

A typical basketball team on an Island Plantation (Wailuku Sugar Company). Note racial ancestry of the different players.

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BASKETBALL IN HAWAII

IF the basketball world today were to select a "capital" for this sport on the basis of number of players per capita, the Territory of Hawaii, America's Gibraltar of the Pacific, would win in a walk. On each of the six principal islands of our group, Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, Kauai, Lanai and Molokai, you will find the boys in our grammar schools learning to play basketball along with the arithmetic and other studies. On the Island of Maui, where the writer lives, with a population of 48,000 in 1940, we had four hundred and thirty-four organized basketball teams in leagues playing for island championships in their respective classes under the supervision of one organization. Every one of our 27 grammar schools on Maui has a "varsity" team which plays in the islandwide school league.

Hawaii is an agricultural community with sugar cane and pineapple being its main products. Ours is, therefore, mainly a rural community life organized into plantations, with the major portion of the population living in small villages. Basketball, as a recreation, fits into the picture much better than any other sport, and visitors will find gymnasias and outdoor electrically lighted courts in most of our plantation villages and centers. Every village has several teams, some plantations having as many as fifty or more. Incidentally, it is recognized by leaders in recreation that our industrial recreational setup is second to none in America.

Basketball, better than any other sport, offers us a great opportunity to teach American ideals in action. American boys, sons of the many races to be found in our "melting pot" of the Pacific, learn true Americanism through basketball. I have seen

many teams whose entire personnel did not have two players of the same racial extraction.

Every school in our splendid educational system, from the University of Hawaii to the smallest grammar school, boasts of from one to several basketball teams.

A handicap to be found in meeting mainland teams (and we have teams visit us yearly from the coast universities) is height. Our athletes, especially those of Japanese, Filipino, and Chinese parentage, are not, on the whole, as tall as the average athletes of other racial groups.

Each year Hawaii prints a sports annual of its own containing records, championships and other important athletic information. More space is devoted to basketball than any other sport. Here you will find listed the annual Territorial AAU championship winners, the Territorial high school championship winners, the leading plantation teams, service teams and other teams in Territorial wide competition. The Army and Navy, with their large service population, play a big part in our athletic life, especially on the Island of Oahu.

When Dr. Naismith started basketball at Springfield College fifty years ago, he little realized that he was giving into the hands of recreational leaders in America's outpost in the Pacific a medium, valuable beyond measure, for teaching and expressing those democratic ideals that we love and want to preserve as our American way of life. So, as no other word can express it, Aloha to the memory of a great American who started something that is 100 per cent American and always will be — BASKETBALL.