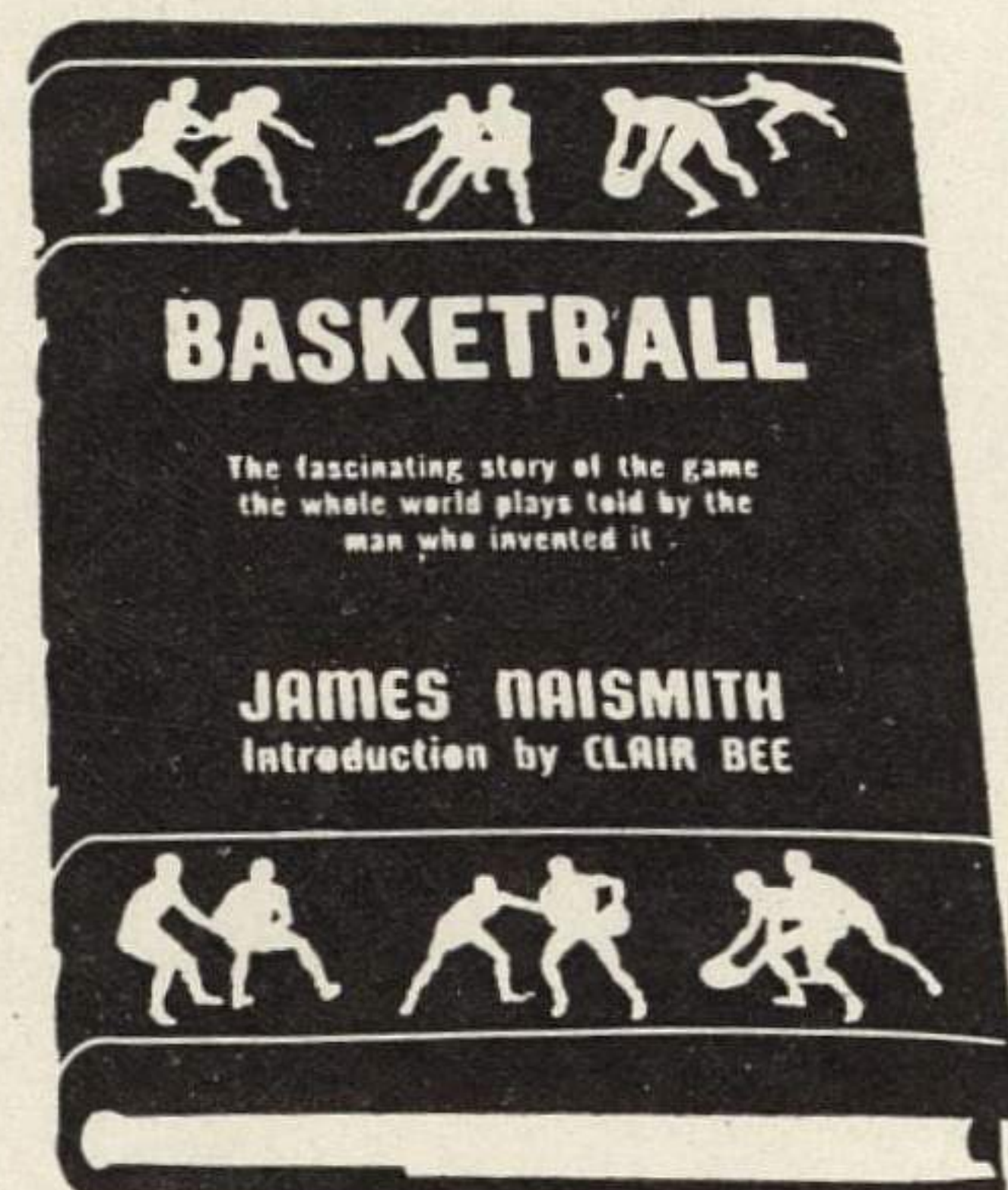


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by James Naismith

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BASKETBALL MEANS SPORTSMANSHIP

(Continued from page 7)

to olden days, who practice the obsolete code: "win at any cost." To acquire a star player with a tarnished "amateur" record, there are some coaches who "forget" (if they think they can get away with it) the elemental rules of right and wrong. They encourage ineligible young men to answer amateur registration blank questions untruthfully, and perjuringly vouch for the true amateur standing of such applicants. As advisors to young men during their character forming years, athletic officials older and more experienced than most players should teach the oncoming generation that no game is worth winning at the expense of decency and fair play.

If competition is specifically designated for amateurs only, why should second-grade professionals or so-called "semi-pros" unfairly intrude? And why should otherwise unapproachable officials aid such deception? The modern professional athlete, be he physical director, coach, referee, or paid player in any sport, has good reason to be proud of his personal prestige and sportsmanship standards. It is not good sportsmanship, by any code, if a coach or physical director aids an obviously ineligible player to enlist as an amateur and unfairly compete against true amateurs.

Happily the type I criticize is few in number. I hope the time is near when he will completely disappear from our athletic life. Basketball is today on a high plane. It should not and need not tolerate this small number of men who are out of step with this great game which typifies the best in our American life: hard, clean competition, with rules applied fairly and equally to all!

Basketball indeed has grown, even in the short span of a single life, as I view it. And through the years it has provided a tremendous amount of pleasure and personal benefits, not only to the collegians and the professionals, but to untold thousands of working boys who pursue the sport in athletic clubs, Y.M.C.A.'s, Catholic Youth organizations, Y.M.H.A.'s, playgrounds, industrial recreational groups, etc.

I don't know of any other activity in our country that has done more to make our youth mentally alert and physically fit than basketball. We can face the future as a nation with full confidence that basketball and our other athletic sports will prove of vital value in any test which may confront us.