

outfit. The Rocky Mountain Conference did not have a representative because Utah had accepted the New York Invitation Tournament. Few Rocky Mountain Conference schools put teams in the field. That left the NCAA without a team for the 7th District. But luckily Kentucky defeated Utah in New York, and immediately Mr. C. E. McBride, a member of the NCAA 5th District Committee, phoned and got the consent of Ned Irish to send the team (Utah) on to Kansas City in time for the Western NCAA playoff. After a harrowing ride from New York, Utah arrived barely in time for the game.

Iowa State defeated Pepperdine, and Missouri was defeated by Utah by about 10 points. Utah then defeated Iowa State, and Missouri annihilated Pepperdine. Utah went back to New York to meet the winner of the Eastern NCAA playoff - Dartmouth - and Utah won the playoff in Madison Square Garden for the National Collegiate Athletic Association championship.

A most interesting circumstance made Utah the Cinderella boys of 1944 basketball. The Invitation Tournament, formerly called the Sport Writers Tournament, sponsored by Ned Irish, the Horatio Alger of Madison Square Garden basketball, assembled the outstanding teams of the nation for their tournament playoff. Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania, DePaul of Chicago, Bowling Green of Ohio, St. Johns of Brooklyn, Oklahoma Aggies, University of Kentucky, Canisius of Buffalo, and the University of Utah were all contacted and accepted the New Yorker's bid. This made the Invitation Tournament THE tournament of the nation. The University of Kentucky defeated the University of Utah by 4 points in the first game playoffs, St. Johns defeated Bowling Green, Oklahoma Aggies defeated Canisius, and DePaul defeated Muhlenberg in the first round. In the second round DePaul defeated Oklahoma Aggies 41-38, and St. Johns of Brooklyn defeated the University of Kentucky 48-45. Then St. Johns of Brooklyn defeated DePaul of Chicago, making St. Johns the winner of the Invitation Tournament.

In the finals of the NCAA tournament played in Madison Square Garden Utah defeated Dartmouth, making Utah the champions of the NCAA.

A giant Red Cross benefit basketball game was planned by Ned Irish between the winner of the Invitation Tournament and the winner of the NCAA tournament. Utah, National Collegiate A.A. winner, met St. Johns, champion of the Invitation tournament, and Utah defeated St. Johns. This reference to the Cinderella boys was made because Utah, a NCAA team, passed up the National Collegiate tournament to enter the Invitation Tournament in New York. They were put out in their first game with Kentucky; then they were invited back into the NCAA fold to make up the Western bracket. They now came back and defeated all the NCAA teams, and then in turn defeated the Invitation champions. Mark you that they were put out in the first round of the Invitation Tournament, yet whipped the Invitation champions! Figure that out for one of the believe-it-or-not episodes.

The stand out teams of the country were all members of the Invitation Tournament - Oklahoma Aggies, Kentucky, DePaul, St. Johns. The NCAA sucked the hind teat. But they had to have Utah in there to make a tournament, so they went begging.

So much for the casaba game, or the round ball tussle. I told you in my previous letter that I had been up to my ears in Red Cross work. As chairman of the drive for Douglas County I was charged with the responsibility of raising \$29,000. We did that all right, and then went \$7,000 over our quota, so we are pretty happy. Other counties in the vicinity had a titanic struggle, so we are especially happy with the generosity of most