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Now for the NCAA playoffs. In the Eastern NCAA, Dartmouth, Catholic University, Temple and Ohio State were the representatives of Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4. Dartmouth defeated Catholic University, and Ohio State defeated Temple. Then Dartmouth defeated Ohio State, to be the Eastern NCAA champion.

In the Western NCAA playoffs much difficulty was encountered. Iowa State, with a Navy unit, was finally selected, after considerable difficulty, as the 5th District representative. In the 6th District Arkansas was selected, but a traffic crossing accident maiming and killing some of the members caused Arkansas to withdraw. The University of Iowa was asked to fill in, which they did, and then later resigned. Then Missouri, with its third place civilian outfit, finally substituted for the Southwest Conference, and made a good showing. The Pacific Coast Conference did not have a playoff and consequently did not have a representative, but the authorities of the NCAA selected Pepperdine College, a school that in years previous had played in the smaller college tournament in Kansas City. Pepperdine was a civilian 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