



HOWARD C. CANN, Coach of New York University, is a graduate of N.Y.U. Voted the greatest all-around athlete in N.Y.U.'s history, he distinguished himself by scoring thirty-two field goals in the National A.A.U. Basketball Tournament in Atlanta, Georgia in 1920. That feat won for him the Atlanta Constitution Trophy Award as the greatest basketball player in the world.

PHYSICAL FITNESS IN BASKETBALL

TO BE a successful basketball player an athlete must possess these five things: determination, courage, physical fitness, mental alertness, and experience. I'm devoting this article to the factor I consider most important—physical fitness.

The old proverb that "a chain is no stronger than its weakest link" applies very well to this sport. A basketball team is no better than its least physically fit member. And I believe that a great player in poor shape is not as valuable as a mediocre player in good shape. So it is of utmost importance that every member of the squad be in perfect physical condition for every game.

In colleges which are located in large cities, it is almost impossible to keep watch over all the members of the team, so the honor system of training is employed. In such cases it is very necessary that the importance of physical fitness in basketball be impressed upon the minds of the players. By calling attention to the fact that when they are tired, shooting and passing become poor and unreliable, and also that athletes in poor condition tire very quickly, they will see the necessity for living up to the rules laid down by the coach.

In striving to get into shape two things are of paramount importance. They are: eating regularly and getting plenty of sleep. Both of these can be supervised at colleges located in small towns where all the players eat together at a training table. That's where the non-metropolitan college has a great advantage.

Practice sessions should be started early, but it is wise to bring the team along slowly. The players should reach the peak of condition just at the time their playing season begins—not two or three weeks before their first game.

One of the weaknesses in basketball today is that

we spend so little time in actually exercising. Instead, too much time is devoted to the playing of the game itself. I believe that work on chest weights, rowing machines, arm and wrist developers, along with rope skipping, should be carried on throughout the season. And if a player is really serious about the sport, he should work out before and after the season, too. A real athlete, in my opinion, is one who is in top condition all year 'round.

I doubt very much if men go physically stale. Staleness is usually caused by a mental condition. A player may have been engaging in too much practice, or he may merely lack interest in his workouts. Before the opening of the schedule, such a condition can be overcome by scrimmaging with outside teams instead of playing inter-squad games only. Another way is for the team to forget about basketball for a day or so and play volleyball or indoor baseball. To ease the mental condition of the players before an important game, it might be well for them to see a motion picture or get their minds off the contest in some similar manner.

When a man adheres to all training rules, he experiences no risk to his physical condition even if he stays in the game for forty full minutes. And not many are called upon to put in as much time as that in a single game.

To sum up, there are several important things to remember. The strain of playing basketball requires that all participants in this sport be in first-class physical condition. Achieving this condition means hard work on the part of each player and intelligent planning on the part of every coach. But the results of these efforts show up in that all-important "win" column at the end of the basketball season.