

THE "LEGAL BLOCK"

During the last few years there has been a marked change in sentiment relative to blocking. The use of a type of playing that has become general has given rise to the term "legal block". The better coaches have used this type of play so commonly that general practice has become contrary to the spirit of the rules concerning blocking. These rules were formulated at a time when it was felt that the sole attention of every player should be on the ball. Since common practice among the better coaches is contrary to this idea, it is felt that that part of the rules having to do with blocking should be brought up to date and made to harmonize with best practices. The term "legal block" is not a desirable one. There is a stigma attached to the term blocking and legal plays should not be regarded as circumventions of rules. The type of play in which a forward loses his guard by passing close to a pivoting team mate and his guard is so commonly used that it should not be regarded as subversive of the spirit of the rules. The present general opinion is that a player is entitled to any place on the floor if he gets there first.

If contact ensues, the rules governing personal contact should apply. If an offensive player, after passing the ball to a team mate runs between the receiver and his guard, he should not be penalized for doing so provided there is room to pass between without making contact. If, in so doing, contact ensues, however, the foul may be on either the offensive or defensive man. In case of doubt the responsibility for avoiding contact should be on the offensive man just as it is on the dribbler in such a situation.

In cases where one or more players run down the floor close to and ahead of or parallel to a team mate who has the ball, with the apparent intention of preventing any opponent from approaching the ball carrier a form of charging usually results. The charging rule should apply. In case of doubt as to who is responsible the responsibility should be on the man whose team has the ball.

Most cases of contact through so-called "blocking" are caused through the use of wide spread arms or elbows or the illegal use of the hips. Fouls should be called for such infractions.