

John R. Tunis
Rowayton, Connecticut

January 25, 1935

Dear Mr. Allen;

Your kind letter of January 22 was forwarded to me by Harper's Magazine. I take it very kindly when anyone goes to the trouble of reading my stuff, and when they go so far as to write a letter I am very grateful indeed. This will make my reply seem all the more churlish, but I have to say what I think even at the risk of being impolite, for after all, I am sure you would agree that there are far too many yes-men in this country today, and that intellectual honesty is a quality more to be desired than politeness.

I did not list basketball because I doubt very much whether it is one of the ten fastest growing sports in the United States. The manufacturer who gave me the information, which was confirmed by checking elsewhere, did not mention basketball. He knows what he sells every day, and what the stuff is used for. Also he is in contact with schools and colleges all over the country.

The fact that basketball drew 16,000 at Madison Square Garden means of course nothing whatsoever. This is not sport, it is exhibitionism and you ought to know it. Hockey draws 16,000 a couple of times a week at the Garden but hockey is not making much progress. Your argument here leads me to distrust your other arguments for basketball even if I were not sure you were wrong.

The fact that basketball is now an Olympic sport has nothing to do with the case. So is lacrosse and soccer and dozens of other sports which have no place whatsoever in an Olympic program. In fact the only sports not therein included are bullfighting and pogroms and I understand they will be in the 1940 Games.

You state that more than twenty millions are playing basketball. Now when the bowling people say 7,000,000 play or rather bowl, they know what they are talking about, because they have an accurate check. When the pin-pong people sell twenty million ping-pong bats, that's fact. If there