

EDITOR'S NOTES

With the feeling expressed by some coaches, old players and sports writers that the present game of basketball could stand improvement, remedies suggested during the past month have been the removal of the back boards, the elimination of wild shooting and forcing the players to take sane shots. Some are even advocating the returning to the cages where the game was played years ago.

"We can first remember basketball in 1899 when most courts had no back boards. The basket was put up on a two-by-four and an iron rod three feet long held the rim in place. The net was tied at the bottom and the spectators knew a basket had been scored when the ball dropped into the net. At first, a stick was used to poke the ball out but later some of the taller players were able to push it up and out.

In those games, every set shot had to be made with the feet together and skillful players arched the ball considerably higher than is done now. Since there were fewer diversions, players of the old school spent more time at practice with the result that excellent shooters were more the rule than the exception.

That is one of the reasons why we old timers would love to see the "hoop" shot taken out of the game. That congenial Irishman, Dave MacMillan at Minnesota would laugh with glee if the boards were removed. So, I think, would Nat Holman and I am sure it would help my teams in winning more games.

Still we must consider the game for every college and high school player and for every coach and having seen more than a thousand games, I firmly believe that the game is better with the boards. It is the belief of some coaches that the taller players would not play such a prominent part in the game and his undeniable value on rebound shots and tap-ins would be lessened. Nevertheless let us warn them that in the old by-gone days, every high school and college was looking for the human circus man and every professional team had a centre that stood at least five inches over six feet.

How those big fellows could work under the basket! The big fellow is still a definite threat around the back boards and if the back boards were eliminated, he would still prove valuable at converting the missed shots. With no boards to break the progress, the missed shots would be numerous.

The limited time given to practice is another item that reacts unfavorably toward the removal of the boards. Boys are still going to high school and college for an education and wild, ineffectual shooting at a suspended rim would draw the ire of the spectators. Not only would the players feel the wrath of the fans but the coaches would also be definitely on the pan. Alumni organizations would rise in arms if their teams gave exhibitions of inaccuracy.

Scores, too, would be decidedly lower and teams, holding slight leads in the waning moments, would be impossible to beat. A few points would be protected by offensive stalling and the game would be slowed up considerably.

Now we must ask ourselves whether or not we want to go back to the enclosed courts. In the old days, the courts were surrounded by a board enclosure three feet high and from there to the ceiling was a net that kept the ball continually in play. Or do we want to go back to the halls that were heated by a wood stove in the corner? A free ball around the stove was retrieved very carefully for reasons you can well understand.

The advocates of a rougher game should know that at the beginning, basketball was a popular sport. Then, as tripping and pushing increased, its interest waned. The situation reached such a degree that those connected with it were determined to stop it entirely unless something was done to correct the evils.