

Twenty Years of Gains and Changes in Basketball

What a galaxy of events in the history of basketball is this year, 1941 A. D! The Golden Anniversary of Basketball! The Silver Anniversary of the Joint Basketball Rules Committee! Two decades of phenomenal progress in basketball.

What has inspired the phenomenal growth and progress of this great game? How have the offense and the defense changed? Why the great popularity of this sport? These are a few questions for which we find the answers.

From the inventor's peach basket to the present iron rim; from a soccer football to a full-sized regulation basketball; from the large rectangular 6' x 4' backboards, that were first made of chicken wire, then glass, then wood, to the present streamlined fan-shaped pressed-steel backboards, the game of basketball has steadily forged ahead to become one of the most popular amateur sports. The original purpose of the large backboards was to keep spectators and partisans of the game from kicking or batting the ball away from the basket. Later the players learned to bank the ball from these large boards. The Research Committee of the Rules Body, by cutting away the dead wood, retained only the fertile area of the board. The radical reduction in size of the backboard has aided spectator visibility, back of the basket, more than fifty percent.

From the small low-ceilinged gymnasiums to the massive field houses of today; from the audiences of a few hundreds to crowds of from 12,000 to 20,000; from nine, then seven to five players on a side unfolds the unprecedented growth of the fifty-year-old indoor game of basketball.

Everyone knows that the distinguished Dr. James Naismith, former Professor of Physical Education at the University of Kansas, while a student at