

BASKETBALL RULES SURGERY

The new 1944-45 official basketball rules contain at least four important changes, which constitute the largest amount of fundamental rules surgery the committee has performed for many years.

Two of the rules changes, those permitting unlimited substitution and five personal fouls before disqualification, no doubt will meet with general approval. They have been tried by many high school teams in a number of states during the season just past, and will be accepted without question. Not so much can be said for the other two major changes.

THE NEW INJURY RULE

The change which permits an official to stop play for an "obviously injured" player, regardless of which team is in possession of the ball, is good in theory. There was a time when this practice was permissible, but the faking of injuries when opponents had the ball in favorable scoring position caused the rules to be reworded so that play might not be stopped during possession by the opponents until the play in progress had been completed. Already officials who remember the old days of faked injuries have raised questions regarding the new rule. Perhaps proper and definite interpretations, accompanied by appropriate penalties for obvious injury faking, will take care of the situation adequately. The best deterrent to the faking of injuries, of course, will be the "branding" a coach and his team will get for their unsportsmanslike conduct.

GOAL-TENDING RULE A DELUSION

The new statute designed to prohibit the tall "goal tender" from intercepting shots that would otherwise score baskets, appears from this angle to be a subterfuge and a delusion.

Without offering an opinion regarding the necessity for this operation by the rules surgeons, may we ask the reason for the peculiar diagnosis and the decision to operate in the particular part of the anatomy indicated by the scar which remains? And assuming it is desirable to curb the activities of the abnormally tall player, for what reason did the rules committee attempt to curb the overgrown defensive player while permitting his counterpart at the other end of the court to continue to wreck his opponents with his activities around the basket? For years the big boys have taken advantage of their anatomical resources to score freely against any opponents who did not happen to have players large enough to stop them, but now since a few of the extra tall defensive lads have become proficient enough to perform similar operations in reverse at the other end of the court, the rules committee has succumbed to the "blitz" engineered by a few coaches and apparently have lost their sense of direction and proportion.