

February 9, 1945.

Major K. E. Wilson, O-917704,  
Hqqs. 50th Fighter Group,  
APO 374, c/o P.M.,  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Major Wilson:

I am very happy to render any service that I am able, but your assignment is rather difficult. I would rather be an oil cup than a file, in this case, and for me to give a personal opinion would be unfair to our visitors from Indiana and Ohio, so I had better discreetly observe that Indiana and Ohio have wonderful basketball organizations. And when it comes to Alabama, let's talk about football. But Alabama is coming along rapidly in the round-ball sport.

Answering your questions to the best of my ability: (1) Indiana has long been known as the basketball state. That was when Piggie Lambert's Purdue team, and Everett Dean and Branch MacCracken had great teams at the U. However, Illinois has taken the play away from Indiana at the present time. Doug Mills "whiz kids" and other fine Illinois teams have rather overbalanced Indiana's claim.

The weakness of Indiana is that their state commissioner refuses to permit any of the Indiana high schools to schedule games with any other state teams. That has caused inbreeding and a false evaluation of Indiana's claim because she cannot reasonably justify it by never having met any of the outstanding high school teams of other states.

Ten or fifteen years ago Indiana built fieldhouses for her high school teams that were bigger than the high school buildings themselves. It was not uncommon at all for high school teams to have fieldhouses with five to six thousand seating capacity, and they were filled to the rafters. Dr. Meanwell, at Wisconsin, used to eulogize the Indiana set-up.

Indiana has a style all its own. If you have seen one Indiana team play, you can just know how the rest of them are going. It is a four-man offense with a big rear guard under the basket, and a short fast front guard running with the two forwards and center on a fast break - lots of shooting - hoopala - good basketball - fight - and color. They were great basket shots, but I do not believe Indiana basketball is up to some of the other states at present due to this inbreeding.

(2) I do not believe that Indiana can lay claim that "more basketball is played in Indiana than any other state in the Union by the number of teams and basketball attendance". I had some definite figures on this but have not been able to lay my hands on them here of late. I have de-