

EDITOR OF BASKETBALL GUIDE
COMMENTS ON COURT SITUATION

By Oswald Tower

Many suggestions have been advanced for the annual coaches and officials meeting, but I believe that moving pictures of basketball situations might be extremely helpful, and probably the most valuable work could be done with a series on screening and blocking, together with a few on held balls showing situations in which held balls are called when none should have been called. The series on screening and blocking should cover both scoring plays and out-of-bound plays.

It is hard for me to make a list of the most frequent questions that come to me because they vary greatly from year to year and from month to month. During the fall, before the season opens, most of the questions are about the changes in the rules. My correspondents have been studying the book and have thought up all manner of things that might happen and want to know what to do if they do happen. Many of the situations are of minor importance and would arise so rarely that my correspondents would forget my interpretation long before there came a chance to apply it.

When the season gets under way, the type of questions change from the hypothetical to actual incidents in games. Most of the latter are covered in the rules, but there are always unusual and unforeseen things which the rules cannot be expected to cover all the answers to which are a matter of personal opinion. On many of these my opinion is no better than that of the next man.

Toward the end of the season when the competition gets hotter and when the tournaments are under way, come the protested games. In many of these I have the doubtful honor of being the court of last resort and am told that the parties to the controversy have agreed to abide by my decision. In such cases I try to get a statement of the circumstances signed by both parties or a statement from a neutral source. In general, it is my policy not to uphold protests; that the game should stand as played. Most protests are based on the claim that an official made an error, sometimes a trivial one. My attitude is that mistakes are made by officials in every game, that the law of averages divides them pretty well in the course of a season, and that if a protest is upheld whenever a mistake is made by an official, there will be no end of protested games.