

# COACHES ARE BLAMED FOR ACTIONS OF FANS

Survey by Basketball Mentors Shows Level of Sportsmanship Is Set by  
Instructors

By JACK MARTIN, in PROVIDENCE EVENING BULLETIN

Rhode Island's schools, along with those of the rest of the nation, this year have launched a concerted campaign for the improvement of "spectator sportsmanship." Generally, it seems, the way the spectator behaves at a basketball game is considered a reflection of how the coach behaves. This is no malignment of the hard-working and worrying mentor; it is the result of a study stretching over several seasons, nation-wide, and made by the National Association of Basketball Coaches itself, no less.

This National Association has an ethics committee which has conducted the survey. The results of the survey have been circulated among the high school coaches in this State through the medium of the State Principals' Athletic Committee. The principals do not say the coaches under their jurisdiction must follow the rules laid down; they merely pass them along as something worth reading and assimilating as far as possible without too much pressure being exerted.

\* \* \* \*

"...We find that the attitude of the coach on the bench either encourages good spectator and player sportsmanship, or throws fuel on the fire of poor sportsmanship, which the National Basketball Coaches' Association is attempting to eliminate," reads the survey. "If the coach is in the habit of making uncomplimentary gestures every time the official calls a foul on one of his players, then you can be assured that the partisans of his team will break loose in their loud disapproval of the decision. This condition sometimes leads to worse situations on the court as spectators exercise a tremendous influence in determining the sportsmanship attitude, or lack of it, among the contestants.

\* \* \* \*

Well, that is right in line with what a lot of the folks closely conducted with the game hereabouts have said in the past. The officials themselves haven't been the only ones to blame the coaches for the few flareups which have come in Rhode Island. Still you can't help but consider the fact that the coaches, nationally and locally, have made this concerted effort to clean their own houses. Perhaps the referees, who have local and National groupings, too, could devote some of their time to looking into their own participation in basketball; maybe they could still be honest and find some of the blame for ruffled tempers--of which there are no more in sports than in basketball--reflected in their conduct.

The coaches have been loyal enough to the game to see their own faults, publicize and try to correct them. Putting basketball on the same high plane of sportsmanship as football, baseball and some of the other branches largely is a matter of co-operation. You can't forget that the indoor court game sprang from an educational institution and primarily was rooted only in the idea of pleasant, body-building recreation in connection with the more academic pursuits in that institution.

\* \* \* \* \*