

MADE TO ORDER' BASKETBALL -
WINNERS COME FROM OLD WAREHOUSE.

Brooklyn - It's just an old warehouse buried somewhere in the maze of Brooklyn's helter skelter street system but it's "the campus" for a made-to-order basketball team that's one of the nations best.

The old warehouse is Long Island University.

Consider that the little school's famous Blackbirds, since 1935, have set up two winning streaks of more than 40 games each. Consider that they have played conference winners and the best "independents" from all over the country.

Consider that after practicing on a small floor better suited to junior high school teams, Long Island meets its top-notch opponents on the massive Madison Square Garden court where it's almost a country mile from basket to basket.

How can a team so handicapped set up those amazing victory records? It's a natural question.

The answer is a nervous little man with a mania for thoroughness in his basketball teaching who regularly presents an offense and a defense made to order for the particular style of play his team is facing.

Clair Bee, because most of Long Island's opposition comes from distant points, may not know beforehand what his team's going to be up against.

He didn't know exactly about Oregon last year's N.C.A.A. champs. Oregon swept Bee's comparatively inexperienced 1939-40 crew off the court in the first half. But the six men who carefully watched Bee move brightly colored spools around a miniature court between halves came back and pulled out from behind a 13 point deficit to win by a point in an extra period.

BEE GETS THE MEN:

Clair Bee's teaching and his flair for fashioning an attack to hit the opposition's weakness are the chief reasons for L.I.U.'s great court success. The other reason is his material - but Bee's responsible for getting that material so the answer is still Bee.

Bee and Long Island university (enrollment 850) make no bones about pulling in the best men they can find. It's significant, though, that only two of Bee's varsity performers in the last eight years have lived farther than ten miles - by Bee's estimate - from New York's Times Square.

A Blackbird basketeer spends his freshman year chiefly on mastering fundamentals. As a sophomore he gets seasoning with the reserves. To be a regular in his junior year his has to be a fancy basketball player who is a whiz at every phase of the game.

As an example, he must be a master of both man-for-man and zone defense. Bee uses them both, drilling his team to switch from one to another at irregular intervals during a single game to confuse the enemy offense.

Bee looks for specialists, though. He likes speed but will sacrifice it in one or two men for good set shot artists. He's a firm believer in the set shot and stresses, in a manual he's written called "Basketball," that a cager should shoot any time he has a chance to get set for the shot.

Si Lobello, a six-foot, three-inch forward, is Bee's set-shot artist this year. Dolly King, a husky Negro, plays a hustling aggressive center. Cool Ossie Schectmann, young captain of the Blackbirds, plays a forward, and the bulletpassing pepper-upper. Butch Schwartz and Joe Shelly, are the guards. Lou Simon, a speedy forward, is Bee's "spot-duty" man.

SEES "DISASTROUS SEASON". Clair says he'll be lucky to escape with something short of a "disastrous season." Counting a disastrous season as Bee does at four or five games lost, he's probably right. The accounting teacher's team this year hasn't the reserve power that came from behind to beat Marquette and the New Mexico Aggies last year.