

The Parable Of Phog Allen

Kansan's Super-Duper Sports League and League of Nations

By BILL CUNNINGHAM

It's amazing how faithfully and how often the world of sport mirrors democracy in all its perfections and its problems. Maybe it's one with what some analysts have claimed about religions—that a deity resembles his worshippers both in physical appearance and in mental and moral attributes, that he is, in fact, but an idealization of themselves.

"You touch heaven," wrote Novalis, "when you lay your hand upon a human body," meaning, undoubtedly, that part of divine intelligence is represented within ourselves and that most of our attempts to comprehend a life beyond are, consciously or subconsciously, idealizations of the only life we know.

Maybe sport, team sport, is idealization, too. Certainly it has all the primary attributes—fairness, courage, honesty, gallantry. It calls for co-operation, co-ordination, discipline, sacrifice for an ideal, and some more, and still, true to the fashion of life in a democracy, it runs into confusion and failure through whang-brained handling. There are those who are perpetually trying to straighten this out with one resounding suggestion or another, but, up to date, they've got nowhere, just as those trying to do the same things with nations have got nowhere.

And they've failed for precisely the same reasons. Note the perfect parallels.

HE MEANS TO BE HEARD

Nationally, we're thinking again in terms of a League of Nations. Various politicians and publicists have broached the subject boldly or cautiously, depending upon their professional safety or their ventral vis viva. Mr. Willkie has sounded his A. Minnesota's young governor, Stassen, now newly in the Navy and saying he intends to stay there, has gone all the way in two magazine articles. Minor prophets have suggested that Mr. Roosevelt sees the chance to become the most powerful and historical temporal figure this planet has ever produced through changing from President of the United States to President of the World. Et cetera.

And just to show you how things go, in terms of the constant parallel, out in the currently flood-bound corn patch of Kansas, the mighty voice of Dr. F. C. (Phog) Allen, veteran athletic director and basketball coach of the University of Kansas, is suddenly lifted across all the weary miles between demanding a League of Intercollegiate Athletic Conferences.

Dr. Allen is a first-class basketball coach and a self-starting Cicero slightly crossed with klaxon. No long-eared, shoe box-nosed, bush-tailed nightingale indigenous to the native vicinage and born to tug a plow can out-sing the Dr. when he really gets going. The crows flap their ebon wings and head wildly for neighboring Missouri, while the rabbits are drowned by the thousands trying to make it in terror across Rattlesnake River when he lifts those snoring tones. The man shakes the ground.

Noting, evidently, where every form of economic sky-writer from the womb-to-tomb boys to the Virginia feed-the-world Zolivas are feverishly blue-printing the great post-war paradise, the Dr. hitches up his britches, takes a running start and throws his weight against an autocephalous situation existing in the campus sporting sphere. His idea is that he might as well brew up a little post-war paradise, too.

Instead of approximately 118 college conferences and