

I guess the difference is being at the head of the class in a small town and in a poor, ill-lighted, small, narrow, etc. court and at the foot of the class in a big University. I remember now what Gene Johnson (Salina) told me and as it turns out, he was exactly right in the case of Max, though I thot he was bluffing then, and still do, and it just happens that he hit it. I can't recall his words, but it was about this: "Max is a small-fry boy from a small town and he won't ever be able to do a good job of warming the bench at Kansas U. The spectators there pay to see their favorite sons play, and the spectators come from the cities." Then he went on to tell me what he could do for Max and offered him three jobs and said he would not have to work at any of them. So you can see what I thot of him. I'll say this, Allen, that when I wrote to you I really and honestly thot he could play ball and I was sincere in it and felt he could anywhere and play a good grade of ball with any college team. I now feel ashamed that that I talked too early and failed to consider the future.

It is peculiar how a fellow can let himself be affected by some such thing as that. I got the letter at noon and read it and tried to foget it that afternoon. That night was a wierd, stormy one, and my people were all away and I went home and tried to reason a little with myself, but could not and I spent a waking night of horror. First I regretted that Max had become careless with his time and himself, but that was not the worst. The horror was that it was a night in which hope died within me that Max might make a record as a basketball player that would be reputable; but by morning I gave up and knew I had as well forget it. I wondered wherein I had been at fault as I am enough of a Fatalist to feel that maybe the Lord might be punishing me in some way. If the Lord is, I wish he would make it known to me. About that time it was early morning, and I turned the radio to get the result of your game at Stillwater. I heard it right away and that made me feel no better, though I had felt that KU might lose that one. But at that, the loss of game meant very little to me in comparison to the loss of a cherished hope.

On the Hill there, a while back, many of the boys would talk to me about Max and most of them would brag on him and two of the leading players confided to me that 'he was good enough to be playing.' It made me mad at them and I have not liked them so well since, for I was sure they were not telling the truth, and I wondered if they thot that I had no idea of what a good player looked like. I went on to make a little inquiry from three parties close to the team and asked them, individually, if Max showed any promise in the 'B' games he had played in. Here is about what they said: That he did not -- that he was hardly good enough for the B team -- and one said that he would never get any place there because he was very mediocre and likely on a given night there would not be a spectator in the crowd that would care, or be there to see him play. I felt they were sincere in what they said. Possibly theye were wrong and while I thot they had a little nerve to tell me that, yet I had 'asked for it' and so maybe they complied.

And right along the same line, in the Kansan of the same date I noticed a little item which might have meant nothing to anyone else. It was regarding the reserve men and what they meant to the strength of the team. In mentioning them, I think all were named with the exception of Max, and I wondered if he was so far down the line that he was not worth mentioning and I could imagine that maybe he was just a hanger-on. I look the Kansan over and so far as I recall since the season opened, I have never seem his name mentioned, and I Awshed that some day he would make a lot of fouls in practice so they could refer to him in some way, if only as a ruffian or something.