

almost a miracle if a player ever got two hands free enough to take a two-hand shot.

Actually, it was quite a trick to get one hand loose from the grasp of an opponent. An offensive player in those days not only was burdened with an opponent on his back but he frequently found himself without use of either arm.

Lucky to Have One Hand Free

It was not uncommon in the days when special professional rules were played around here to have a teammate pass you the ball and be hit flush in the chest with it for the simple reason that both of your hands suddenly had been pinned to your side. And in one pro game, we saw the ball lay unmolested on the floor under one basket for several seconds before a single player could break away from his opponent long enough to pick it up.

"The new system of shooting with one hand has changed the game," was one comment made in this article.

"Goodness gracious," as Connie Mack would say in a similar situation, the writer of that piece certainly never saw any of the basketball games that were played around here 20 to 30 years ago if he thinks shooting with one hand is a new development.

That was about the only way a player could shoot before the rules were changed to prevent a defensive player from making contact with an offensive player. If his other hand wasn't already pinned or paralyzed he was forced to use it as a buffer to keep the defensive player from pulling his shooting arm off at the shoulder.

And in those days, a player not only had to shoot one handed most of the time while in the grasp of an opponent but the target was not always visible or conveniently located.

Basketball games are played in spacious and well-lighted courts for the most part today. Years ago, they were played in town halls, churches, school cellars and gyms with low ceilings.

Even Spectators Provided Obstacles

Most of the baskets were fastened to walls, posts, or balconies. After firing a close-up shot, a player could figure on being driven into a wall, a radiator or the lap of an unhospitable spectator who wasn't adverse to bracing his knees to provide the first line of resistance.

There always seemed to be certain places on most courts where an obstruction of some kind blocked the flight of the shot and in some extreme cases the ball had to be maneuvered to a definite spot before it was possible to reach the basket with a shot of any kind.

There was no wild scoring in those days. The scores didn't measure up to the current standard which requires an adding machine to figure out the final total. But plenty of one handed shots were fired at the basket. And when they didn't carom off the rafters or hit the low ceiling a good percentage of them sailed through the hoop despite the obstacles.

Basketball has changed, yes, but the biggest changes are in the freedom an offensive player has because of legislation and the opportunity he has because of improved conditions under which the game is played. Give some of the old timers, who used to have to wiggle out of their trunks to escape the vice-like grasp of an opponent, peek around a post and then scale the ball over a set of steam pipes to reach the basket, the freedom and constant conditions that prevail now and they would have molested the strings as frequently as the modern stars. The game has developed rapidly in some ways but the uncanny ability to shoot with one hand isn't one of them, in our opinion.