



WILLARD N. GREIM, Director of Athletic Education in the Denver Public Schools, is a graduate of Springfield College, where he was an all-around athlete. He is Chairman of the Men's Basketball Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States, and Manager of the National A. A. U. Basketball Championships in Denver since 1935. He is a Colonel in the Reserve Army.

## THE A.A.U. AND BASKETBALL

**A**THLETIC SPORTS in the United States were not always as well organized and conducted as they are today. This statement applies equally to interscholastic and intercollegiate sports, as well as to sports outside of schools and colleges. Years ago the country was infested with teams of athletes, as well as individuals, touring the country under their rightful or assumed names, making their living on side bets or duping the public. The Amateur Athletic Union was organized in 1888 in the hope that this condition could be altered, and, also, that certain sports which were essentially amateur in character could be properly promoted.

Schools and colleges have continued their organization and promotion of sports for their student bodies but their activities are limited to school groups. The A.A.U. has attempted to further sports activities especially for men and women not involved in the school and college programs and has also included the school and college athletes in its program. Because of their present and future interest in the athletes who have been developed in their programs, colleges have affiliated with the A.A.U. hoping to formulate the best conditions of participation for these athletes. The influence of the A.A.U. has done much to eliminate the professional athlete from amateur ranks and to raise the standards of amateur competition.

Basketball was one of the sports over which the A.A.U. assumed jurisdiction a number of years ago. At that time, basketball was thought of as a recreational activity rather than a highly competitive game. From its inception in 1891, basketball developed into a game popular with independent teams affiliated with the Y.M.C.A., athletic clubs, and such organizations throughout the eastern part of the United States. Its growth throughout the mid-

western and western part of the U. S. was largely through schools and colleges. The A.A.U. emphasized its play among its member organizations and attempted to hold championships in the various associations, and here the major emphasis rested until 1920.

At the annual meeting of the A.A.U. in 1919, the men's basketball championships on a national basis were scheduled to be held in Atlanta, Georgia. The 1920 tournament attracted teams from various parts of the United States, and was the first of the A.A.U. basketball championships awarded to the Missouri Valley Association. It was held at Kansas City, Missouri. The tournament was continued there for fourteen years, and it expanded to include as many as sixty teams with wide representation throughout the United States. Since 1935 the championships have been held in Denver, Colorado, under the auspices of the Rocky Mountain Association of the A.A.U. and with continued success from the standpoint of both representation and finances.

Each year since 1920 there has been college representation in the tournament, but the recent plan of the N.C.A.A. to hold a national championship has involved many of their best teams.

Basketball was recognized significantly when it was made a part of the 1936 Olympic Games Program. This was done largely through the efforts of the A.A.U. and the N.C.A.A. working through the American Olympic Committee.

Today, basketball is a game of the masses. It can be played by boys, girls, men, and women. The expert and the novice can enjoy participating in it. The future will likely see an expansion in the numbers playing the game, following the direction indicated earlier by its originator, Dr. James Naismith.

**Official Watch for Timing N.C.A.A. and A.A.U. Championships Is LONGINES —  
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