

CROW'S NEST FOR OFFICIALS

Pacific Coast Sees New Idea And Finds It Works

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BASKETBALL in the Pacific Northwest is enjoying one of its greatest seasons. The calibre of play has been high, attendance is excellent and at least one very workable idea to improve the game has been brought forth.

The Pacific coast conference has sponsored several improvements, including elimination of the center-jump. The northern division of the conference, always progressive in trying ideas that will better the game, is one of the few leagues in the nation using glass backboards to provide better spectator vision.

The latest idea is "crow's nest" officiating, not exactly new but never before given so much attention since Jean Eberhart, athletic director and basketball coach at Southern Oregon College of Education at Ashland inaugurated a series of widely publicized and successful demonstrations.

I imagine most coaches are familiar with the general idea. It simply involves removal of the two officials from the playing floor. One is stationed at each end of the court, in a "nest" or "cage" built above the basket. Each arbiter is given a microphone, or megaphone, so that his rulings can be announced to the players and audience. The officials, each with unobstructed vision of at least half the playing floor, call the game as usual with the exception of out-of-bounds plays.

Here they consult with two linemen, who are placed at opposite corners of the floor. The linemen throw up the ball for jump-balls, watch for out-of-bounds violations and handle the ball on out-of-bounds plays and on free throws.

This type of officiating has been given thorough trials in numerous smaller college and high school games in the Pacific Northwest since Eberhart's first test at Ashland some weeks ago. We are seriously considering its use at Oregon in a northern division conference game later this season.

The idea has numerous good points. First, it places the officials where they cannot be screened from seeing action on the court and where they do not get in the way of players or spectators. It speeds up

play, for the linemen can quickly handle the ball when necessary without the wait for officials to get from one part of the court to another.

I see still another advantage. It would mean that older officials, with years of experience but with wobbly legs that make them unfit for the fast game of today, could continue to work. We may have to use these men if our younger officials are called into service.

In spite of the improvement gained through more intersectional play, there still is a great need for more uniformity and consistency. A basketball official has some 70 important decisions to make during the average game, as compared to only a very few involving penalties by football officials. For this reason it is vital that we do everything possible to aid basketball officiating.

Getting back to the current season, the northern division, Pacific coast conference race is one of the hottest and most interesting in years. The five member teams are very evenly matched and with two weeks of play remaining three teams are neck and neck for the championship. They are Washington State, N.C.A.A. runner-up last year, Oregon State and the University of Washington. If evidence is needed that this league is one of the nation's strongest, we offer the Washington team, one of the nation's fastest and holder of the new Madison Square Garden scoring record. The Huskies have been defeated five times in twelve games played to date.

This section has consistently produced outstanding teams in recent years with the University of Oregon and Washington State in the N.C.A.A. finals two of the past three years. I believe any of the league members could play on even terms anywhere in the nation.

The one-handed shot, so often maligned in some sections of the country, seems to be more effective than ever this year. Despite unusually tight defensive play, scores are high, often reaching 60 or more points a game.

NATIONAL COURT NOTES

George Hamburg of Colorado U. broke his nose in a recent game and is wearing a special nose protector . . . The sophomores are going to town for Colorado. Heath Nuckolls sank two free throws with three seconds to play to defeat Utah by one point after Bob Doll told him that there were two minutes to play to relieve tension. And Lee Robbins

made seven field goals in seven attempts against Brigham Young after making only 12 points all season . . . Gene Bouley, Boston College soph is 6-3 and weighs 230 pounds . . . Mike, Dave and Joe Crowell, sons of "Cap" Crowell, athletics pitcher of decades back are members of Central Fall H.S. team in Buffalo.