

EDITOR'S NOTES

Colleges in New England dropped it; the professional crowds fell off and from 1810 to 1920, basketball was at a low ebb. With the game almost headed for extinction, a small group began to hold interpretation meetings and this resulted in better officiating, better playing and better conditions.

Today we have a fine game that is played by a greater number than any other sport. An example of the success with modern basketball is being received can be cited by the fact that more than 18,000 fans paid their way into Madison Square Garden, recently for a college double header.

Why go back to the centre jump and other phases of the old game that served to slow it up to a point of disinterest? Let us make a few steps toward increasing its appeal to player and spectator alike. This could be done by standardizing the officiating and the playing surface. The latter should be from 82 to 85 feet in length and 42 to 45 feet in width.

Officiating has improved tremendously but there is still room for improvement. An indication of the improvement is revealed in a story by Leander MacDonald, now physical director of the schools in Cambridge, Mass., and a coach for over 25 years. MacDonald had been asked to referee a game between Dartmouth and Williams at Hanover shortly after the turn of the century. On the day of the game, MacDonald bought a rule book and studied it on his ride to Hanover. When he stepped onto the floor, he was still in doubt as to many of the rules and most of the penalties. At the end of the contest, the Williams coach asked him where he thought he had learned the game and MacDonald replied that he had played some on a class team at Harvard but that most of his knowledge had been secured from the rule book on the train. "Luckily for me", he said, "Dartmouth won 16 - 15 or I would have been lynched before I left."

NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

Basketball is not much like the game that Dr. John Naismith started in Springfield many years ago although four of the 13 original rules are still in effect. The ones that have managed to survive follow:

- (1) - The ball shall be a light round object similar to a soccer ball.
- (2) - Walking or running with the ball is prohibited.
- (3) - The goals shall be horizontal.
- (4) - There shall be no personal contact.

At first, dribbling was banned but when it was found that players (trapped in the corners had no way of getting out, bouncing was permitted and later a dribble with either hand or both hands was permitted. It was even possible to break the dribble at that time but this was later ruled out.

With the advancement through the years, other notable changes almost completely revolutionized the game. The well dressed player of a few years ago wore an outfit that included long tights and when the shorter pants became the vogue, they were heavily padded - - The playing surface were not always in the best of condition and the game was played with the grain so that when a player fell, he would pick up only a few splinters - Basketball was once known as a sissy's game - The first interpretation meeting in New England was held in 1920 and for a long time, the New England district, with 360 members, had the largest number of officials - There was no disqualification for four fouls in the early games as most clubs had but five players. Instead, for every three fouls committed by Team A, one point would be given Team B.

Heywood Broun, the well known sports columnist who died recently, was a great advocater of basketball. While at Harvard, he was the coach of one of the class teams and did much toward fostering the progress of the sport
