

GOAL TENDING, or DEFENSIVE PLAYER FORBIDDEN TO TOUCH BALL ON
DOWNWARD FLIGHT

The National Basketball Rules Committee at their last meeting proved itself to be a "model" rules committee - see Webster - "a model is a small imitation of the real thing". The Rules body temporized. They did not meet issues squarely.

The Rules Committee did nothing about the extremely tall player on the offense. But they humored a pressure group which protested against the giant goal tender on defense. Symptomatically they dabbled awkwardly in the same direction of their mistakes the previous year. Why discriminate against the defense while permitting full freedom to the offense as the same rule in principle concerns the extremely tall player under both baskets.

The newly exacted goal tending rule will be only about ten per cent efficient. I predict that Hank Iba and other crafty coaches with goal tending giants will still place their goal tenders in front and under the defensive basket. Had the Rules Committee members done any research previous to their hasty action and studied the flight of the ball toward the basket they would have discovered that an extremely tall player can still steal most of the shots before the ball gets to the basket. The ball does not begin its downward arc generally until it gets above the basket.

Most players shoot "skimmers" - low shots - just clearing the rim. The ball leaves the players hands at a height of less than six feet and the basket is ten feet high, hence tall defensive players will get the ball while it is still going up. Offensive shooters cannot readily learn a new arch shot just for the benefit of the hyper-tall goal tender without seriously affecting their shooting accuracy.

Few officials will bother themselves regarding the questionable arc of the ball when they are paid to watch the action of the players for fouls and violations on the floor. Certainly this distraction of the officials eyes away from the playing floor cannot improve the calibre of this already difficult game to officiate.