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INDIANA—HOTBED OF BASKETBALL

BASKETBALL, born in Massachusetts, bred in Indiana, cultivated in Kansas, remodeled in California, and full dressed as America's foremost after dinner screech in Madison Square Garden, has been translated into almost as many languages as the Bible. And there are places in these United States where it is taken just as seriously.

Its chief merit seems to be its adaptability. It can make itself at home almost anywhere and that, more than anything else, unless it be its simplicity, is probably accountable for the game's growth. Almost every game known to mankind has been elaborated on in the course of its evolution. Basketball, beginning with eighteen players, has been cut to ten.

It seems sensible to admit that basketball filled a spot that baseball created when winter arrived and all kinds of weather drove people inside. It has a little edge on our national pastime too for it provided excellent entertainment for the spectator in the evening when there was time for adult recreation. It was not even as demanding in the matter of equipment as baseball.

That little hall in the basement of the church could be made into a gymnasium or perhaps the assembly room in the high school would do. The town hall didn't have to undergo much remodeling to make it fit for an evening's game. And the neighboring community was more than happy to buggify over and have a go at the next town's quintet. If ever a game was born with a silver dollar in its pocket, basketball was it.

The spirit of rivalry engendered by the playing reached into bigger fields. One town would say the next town's gym wasn't much so the next town built a new one. Pride took charge of another neighboring community so the aroused folks put

up a better hall of goals in their town. Woven into this natural growth came other accessories such as the urge for education, the building of new roads, the coming of the automobile, and the like.

Before talking about the state of Indiana, I would like to say this. No one out our way claims that Indiana produces better basketball players than any other part of the nation. Indiana does claim that for the size of it, it does turn out more good basketball players than any part of the nation. Maybe Indiana isn't a fair locality to dwell upon in tracing basketball's growth, but certainly no section of the country is more ideally suited for such tracing than the home of Booth Tarkington, James Whitcomb Riley, George Ade, Meredith Nicholson and a few others who never shot a basket.

More words have been written about basketball in Indiana and written in Indiana than the United States Government has spent pennies for defense. Why? Simply because, as I have contended for years, the basketball gym is the night club of Indiana and the supreme court out this way has a couple of goals hanging at either end with bleachers wherever there is room for them.

I know that the good citizens of one town subscribed over \$100,000 in three days for a new basketball gym and they paid off that indebtedness in no time at all without benefit of slot machines or bingo. Another community of 4,900 population built a basketball hall in which the seats were 28 inches wide and 28 inches deep and 5,200 could go on a sit down strike without disturbing the players' court. In one year that gymnasium paid \$13,000.

All this was born of community spirit, and that spirit reached over the whole state as completely as the movies dominate Hollywood. I suppose the game grew in that manner all over the nation.