



BY HY GOLDBERG

APPARENTLY the chief complaint against Dr. Forrest C. Allen, Kansas University basketball coach, is that he goes by the nickname of Phog. Dr. Allen made the charge last week that college basketball, since it attracts large collections of gamblers with fists-full of coarse money, would some day soon be rocked by scandal. Furthermore, he declared that at least one player sold out to the betting gentry during an Eastern tournament last year.

The Kansas coach was immediately assailed on all sides, with his nickname as the focal point. "He carries his own 'phog' with him," cried one defender of the good name of basketball. "He's on the 'phoggy' side of the street," said another.

A sympathetic critic tossed in, "Down through the years he has been a fog horn for basketball, sounding loud and long blasts whenever he felt the game was running close to rocky waters." All in all, Dr. Allen was taken to task on a wide front, extending from New York to Utah. In some quarters, his charge was brushed aside as simply another means of seeking publicity. To that, we can only say a college coach usually can find a less startling way to break into print.

Ned Irish, who promotes college basketball in Madison Square Garden, and also is the institution's acting president, indignantly retorted that "all known gamblers are barred from the Garden." Accordingly, New York must be crowded with unknown gamblers. Before any sporting event, the lobby of the Garden is crowded with "innocent bystanders" and except for a total stranger, it's often easier to make a bet than to buy a ticket.

Collegians Scornful

COLLEGIATE officials greeted Allen's charges with cries of horror and scornful rebuttals. Emil Liston, director of the National Association of Intercollegiate Basketball, censured Allen for "lack of faith in American youth." To which the Kansas coach replied, "I find Mr. Liston's child-like faith very touching and I hope nothing ever happens to enlighten him."

In that respect, we find ourselves somewhat in agreement with Allen. We have as much faith as the next fellow in the average boy who engages in college sports, but if gamblers are going to make a practice of approaching the players, sooner or later they're likely to find some who will succumb to an attractive offer.

Vadal Peterson, the Utah coach, confirmed Allen's assertion that a man came to his hotel room in New York and asked how much it would cost for Utah to lose the game. Peterson considered the incident closed when he slammed the door in the intruder's face, but if they rap at enough doors, one of them might remain open.

It wouldn't be a question of throwing the game. Betting on basketball is confined pretty much to a point basis. As long as his team wins, the average player isn't too interested in the score, and if a wily citizen can induce a key performer not to run up the tally, once his team is in the lead, well, it might not sound too bad.

According to Allen, a spectator rushed on the floor after the aforementioned Utah game, and embraced one of the Utah players with the exclamation that the final goal scored by the boy had saved him \$15,000.

It Can Happen

BASKETBALL people should give the matter a little thought, and not simply brush it aside with a scornful, "It can't happen here." The Utah coach, who "doesn't want to become a party to a reform movement against gambling," pointed out that fans bet on basketball games just as they do on elections or any other contest.

That may be true, but it's probably easier to "fix" a basketball contest than any other team game that comes to mind. Football pools have been rampant in the country for years, but no single member of a football squad can control a game as can a key scorer on a five-man basketball team. A baseball player is similarly incapable of taking charge of the situation. But in basketball, the high scorer need only narrowly miss the basket on a few shots to hold the score down, and not even his own teammates could detect it.

In fact, that sort of thing was a common practice for years in professional court circles. It wasn't necessarily a matter of heavy wagering. The big pro outfits simply avoided humiliating the hometown team. They "made it close," usually with an eye toward a return engagement.

Allen appeals for the appointment of a "Judge Landis." But professional baseball is a compact organization and we doubt whether the same authority could be exercised over a far-flung sport like college basketball. However, while they denounce him publicly, Allen's warning might serve to make the college coaches a little watchful.