

PROBABLE EFFECTS OF ELIMINATING THE CENTER JUMP

Even with the center jump virtually eliminated for the 1938 season, doubtless basketball will still possess enough thrills to enthrall her followers. The advocates of the elimination of the center jump contend that the game will be further speeded up, that about 6 or 8 min. will be added to its actual playing time, and that, with sleepers laying back for long surprise shots after goals by opponents, the fast break will be enhanced. They further contend that only a few teams ever possessed tall centers so that the game will now be more equalized; that scores will be higher; and that the center, who heretofore did most of the jumping, can now reserve his strength for better team and floor play. Fouls will be decreased, they say, and the officials will be rid of much of that troublesome bugaboo of throwing the ball up high enough and straight enough to allow both centers a fair jump and tap for the ball.

The proponents of the retention of the center jump contend that the tip-off added many additional thrills to the game. Dr. James Naismith, the originator of the game, in attendance at a meeting of the National Association of Basketball Coaches, asked a group which of the following situations gave them the greater thrill: (1) When the ball was in the air about 2 ft. above the basket; (2) when the ball went through.

Most of them said, "When the ball went through the basket." "You are wrong," quoth Dr. Naismith, "Your highest pitch of expectancy or interest was when the ball was just above the cylinder of the basket and you wondered, 'Will it go through or not?'"

"And so with the tip-off," says Dr. Naismith. "When the ball is tossed up at center there is the same intense interest and the same parallel question is asked, 'Will it go to the team controlling the tip-off or will the opponents get the tip-off from the controlling team?'"

On the other hand, under the new rules, when a field goal or free throw is scored one knows just where the ball is going in so far as possession is concerned. It will go to the opposite team. Heretofore, many have contended that under the eliminated rule the tall player won the game, not at the center tip-off but rather under the offensive or defensive basket, and that the elimination of the tip-off will have no bearing on the tall player's potency.