

Art or Acrobatics?

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There is a hit and run rage in basketball at the moment and it isn't confined to high schools. The college teams are at it and the thrill of seeing a team go through a thinking, passing and running block process in order to get a good shot at the basket is gone with the windy offense that prevails in all precincts today.

In the hit and run game the important thing is to hit. Anybody can run, but to be able to throw that basketball into the hoop with one hand while taking off on a dive into the fourth row of the bleachers is either art or acrobatics. I'm not sure just yet which it is.

If the coaches are deliberately teaching the boys to shoot one-handed it must be art. If the boys are doing it because they need the other hand for ballast and balance, it is acrobatics.

The scores of the games played in Madison Square Garden are interesting because they represent the entire nation. These scores are higher this year than ever before. The shooters are not waiting until they see the slipknots in the net cord around the little iron doughnut. They are firing at will.

The secret of success in this type of offense seems to be divided into two styles. There is the soft shot artist who hopes to make the basket but makes certain that the ball will not rebound much. Then there is the backboard angle artist who can throw the ball as accurately as a good billiard player can play bank shots. These shots are usually made going away.

The most important thing about the one-handed shot is that it can hardly be prevented. The soft one can, but not the one that whistles through the basket as it comes off the glass. Only a body block can stop this one and inasmuch as a defensive man has no more privileges than a wooden Indian, body blocks are costly little diversions.

Basketball certainly isn't right just now and something will have to be done about it. We have gone from famine to feast in the field goal flinging. This flooie flooie joy will eventually flop.

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After the country-wide tours of the Southern California and Oklahoma A. and M. basketball teams in which they won the great majority of their games, Everett B. Morris, the well known basketball authority and critic of New York, says:

"When a college basketball team returns from a country-wide tour with a string of victories over major foes, it is evident that not only is that particular squad exceptionally skilled and well manned, but that playing conditions and rules interpretations are becoming more standardized.

"It requires poise to adjust to strange courts, hostile crowds and different types of officiating.

"It takes manpower to stand up under punishment of frequent games interspersed with long train rides.

"But all of these attributes would avail little if courts and equipment were not pretty much the same in all major hoop centers, and if officiating was not gradually losing some of its provincialism."