

# THE VALUE OF BASKETBALL

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**T**HE occasion of The Golden Jubilee of Basketball suggests that an evaluation of the sport is in order. Future trends can best be directed by an intelligent review of the past.

The far-sightedness and modesty of Dr. Naismith, as he tackled the problem submitted to him by Dr. Gulick back in 1891, augured well for the future growth of the sport. First, he set up the limitation incident to an indoor game and then established the principles under which it should be played.

These same five principles, throwing the ball in any direction, prohibition of running with the ball, elimination of blocking and tackling (personal contact), an elevated longitudinal goal and the element of continuous contest for possession of the ball, have been maintained inviolate throughout the life of the game.

These factors and the comparative simplicity of the game have permitted and encouraged a world wide spread and continuous growth. It is doubtful if any other game is played by as many people in as many countries and by as many different groups. Herein lies its greatest value. The game fits a recreational and physical education program. Youngsters of twelve, the high school, college, club, Y.M.C.A., industrial groups and girls enjoy it with equal enthusiasm and play it with comparable vigor. There seems to be equal fun for the dub and the expert; for the gym class, the intramural group and the highly organized teams.

A second value lies in its test of self control. The challenge to get the ball from the other fellow,

to score a goal, but with the requirement to avoid personal contact under the most intense situation tests the caliber of every red blooded individual.

While some specialization is possible, the game emphasizes team play first of all. Co-operation or the lack of it can be easily observed. As I look back on my coaching experiences with one of the game's greatest, Hank Luisetti, I remember not that he was a great scorer, passer, dribbler or guard. I see him rather as a boy who was an unselfish part of a team

and who insisted upon being considered as one of a team. Any game which can develop this trait or can bring it out in a player is of inestimable value in our society today. How we do need to teach more cooperation so that we can get along with each other on friendly, unselfish terms!

Finally, the game has value for me for sentimental reasons. I knew the man who developed the idea. I had the privilege of working under him for fifteen years. How pleased he was to see his brain child give pleasure to so many. How modest he was to refrain from assuming any great amount of credit. Dr. Naismith would not permit the game to be named after him.

The objectives of the game, as indicated by the values listed above, represent the ideals of the man himself. It was fortunate that he should receive recognition

for it all while he lived and how fitting now that we should commemorate fifty years of growth and perpetuate by a memorial at the birth place of the game, the memory of the noble man and the game he created.

## BASKETBALL IDES OF MARCH

(1)

The gym lights gleam like a beacon beam  
And a million motors hum  
In a good will flight on a Friday night;  
For basketball beckons, "Come!"  
A sharp-shooting mite is king tonight.  
The Madness of March is running.  
The winged feet fly, the ball sails high  
And field goal hunters are gunning.

(2)

The colors clash as silk suits flash  
And race on a shimmering floor.  
Repressions die, and partisans vie  
In a goal acclaiming roar.  
On Championship Trail toward a holy grail,  
All fans are birds of a feather.  
It's fiesta night and cares lie light  
When the air is full of leather.

(3)

Since time began, the instincts of man  
Prove cave and current men kin.  
On tournament night the sage and the wight  
Are relatives under the skin.  
It's festival time—sans reason or rhyme  
But with nation-wide appeal.  
In a cyclone of hate, our ship of state  
Rides high on an even keel.

(4)

With war nerves tense, the final defense  
Is the courage, strength and will  
In a million lives where freedom thrives  
And liberty lingers still.  
Let dictators clash and empires crash  
'Neath a bloody victory arch!  
Let our boys tread where hate is dead,  
In this happy Madness of March!

—H. V. PORTER