

May 2, 1942.

Mr. Melvin Henry,
Central High School,
Lonaconing Md.

Dear Mr. Henry:

I beg your pardon for my long delay in answering your good letter of March 3rd. I know that you will feel that I did not care to answer your inquiry, but that is far from the fact. We had a play-off series in our conference, and in our district and the National Collegiate. I was out of town so much during that time, and upon my return administrative matters and teaching responsibilities left me no alternative but to put aside much of my correspondence until I could find time. I am just now getting around to some of the letters that should have been answered months ago.

In endeavoring to answer your question, first I would venture an opinion that the shooting in the east has been after the teaching of Clair Bee, of Long Island University, who is a very excellent coach. His shooting technique and mine are entirely different. I can only speak as to my own coaching, and will answer your questions to the best of my ability.

I teach the thumbs to be placed at the side of the ball and not the thumbs pulled back as so many coaches teach. My argument against this is that it tenses or ties up the palmer arch when the thumb is pulled back, the fingers are restricted, and when you give the tonic snap to the ball you do not have the freedom of action as in the case where the thumbs are placed in their normal position and used only as a bracket. I believe my book gives a good deal on that and I have not changed one iota in the teaching of it.

The wrist joint is locked, but relaxed; fixed, but not tensed. The ball is dropped slightly, only for relaxation of the forearms and the wrist and fingers, and then the upward movement of the hand with a tonic snap in an extension movement. I do not teach using the thumbs on the ball except as a bracket. I do not coach a downward and upward break of the wrists. When the ball is dropped downward the elbows are thrown out. By teaching a relaxed wrist joint you get perfect relaxation of the wrist and fingers and an accurate propulsion of the ball toward the basket.