

March 3, 1941

Mr. Harold Claassen
Sports Editor, Associated Press
The Kansas City Star Building
Kansas City, Missouri

Dear Harold:

I have noted some reaction over the country to my idea of a so-called nine-man basketball game. I am writing you so that you can perhaps clear up a few points which some of the boys have lost sight of when they have written about this feature. This nine-man basketball game is a long way off in our vision of seeing the game develop.

Now I am only speaking of college basketball and not high school basketball. When I say that the 12-foot basket will come, and it will, I mean that it will come to college basketball. There is no need of a 12-foot basket in a high school because the boys' coordination has not been developed to the point that they can consistently dunk the ball into the basket. I have made this statement: In ten years or so we will have enough large auditoria over the country that a court can be laid out 110 feet in length and 60 feet in width without handicapping the seating area or playing space. This space will be right for seven-man basketball.

I have made the point that basketball crowds will only be limited by the size of the building and the playing area. Naturally as many spectators as possible desire to be along the side lines and not the end lines, and that is the reason for increasing the length of the playing floor.

I have said that as the seven-man game is developed that it is thinkable that the game court will be enlarged to 130 feet in length and 80 feet in width. Such space would provide ample playing area for nine men on a team.

I have never spoken about high school basketball teams being enlarged because that is not necessary. The normal enrollment is not so large but what the regular playing length of the court in the high school gymnasium is ample to answer the high school needs. In colleges the alumni of both teams and friends total a far greater number of spectators and followers than they do in a high school; therefore, there is greater need for a larger playing and spectator area. I was looking ahead 25 to 40 years when I mentioned the nine-man team.

The fundamentals such as dribbling, pivoting, and passing will be exactly the same. Looking into the future, it might be possible to put an additional line across the court, saying that only so many defensive men can play in certain areas with the start of the game, such as we have in football in the kickoff.