

DO YOU LIKE THE GAME OF BASKETBALL:

By George Edmond

St. Paul Pioneer Press - Jan. 14, 1940.

Do you like the game of basketball? Does it provide thrills in proportion to the cost and trouble involved in attending games.

Reason for the question is simply this: A lot of fans believe there is considerable room for improvement and suggest changes so radical that, if they were put into effect we might have another fine sport, but - it wouldn't be basketball as we know it now.

In our opinion it would be difficult to uphold an argument that basketball, imperfect as it may be, is not a good game. It still outdraws the great college game of football and by observation, provides about as many thrills as a person could ask to be packed in an hour of competition.

Basketball, from a technical standpoint may be picked to pieces. It may be shown, in logical fashion, that it is not a fair game and that it might be made far more attractive from a spectator standpoint. And, yet, despite all the criticism, 12,000 or more fans can be packed into the Minnesota field house to see the Minnesota Gophers meet a Big Ten opponent.

The logic may show one thing, public interest something entirely different. Any game that stands tops from a general interest and attendance standpoint can't be entirely wrong.

WHAT ARE ITS FAULTS?

This is the criticism you hear about basketball above all others: Is it a game in which good play is penalized rather than rewarded?

That is based principally on the point that a team scoring a basket must give up possession of the ball to the opposition. Why, the critics ask, should a team be put at a disadvantage after doing something for which it should be commended? Basketball, they say, is the only sport in which this is done.

As a matter of fact, that is the least of the criticisms that may be directed against basketball.

It is not the only sport that seeks to make things even by putting at a disadvantage the team which has just made a score. Football does exactly that when it provides that the team scored against may choose whether to kick or receive the next kickoff. Golf does exactly the same when, in match play, it provides that the player winning a hole must play first from the next tee and give his opponent the advantage of judging the wisdom of his choice of club.

Basketball would become a farce if the team scoring a basket were given the advantage in the throw-out of the ball for resumption of play. If that were done a team that was only a little superior to its opponent would become so superior as to destroy the competitive angle. Games that now give the deserving team an advantage of a few points would become utter routs.

It must be admitted that the element of luck often results in the better basketball team losing a close game. But is that a situation peculiar to basketball? Would anyone suggest that it doesn't happen, too, in football, golf, hockey, or what have you?

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT:

It would be ridiculous to say that there isn't room for improvement in basketball. But when the rules committee takes up the matter of correction it should remember that most of the things now being criticized are the result of changes that were designed to correct what previously were considered faults.

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