

IT'S BASKETBALL NOW— The Game That Has Everything

READING TIME
10 MINUTES 25 SECONDS

BASEBALL is the national game," the baseball fan said. "You can't deny that."

"I do deny it."

Then we were off.

What is a national game?

Soccer football is — in more nations than any other game. And cricket is in some. And curling in others. And baseball, according to sports writers, is in ours. But, as Mr. Roosevelt is so fond of saying, they are "thinking in the past."

Don't be misled by the big baseball-attendance figures in less than half a dozen big cities. The rest of the major-league clubs are dying at the turnstiles. Most minor leagues would disband tomorrow if it weren't for financial first aid from the few moneyed majors. College baseball incurs an annual deficit of \$250,000. And don't take my word for it.

Ask the man whose business it is to sell bats and balls, mitts and masks. He knows. Ask the baseball magnates themselves.

They are so scared about what is going to happen to them when a generation grows up that knows not baseball that they are resorting to all kinds and methods of artificial respiration intended to pump new life into a dying pastime.

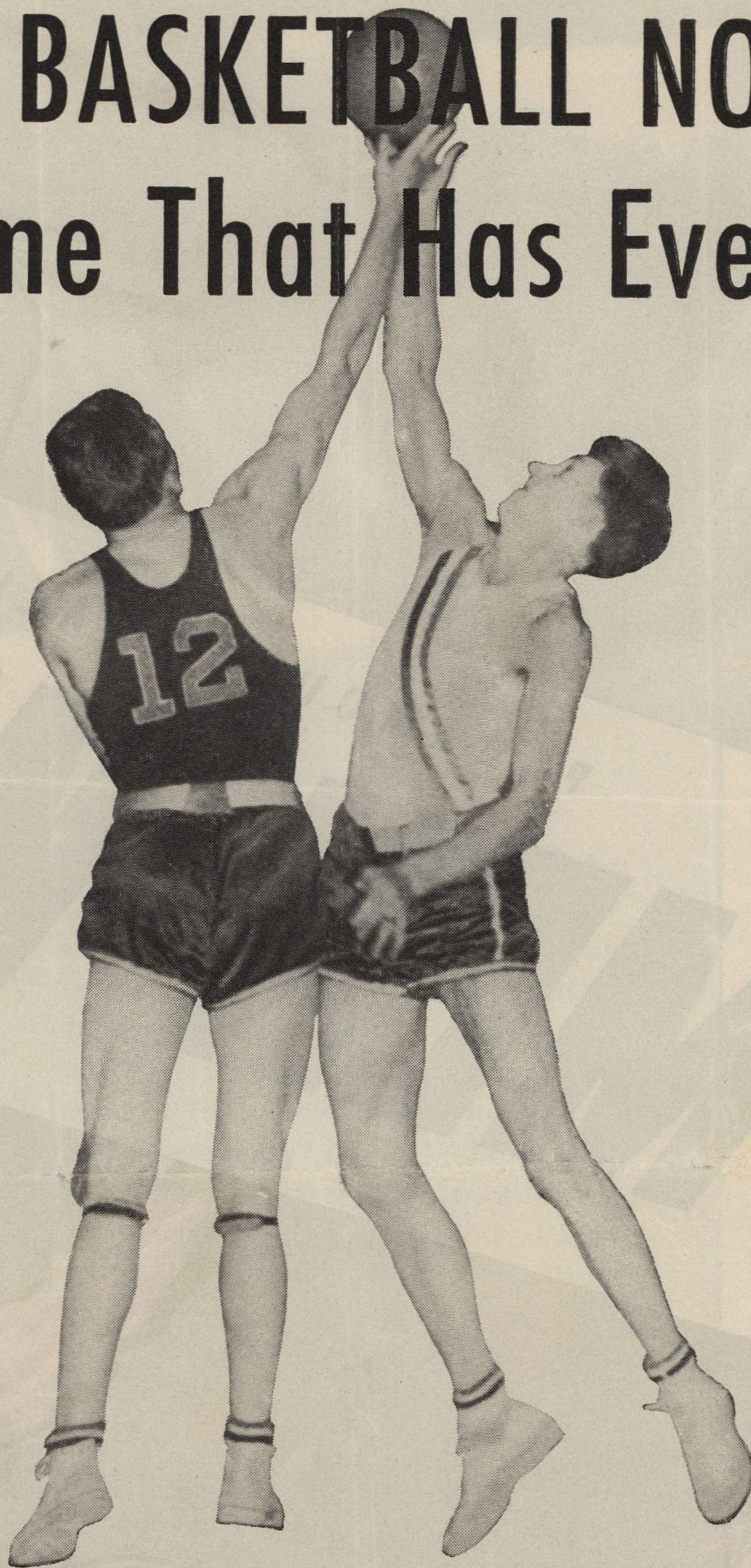
Baseball schools, movies, pep talks, exhibition games in small towns, free admission for school children, radio interviews with stars, subsidies to semi-pro and semi-amateur outfits—all have been tried without any appreciable increase in the number of people who play the game, as distinguished from the big-city crowds that just watch it.

Meanwhile, between now and spring, 80,000,000 Americans will watch 60,000 teams play 1,500,000 games of basketball.

On the attendance side, this is 30,000,000 more than see baseball games, 40,000,000 more than see football games, 50,000,000 more than see horse races or boxing matches.

This in spite of the fact that most basketball games are played in school, college, and Y gyms, where fans have to ease themselves in between the punching bag and the rowing machine and sit on the parallel bars.

In auditoriums where there are seats by the thousand,



**80 million fans can't be wrong on
a game that outdraws baseball!
BY YANKEE STADE**

thousands fill them. In Indiana, where the game is hottest, crowds of 7,500 frequently converge on villages of 750. In New York, where basketball is just getting established, crowds of 15,000 to 18,000 in Madison Square Garden are the rule.

If the time comes when the game is played under floodlights in baseball stadia, the late Abner Doubleday, founder of baseball, will emerge from his dugout and throw away his bat. By the same token, if the game is regularly played in all movie theaters between features—as it already is played in some—show business will enjoy one of its biggest years.

Where basketball has it all over its rival games, however, is in the number of people who play it. Sixty thousand teams are rated good enough to play in public exhibitions. How many more teams there must be that play privately for their own amusement—and how many more unattached individuals who pick up an hour or two at the baskets, just as the golfer or the tennis player picks up a game on the fairways or the courts!

It is safe to say that the number of people who actually play basketball outstrips the number of people who play any other game in America by at least three to one.

Basketball's climb to the popularity tops would seem to be based chiefly on the fun that is inherent in the sport itself. This goes for players and spectators both.

Basketball has everything: the sharp physical contact of football and the prize ring, the mental and manual coordination of baseball, the intricate beauty of ice hockey, and the exciting speed of the horse race.

The last-named quality stands out.

"Heaving Hank" Luisetti, the "Slingshot Sammy" Baugh of intercollegiate basketball—who hails from San Francisco—frequently scores a point a minute; in one game he made twenty-four points in eleven minutes. Not much chance for boredom, for players or watchers, in a game that goes as fast as that!

The conclusion is inescapable that more people play basketball, and more people pay to see it played, because they get more enjoyment out of it than they do out of any other athletic pastime. In short, basketball is the American national game.

It is, in fact, (Continued on third page following)