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BUREAUCRACY IN BASKETBALL

IN the spring of 1940 the Collegiate Basketball Officials Bureau was established through the interest and cooperation of nine colleges in the New York metropolitan area. Other institutions in the East later joined in the sponsorship, with the result that the Bureau served 24 colleges last year and lists 26 among its subscribers at the outset of the 1941-42 season. One purpose of the organization is to simplify the process of selecting and assigning basketball officials through central appointment, just as is done in football, hockey, and a number of other sports.

An even more important objective is to acquire uniformity—throughout Eastern territory for the present, possibly over a wider area in the future—in officiating methods, techniques and mechanics, and in the conception of the game of basketball. It seems superfluous to say that such uniformity is desirable, and that it has not existed in the past.

The Bureau's sponsoring colleges felt that previously there had been not only good and bad officiating, but also different kinds and types of good officiating, with the play of games too greatly affected by this variance. They believed that basketball and basketball officiating would benefit greatly if steps could be taken to standardize the most widely approved officiating techniques and to make the performances of the recognized experts the pattern for all officials.

In an effort to accomplish these ends, a series of clinics for officials was held last season and will be conducted again this year. At these sessions men with many years of experience in handling the sport demonstrated frequently misunderstood plays and interpretations.

To this same purpose, a pair of capable fieldmen, Dave Walsh of Hoboken and Ellwood Geiges of Philadelphia, have undertaken the task of ob-

serving and advising promising younger officials, in an effort to bring them as quickly as possible to the peak of their perfection. Another step has been distribution among officials registered with the Bureau of a small pamphlet entitled "Manual of Basketball Officiating." This publication represents an attempt to commit to paper a definite technique and method of basketball officiating, and to present various suggestions designed to assist individual officials and to better officiating in general.

This booklet is just a beginning; if properly and popularly used, however, it may some day develop into a manual which will tell the whole story. It is not felt that a guidebook of this sort will make good officials out of those who have no ability or promise, but it does seem certain that it will help a man with officiating gifts and instincts to make the most of his possibilities.

In my own opinion the worst foul which basketball officials commit today is one which they share with persons who never carried a whistle or who perhaps never saw a basketball game. Like most people, basketball officials talk too much. In my view they are too inclined to describe the fouls which they have called and are too ready to explain the rulings they have made—with an occasional comment on the war situation thrown in for good measure. Fouls called briefly and announced clearly leave their impression just as well as any others, and officials who handle rulings in this way are less likely to antagonize crowds and players as well.

Very briefly, these are the aims of the Bureau. With basketball now one of the fastest games on foot, with teams crossing the continent to play each other before thousands upon thousands of spectators, the skill and keenness of judgment of the officials must be a tribute to—not a liability for—the popularity of the sport.