66, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{G}}$

$8x + 10 = 58, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{A}}$

$8x + 4 = 108, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{I}}$

$7x + 3 = 122, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{S}}$

$3x + 9 = 45, x = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{U}}$

Scratch space:

CLUE 2

Exponents

The arena stadium lights multiplied in power levels across the scoreboard grid.

Solve each problem, then write its letter in every clue box that shows the same number.

W									W						
512	324	25	8	343	121	121	121	361	512	361	225	324	256	125	25

125	361	8	729	343	729	121	125	27	27	25	343	225

$2^9 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{W}}$

$19^2 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{A}}$

$11^2 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{S}}$

$5^2 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{T}}$

$18^2 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{I}}$

$2^3 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{N}}$

$15^2 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{R}}$

$5^3 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{H}}$

$3^3 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{O}}$

$2^8 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{G}}$

$7^3 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{E}}$

$9^3 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{D}}$

Scratch space:

CLUE 3

Square roots

The stat tracker calculated the exact square dimensions of the court logo.

Solve each problem, then write its letter in every clue box that shows the same number.

T													T				T
25	20	4	5	4	22	12	9	19	19	4	18	11	25	5	3	12	25

			T					T	
22	6	6	25	22	9	16	19	25	11

$\text{sqrt}(625) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{T}}$

$\text{sqrt}(121) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{S}}$

$\text{sqrt}(400) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{H}}$

$\text{sqrt}(81) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{A}}$

$\text{sqrt}(484) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{F}}$

$\text{sqrt}(9) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{I}}$

$\text{sqrt}(36) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{O}}$

$\text{sqrt}(144) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{C}}$

$\text{sqrt}(16) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{E}}$

$\text{sqrt}(256) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{U}}$

$\text{sqrt}(25) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{R}}$

$\text{sqrt}(361) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{L}}$

$\text{sqrt}(324) = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{D}}$

Scratch space:

CLUE 4 Integers

The referee logged the gained points and point penalties on score sheets.

Solve each problem, then write its letter in every clue box that shows the same number.

A			A				A			A		A			A	
2	21	20	2	24	26	21	2	33	1	2	33	2	7	2	10	

37	19	22	33	1	38	33	20	19	24	26	34	13				

$$(-9) + 11 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{A}}$$

$$12 - (-7) = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{O}}$$

$$(-15) + 53 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{I}}$$

$$6 - (-14) = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{L}}$$

$$(-10) + 31 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{B}}$$

$$(-10) + 32 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{U}}$$

$$26 - (-7) = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{N}}$$

$$(-13) + 23 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{S}}$$

$$(-4) + 17 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{R}}$$

$$36 - (-1) = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{F}}$$

$$(-8) + 34 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{K}}$$

$$(-13) + 14 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{D}}$$

$$27 - (-7) = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{E}}$$

$$11 - (-13) = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{C}}$$

$$(-14) + 21 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{W}}$$

Scratch space:

CLUE 5**Two-step equations - the last clue**

The head scout solved two equipment equations to unlock the video vault.

First solve each problem. Then find each answer in the numbered list below and cross that sentence out. One sentence will be left - that is exactly what the villain did!

Step 1 - solve these:

$9x + 12 = 30, x = \boxed{}$

$6x + 12 = 18, x = \boxed{}$

$6x + 3 = 63, x = \boxed{}$

$7x + 8 = 64, x = \boxed{}$

$5x + 7 = 27, x = \boxed{}$

$3x + 5 = 23, x = \boxed{}$

$4x + 12 = 60, x = \boxed{}$

$8x + 11 = 67, x = \boxed{}$

$8x + 10 = 34, x = \boxed{}$

$4x + 6 = 26, x = \boxed{}$

$3x + 4 = 37, x = \boxed{}$

Step 2 - cross out the sentence with each answer:

1. The villain dazzled with a crossover dribble, then strapped on ankle braces.
2. The villain rocked a windmill dunk, then strapped on ankle braces.
3. The villain drained a fadeaway jumper, then pulled up a padded sleeve.
4. The villain snuck a no look pass, then adjusted their neon headband.
5. The villain snuck a no look pass, then flashed a glow wristband.
6. The villain dazzled with a crossover dribble, then pulled up a padded sleeve.
7. The villain executed a sky hook, then laced up high top sneakers.
8. The villain snuck a no look pass, then laced up high top sneakers.
9. The villain executed a sky hook, then adjusted their neon headband.
10. The villain snuck a no look pass, then strapped on ankle braces.
11. The villain executed a sky hook, then pulled up a padded sleeve.
12. The villain rocked a windmill dunk, then adjusted their neon headband.

Answer Key

The Championship Trophy Caper

Culprit: Steph Curry

Sky Hook · Neon Headband · Right Handed · Black Bandana · Strict Foot Faults

Trail: Start 21 → Clue 1 18 → Clue 2 10 → Clue 3 7 → Clue 4 4 → Clue 5 1

Clue 1 (Two-step equations): "THE SUSPECT DOES NOT WEAR A GLOW WRISTBAND"

$4x + 2 = 86, x = 21$ (T) · $7x + 11 = 137, x = 18$ (N) · $9x + 4 = 148, x = 16$ (D) · $4x + 9 = 65, x = 14$ (O) · $8x + 6 = 70, x = 8$ (C) · $9x + 7 = 52, x = 5$ (W) · $6x + 11 = 71, x = 10$ (R) · $5x + 3 = 23, x = 4$ (L) · $6x + 2 = 44, x = 7$ (E) · $3x + 10 = 76, x = 22$ (H) · $7x + 6 = 20, x = 2$ (P) · $8x + 9 = 129, x = 15$ (B) · $7x + 3 = 66, x = 9$ (G) · $8x + 10 = 58, x = 6$ (A) · $8x + 4 = 108, x = 13$ (I) · $7x + 3 = 122, x = 17$ (S) · $3x + 9 = 45, x = 12$ (U)

Clue 2 (Exponents): "WITNESS SAW A RIGHT HANDED SHOOTER"

$2^9 = 512$ (W) · $19^2 = 361$ (A) · $11^2 = 121$ (S) · $5^2 = 25$ (T) · $18^2 = 324$ (I) · $2^3 = 8$ (N) · $15^2 = 225$ (R) · $5^3 = 125$ (H) · $3^3 = 27$ (O) · $2^8 = 256$ (G) · $7^3 = 343$ (E) · $9^3 = 729$ (D)

Clue 3 (Square roots): "THE REF CALLED STRICT FOOT FAULTS"

$\sqrt{625} = 25$ (T) · $\sqrt{121} = 11$ (S) · $\sqrt{400} = 20$ (H) · $\sqrt{81} = 9$ (A) · $\sqrt{484} = 22$ (F) · $\sqrt{9} = 3$ (I) · $\sqrt{36} = 6$ (O) · $\sqrt{144} = 12$ (C) · $\sqrt{16} = 4$ (E) · $\sqrt{256} = 16$ (U) · $\sqrt{25} = 5$ (R) · $\sqrt{361} = 19$ (L) · $\sqrt{324} = 18$ (D)

Clue 4 (Integers): "A BLACK BANDANA WAS FOUND IN LOCKER"

$(-9) + 11 = 2$ (A) · $12 - (-7) = 19$ (O) · $(-15) + 53 = 38$ (I) · $6 - (-14) = 20$ (L) · $(-10) + 31 = 21$ (B) · $(-10) + 32 = 22$ (U) · $26 - (-7) = 33$ (N) · $(-13) + 23 = 10$ (S) · $(-4) + 17 = 13$ (R) · $36 - (-1) = 37$ (F) · $(-8) + 34 = 26$ (K) · $(-13) + 14 = 1$ (D) · $27 - (-7) = 34$ (E) · $11 - (-13) = 24$ (C) · $(-14) + 21 = 7$ (W)

Clue 5 (Two-step equations): surviving statement is box 9 → Steph Curry

$9x + 12 = 30, x = 2$ · $6x + 12 = 18, x = 1$ · $6x + 3 = 63, x = 10$ · $7x + 8 = 64, x = 8$ · $5x + 7 = 27, x = 4$ · $3x + 5 = 23, x = 6$ · $4x + 12 = 60, x = 12$ · $8x + 11 = 67, x = 7$ · $8x + 10 = 34, x = 3$ · $4x + 6 = 26, x = 5$ · $3x + 4 = 37, x = 11$