

Already basketball was probably the least beneficial of our team games. Frequently, particularly in high school gymnasiums, the conditions are not good. Into a room, the ventilation of which has been planned for a gymnasium class of fifty, are packed hundreds of spectators, usually crowded close to the side lines. The air soon becomes foul and overheated, so that a game that at best is a severe tax on the circulatory system, becomes more of a tax. Too, the proximity of spectators - often of the "town sport" variety - and their remarks, incite the players toward unsportsmanlike acts, which bring discredit upon players and school, and upon educational procedures, at least upon this one.

As Dr. White and others suggest, this "speeding up" is peculiarly dangerous in smaller communities where the size of the school makes impossible a sufficient number of skilled substitutes. Hence, a few are compelled to play throughout the whole game. Moreover, this change has added materially to the total energy expenditure of the game. It has been estimated that the actual numbers of minutes the ball is in play has been increased 25%. To adolescent school boys, many of whom are still in the period of rapid growth, this is a serious added burden.

Indiana  
Tournament

An article appearing in the Buffalo Courier-Express of January 21, 1938, indicates that the insatiable Molock of too intensive interscholastic athletic competition has reached down into the seventh and eighth grades. In Indiana, according to this report, basketball tournaments conducted for teams from these grades are being investigated by state authorities. Forty teams completed a tournament in three days, each team of these immature boys being compelled to play two games each day.

It is time that parents take this and similar situations in hand, and insist that nothing shall be countenanced in the schools that is not for the physical, social, and educational advancement of their children.

Parents and school administrators have the right to demand that boys and girls be permitted to participate only in those school physical activities that are both safe and beneficial. If interscholastic athletic competitions are educational, they are definitely subject to the same criteria - mental, physical, and social - as are other activities in the schools, and rules and regulations controlling these contests should be established and enforced by elementary and secondary school authority, not by any Rules Committee whose only interest seemingly rests in intercollegiate competition.

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There is a National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations, made up of delegates from State Interscholastic Athletic Associations. This Federation has been a great influence for good, but naturally - because of the great need of such supervisory control - has given much of its attention to improving rules of eligibility. It has, too, been largely instrumental in bringing about modifications of playing rules, especially those of football. The changes in basketball rules advocated have helped in making this game safer in the communities adopting them. This group could be a wonderful power for good if it would interest itself more intensely in matters relating to the physical welfare of the youngsters - a large percentage of them physically immature - who compete in interscholastic athletics.

Concerned  
with  
eligibility

This effort toward better control should take two directions: first, the establishment of modified playing rules that would make these college games safer for boys and girls of school age. To a considerable extent the Federation has emphasized this need, but in all too many localities its influence has not been potent enough to bring the needed added protection.