

"After several seasons of observing a conservative type of basketball I was astonished, last year, at the change in the attitude of the gallery. Our medical service is extended not only to our own team, but also to the visiting team. Very rarely do visiting teams bring medical supervision. Because of this fact, I have had opportunity to observe the condition of our own players as well as that of opponents. It was easy to note the attitude of the gallery beginning with last season's basketball. A marked change in the tempo is apparent. One might almost say - frenzy, hysteria, a concession to the gambling spirit, or a Roman Holiday attitude, was apparent. It was easy to see the cause thereof, namely, a change of playing rules, indicating that the change in rules was more to stimulate attendance and interest than any consideration for the adolescent boy. Then began the blood pressure study which follows:

Good

"The New York State High School Athletic Association requires, in its insurance protection, a thorough physical examination with special emphasis on the heart findings. Insurance companies as the Metropolitan, the New York Life, and others, in their instructions to medical examiners, estimate the blood pressure, based on a report of 187 individuals, as follows: In the age group of 15 to 19 there was an average systolic of 119. Average diastolic of 85.

"In the examination of 239 high school boys, with the same age distribution, I have found the average blood pressure, before participating in any program of sports, to be - average systolic, 118; diastolic, 80. Note the similarity in these two groups, 119 over 85, and 118 over 80.

"With a desire to learn if there was any effect on the blood pressure of basketball players, readings were made on 32 participants through last year's season and the following findings were recorded, through and at the end of the season. Seven of these boys showed a gradual increase in pressure from 120 to 138 systolic and 81 to 94 diastolic.

"Twenty-five showed a lowering of from 112 to as low as 90 systolic and 76 to 61 diastolic. These figures are the summary taken from several pages of records.

"During the season we have observed many boys 'panting' undoubtedly from over-exertion. Occasionally one lying on his back 'gasping' for breath. True, a good coach will replace players and will give reasonable care, but with a close game there will be little change in the lineup. Especially is this latter situation true in smaller schools where close competition allows little chance to use poorer players. In six games played during the past month, I find that in no game were there over 10 players used, and six, seven, eight, and nine was the rule. Also the schedule is tough.

no
12
players
used.

"Seven football games is the maximum allowed, under State Department regulations, during a season. Sixteen basketball games are allowed, and our physical director says it is necessary to "double up". In our schedule, Friday and Saturday games, in succession, occur on two occasions. I believe those of you who have city schools under your care, with grammar leagues, do not allow the use of the new rules in their games. I have stated facts and findings. I am not going to state any conclusions. I will leave this for you to consider.

"I wonder if blood pressure readings mean anything in these boys?

"I personally believe the rules should be changed again, either as formerly, or at least more protection given to these boys.