

Such strength might have beaten Southern California, the team that ended L.I.U.'s winning string at 42 games.

He'll have it next year, with this year's six best men returning and a bright freshman crop coming up for reserve duty. Bee doesn't think, though, that 42-game winning streaks are going to be frequent from now on. He says:

"It used to be that you had to worry only about every third or fourth opponent. The rest were just ordinary. Now they're all good and even the least excellent, when they're hot, can knock off the best team that's slightly off."

By FRANKLIN ARTHUR

Redlands, Jan. 20 (AP)--One afternoon almost a half century ago a young athlete grabbed a ball and tossed it into a peach basket. He and 17 other young men on two nine-man teams were creating a new sport. It was the first basketball game.

The other night that same individual, now 74, watched a basketball game for the first time as a spectator.

MAYHEM, TOO

It was "swell," he said, with youthful-sounding enthusiasm, but it wasn't like the good old days when, one gathers, basketball and mayhem were all but synonymous.

E. S. Libby, white-haired, slightly built and brisk-stepping, is a real estate man in this Southern California citrus community. But in 1891 he was studying secretarial work in the Springfield (Mass.) T.M.C.A. College when the late Dr. James Naismith "fathered" the idea of tossing a ball into a couple of peach baskets.

His memories of that first contest, in which he captained one squad, are vivid. Technically, he recalls, the peach baskets weren't Naismith's idea at all. The janitor, sent out for something to throw a ball into, came back with the baskets.

FISHED OUT BALL

They were attached to a gallery baseboard in a gymnasium used chiefly for boxing and wrestling.

Two students sat and patiently fished the ball out for a half hour or so before someone hit on the idea of knocking the bottoms out of the baskets.

It's a little amazing that, either by choice or accident, he didn't see a game in all these years. For one thing, they not infrequently go off the deep end hereabouts over University of Redlands cage squads, which have taken a half dozen titles in recent years in a league which includes most of Southern California's smaller colleges.

For another, Libby takes almost daily workouts in the Y.M.C.A. plunge and a game often is going a few doors away.

But now, after breaking the ice at a clash between Redlands and Whittier cagers, he thinks he'll go oftener.

HASN'T CHANGED

"I like it," was his summing up as he pushed his way toward an exit. "It wasn't as rough as it used to be, but it's faster and I'm surprised at the boys' stamina. It hasn't changed a lot. It's less crowded with only five men on a side. The baskets seem about the same height. (Actually they're 10 feet now, were 9 then.) The boys still dribble the ball and can't run with it. We had the center tip, too.