

BASKETBALL HAS GROWN UP

By Maurice Rosenwald

BASKETBALL has come a long way since Dr. Naismith struggled with the gymnasium class problem on the shores of Lake Massasoit, and the Y.M.C.A.'s, the colleges and high schools have had a tremendous part in its growth, but it must not be lost sight of that the professional players, almost since the game's inception, had a great part in its growth.

Away back in 1905, E Company of Schenectady won the world's championship in Kansas City. There were the famous Buffalo Germans, the first team to travel from coast to coast, winning some 108 games, although in some of the towns they had to pick five men and tell them what to do; the Twenty-third Street Y.M.C.A. with Wendelken, center, Shields and Eberlein, forwards, Reed and Deitrich, guards, which won the A.A.U. championship in the early 90's, then joined the National Basketball League as the Y Wanderers and won the National Championship three years running; and other teams in the Eastern, Interstate and Hudson River and other leagues, and, of course, coming down to a much later date, the New York Whirlwinds from the lower East Side settlement houses and the Original Celtics from the settlement houses of the lower West Side.

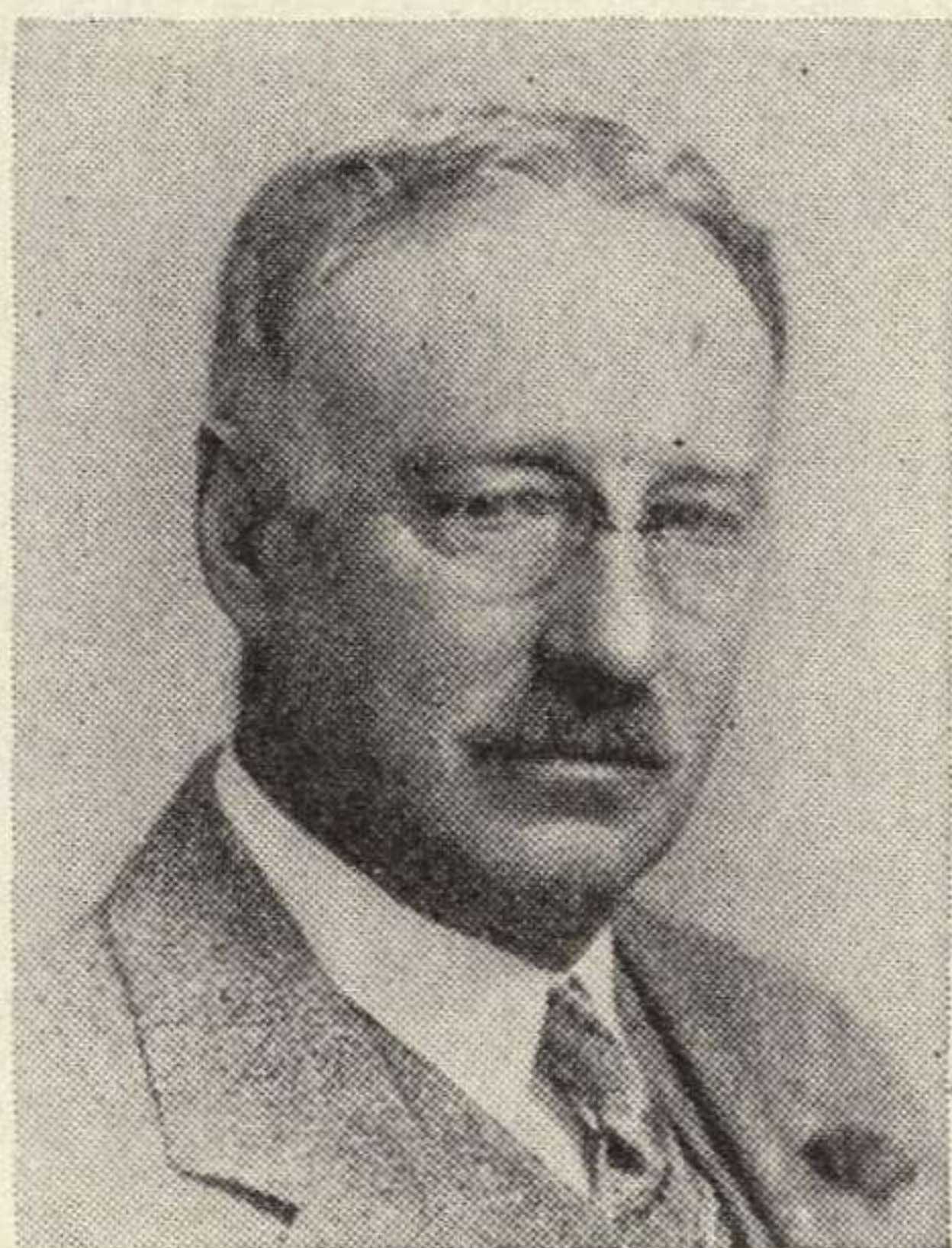
The Whirlwinds, composed of Barney Sedran, Marty Friedman, Chris Leonard, Nat Holman and Harry Riconda, were possibly the only team of that day that could have beaten the Original Celtics at their best in a series, but the teams met only twice, each winning one game. The third game was never played and the next year Nat Holman, even then coach of City College of New York, and Chris Leonard came to the Original Celtics, where with John Beckman, John Whitty, Ernie Reich, Joe Lapchick, Dutch Dehnert, Davy Banks, Horse Haggerty, Pete Barry, Ed Burke, at various times they made basketball history. Their longest winning streak was 93 games. They won 741 games and

lost but 70 in the space of seven years that the writer was connected with them. They played over 100 games in old and new Madison Square Garden and lost but one game, that to the Kingston Colonials. They played in dance halls, in renovated barns and in the finest of auditoriums. Until Ned Irish came along with his college basketball double-headers, the Original Celtics held the record for attendance, with 22,000 in the Cleveland, Ohio, auditorium, playing afternoon and evening.

The Celtics could spot any team in the country ten points and beat them, barring floods, strikes and accidents. They would play in Cleveland on a Friday night, in Brooklyn on a Saturday night, in Philadelphia on Sunday afternoon and in Madison Square Garden on Sunday night. They were the first basketball team ever to be put under contract to play with the Celtics and the Celtics only. Prior to that, one might run up against the same player in the Interstate, the Eastern, the Hudson River, or any one of a dozen different leagues, or teams. Under the managerial wing of Jimmie Furey and Johnny Whitty, the Original Celtics won the championship in every league in which they competed. They were never beaten in a series by any team, and after they left the American Basketball League, they traveled all over the United States giving exhibitions, and still do.

The pivot play was developed by the Celtics, composed then of Dutch Dehnert in the pivot, Chris Leonard at the other guard, Joe Lapchick in center and those two masters of the forward court, Nat Holman and John Beckman. These five were the best Celtic team. They could play any position and did in the course of the game.

Today, of the old Original Celtics only Davey Banks is left, and as he says, "We give them a show." The old Celtics gave them a show, too, but they gave the populace and the teams they played against a basketball education also.



No man with the possible exception of Dr. James Naismith has done so much for the well-being of basketball, for its development and improvement as George T. Hepbron (left). Mr. Hepbron edited the Spalding Basketball Guide four decades ago, and his interest and helpfulness in basketball have never wavered.

For almost half a century John Doyle (right) has been one of the most constructive figures in American athletic life. Basketball, as well as other sports, owes a great deal to his wisdom and his intelligent service.

