

Coach "Phog" Allen and his six-foot-seven center, Al Wellhausen, experimenting with the ten and twelve foot baskets.

ONCE read a short story in which a basketball coach beat a bitter rival in the final championship game by - suddenly producing an awesome giant—as I remember he was an eight-footer—who did little else in the game than stand under his own basket with his hands upraised and batted the ball off the rim of the hoop every time the enemy shot. It was very exciting, and the fact that such a procedure has always been illegal under the rules did not dismay the author at all. His facts, indeed, were stranger than his fiction.

There wasn't any fiction about his tall boy: we see some pretty big ones here in the Midwest. I've had some of them playing for me at the University of Kansas. One year I kept my eye all season on the freshman team, watching the development of the center, Harry Kersenbrock, who stood, barefooted, just a quarter of an inch under seven feet. But we lost a fine lad when he was drowned the summer before his sophomore year. One of the Indiana universities a few years back had a player so tall they couldn't get him into a Pullman berth. The problem was solved finally by taking out the end board of an upper berth, permitting the player's legs to extend into the adjoining upper, and he was able to get a fair night's rest.

Last season Dick Wells, my center, was the midget of the Big Six Conference, with his six feet one and a half inches. He was topped by every other jumper in the league. The rest of them ranged from six feet three and a half up to six feet four and a half—and they were really not big as big boys go. This season Kansas is back into the skyscraper competition with a six-foot-seven center.

## DUNKING ISN'T BASKETBALL

by FORREST C. (PHOG) ALLEN

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vacation, I went to Kansas City to witness the National A. A. U. basketball tournament, which has been held there in Convention Hall for several years, and I saw what looked like a dream-come-true to a basketball coach whole droves of stretchy six-footers, and they had power and speed to go with the height. Five men in that tournament were over six feet six; two of them ran up to six feet eight.

## FIVE PROPOSED CHANGES

knew how to handle the ball, and I expected to get a great thrill watching them play, yet I had a strong sense of disappointment in one parison, basketball has changed but little. important phase of the games. Those tall felwere literally "dunking" the ball into the basketball. My conception of the game is that goals should be shot and not dunked.

I'm not picking on those fine tournament players. Our big college boys are doing it, and I'm teaching my beanpoles to tally that way, score under the present rules, and there is no sense in trying a hard way when there is this easier and surer short cut to the pay-off.

Yet I would like to ask coaches, officials, players and spectators this question: Should height, figured by itself, carry such a premium as it does now? Isn't the game penalizing the fine players who fall below the six-foot mark? I've thought for several years now that the tall man has an unearned advantage and I had that in mind when, not long back, I offered to the rules committee the suggestion that baskets be raised to twelve feet.

I want it understood that I am not trying to eliminate the tall man from the game. Under any conditions I'll take a good big man over a good little man, merely because he is as baseball outgrew the forty-five-feet pitching distance. a bigger dish of a good thing. But I would like to see a tall man forced to shoot his baskets the same as a short man. The twelve-foot basket would level them off.

We have experimented with the higher baskets here at Kansas for two years, and the results have been interesting to observers. But before discussing our findings I want to list other changes I have offered for consideration. Some of them, perhaps, will seem radical to students of the game, but in my opinion they have merit.

I would move the backboards into the court to a distance of six feet. They are now two feet from the end lines. I would permit an offended team to throw for the

basket in the half of the court where the foul was committed.

I would have all jump balls taken to one of three spots on the playing floor—the two foul-shooting marks and the center spot. Around two-foot circles at these points I would have six-foot circles to hold other players away from the jumpers until the ball is tapped.

I would change the scoring of field goals to three points, the free throw remaining at one.

If it seems to some that a reformer wants to tamper with a successful game, I want to say that I love the game as only a person can who has played it and coached it for more than twenty-seven years. To me it's the greatest game of them all. Knute Rockne loved to roast me about basketball. He used to say: "Phog, there are two great athletic games that I don't care for, and basketball is both of them." But of course to "Rock" there always was but one game.

In proposing these changes I am not seeking a vicarious method of turning losers into winners, for we have at Kansas won championships in our Conference twelve out

Late last winter, on a basketball coach's of the past seventeen seasons, and we have won consistently against outside big-time competition. There isn't an "Allen System" in basketball in the sense that there is a Warner System and a Notre Dame System in football; but if you will pardon the pride, I want to mention that my players have gone out to high coaching positions—to Nebraska, Stanford, Kentucky, Northwestern, Tulane, Iowa State, and to a host of smaller colleges and high schools.

> As a coach I may possibly lose my "curve," as the saying is, if the game is changed; maybe it will hurt us at Kansas. I still favor one and all of the changes proposed.

If you think a game is inviolate, consider the one that TANY of those tournament players were Gen. Abner Doubleday built, in 1839, on the flimsy ex-college stars, seasoned veterans who foundation of One Old Cat and some 4000 years of harumscarum hitting of some sort of ball with some sort of club. There have been dozens of changes in baseball. In com-

A baseball writer was kind enough to dig out for me a lows were leaping at the ten-foot baskets and list of changes that have been made in our national game, some of them probably familiar to fans, but most of them hoop, just as a doughnut is inelegantly dipped were new to me. In 1845, for instance, the pitching into the morning coffee. And I say that is not distance was forty-five feet, as compared with sixty feet and six inches today. When I read this my mind turned to the dreadful predicament of a batsman today standing at the plate, with fire-ball pitchers like Dizzy Dean and Schoolboy Rowe throwing them up. I find that in those days a batter could call for a high ball or a low one, but as other coaches are doing. It is a fair way to even this would scarcely help him against fast balls thrown from forty-five feet by these big-league aces.

At one time a team scoring twenty-one "aces" or runs won the game, whether it took one inning or twenty. In 1858 a pitcher was restrained by a boundary line twelve feet long, and he could take a short run before delivering the ball. Previous to 1863 batsmen could use a bat of any size, shape and material; at that time they were restricted to wooden clubs, and thirteen years later the rules makers placed the maximum length of bats at forty-two inches. In 1864 the "out on first bounce" rule was abolished.

Those are only a few of the changes in the physical aspects of baseball. It is a made game, the product of years of trial and adjustment, although I think it has now been perfected. And I maintain basketball is no more inviolate than baseball. In some respects I feel we have outgrown the original garments of basketball, just

Athletics are an integral part of school and college education, and our chief aim, of course, is the physical development of our boys and to teach them to play hard, to take punishment and come up smiling and still play fair. Something is learned on athletic "battle" fields that can't be acquired in the classroom. But of importance, too, is the spectator who pays the bill and lends zest to inter-school contests. I've asked many of them about their likes and dislikes in basketball and have found that primarily they want action and scoring. I've watched lots of hockey games and have loved the action, but I have bemoaned the lack of scoring. Basketball fans dislike an abundance of whistle blowing which checks the action and breaks the interest. The perfect referee, to me, is the one who is seen but never heard—well, hardly ever.

## A PREMIUM ON SPEED AND AGILITY

TF YOU will check carefully on a game of basketball you will find that a great many fouls are called as the players are scrambling under a basket for a ball coming down from a rebound. It is inevitable with so many players jammed into a small space. Many of these fouls are purely accidental. And if there isn't a foul committed in the scramble for the ball the chances are great that the player who gained possession of it has stuck his toe over the end line, and the whistle blows anyway.

With the twelve-foot basket the players are spread over a greater area, for the rebound from the high backboards sends the ball farther out into the court; the area of dispersement of players is greater; the small man has quite as good a chance to recover it as a tall one. Thus the premium is put on speed and agility instead of mere height. I have been somewhat amused while watching