

# "JUST RAISE THE BACKBOARDS!"

by Bob Hamilton

"No City College team ever lost four in a row under Nat Holman's regime but the current Beaver squad is going to lose many more games unless it learns that the fundamental idea of basketball is to put the ball into the hoop. City executes intricate passing maneuvers with speed and accuracy, but all of this serves merely to get the ball farther away from the goal." This is an excerpt from the column of a well-known basketball writer which appeared recently in a Metropolitan paper.

The almost complete collapse of Eastern basketball teams against "outlanders" today revolves around their failure to recognize the fact that "the fundamental idea of basketball is to put the ball into the hoop." It is the difference between the so-called Eastern and Western styles of basketball.

Eastern methods were probably derived from the system used by the old Celtics with great success years ago. Indiana, or Western basketball, never had the "benefit" of seeing the old world's champions in action and, therefore, they simply continued to throw the ball into the basket without regard to so-called pivot and screen plays. It is being definitely demonstrated today that the score is raised two points after the ball goes through the hoop, with or without benefit of "razzle-dazzle". Since the principal idea is to obtain more points than the opposition, the simple conclusion is that the team which throws the ball through the basket more often wins the game. The sooner that Eastern collegians learn to shoot from any position or spot on the floor, the sooner they will give Western teams better opposition.

It was my lot to have learned the game in the Eastern style of passing and set shooting. Unfortunately I was forced to sit on the bench, watching many games at Notre Dame, until I had learned to throw the ball from any position without getting "set". For years the axiom of Western coaches when playing an Eastern college was "watch their feet - when they start drawing them together step in close and block the throw". Therafter the Western coaches bothered no further with defensive measures other than to teach their players to "switch" on the defense when the opposition used pivot plays, etc.

After warming the bench for one year and then playing for two with a Notre Dame team which won 60 out of 66 games and the Western championship twice I returned to the East. Through the efforts of Arthur Donovan, the well-known referee, an opportunity was given me to try-out for the N. Y. Athletic Club five. This team ultimately consisted of ten players, nine of whom had been captains of their respective college teams, most of them Easterners. It was at once apparent that those who had learned the game in the West and those who had learned in the East could not coordinate their respective systems, namely a wide-open game and a short-pass, pivot game. However on individual merits this team won the Eastern Athletic Club championship the first year. Eventually, after a lapse of four years and a change of players had taken place, they evolved too separate and distinct teams. One group was comprised of players from Indiana, W. & J., Oregon and Notre Dame; the other of players from N.Y.U., Fordham, Manhattan and Columbia.