

Hank Luisetti (continued)

"I've always been a good listener to stories concerning Hank because I've looked up to him as a world champion, a 'natural' in anything he's ever done. But here's the point and I thought you could use it in col. form today.

"It's timely because of his return to the courts after a three-year period of obscurity. And this is typical of the Luisetti I followed in high school and the champion I cheered at Stanford.

"During the past month or so Hank has been continually practicing, getting into perfect physical shape with the hope the A.A.U. would reinstate him. He's never done anything halfway so it's reasonable to assume the Luisetti who'll play tonight for the Olympic Club against Stanford is the same Hank, just a little older edition, who shattered scoring records on the Farm.

"Now, last Friday, while Galileo was practicing, Hank knocked on the gym door and asked Tommy DeNike, who first coached him as a scrawny, spindly-legged 120-pounder, if the preps were working out.

"Sure, Hank," said Tommy, "want to come in and watch?"

"Hank said he'd like to work with them if DeNike would permit it. DeNike told him to hustle downstairs and get into a suit and come up and play, the kids would get a terrific thrill out of working with him.

"But," added DeNike, "We're only working on fundamentals today."

"That's just exactly what I want," answered Hank.

"And there it is, the greatest basketball player the Coast has ever produced, perhaps the most amazing the Nation has ever produced, eager to practice fundamentals with a high school team.

"He said he needed the fundamentals too. So he donned a suit, practiced with the kids, listened attentively to DeNike as he gave pointers to the preps and actually tried them out himself. After that he went to a vacant basket and worked for two straight hours on pivots, feints, lay-up shots, dribbling --- the whole pattern of offensive basketball.

"He helped some of the preps, too, patiently answering their questions and laughing when, after he'd missed the easy ones just like us."

"The next morning he was out at George Washington high, working with Lloyd Leith's kids, answering the same questions, and going through the same practice schedule, he's religiously stayed with ever since he was an obscure prep.

"That, Bill, is why Luisetti was so great and may be even better now. He's never figured himself so polished he couldn't listen to pointers from high school coaches. And he's the same Luisetti I knew at high school, a little on the bashful side, unaffected by the hundreds of superlatives that have fallen at his feet from the time he could lift a basketball.

"Luisetti isn't just an athletic champion."

EDITOR'S NOTE---A crowd of 10,000 witnessed Luisetti's debut, following his reinstatement. The king of the court scored 20 points, as his Alma Mater, Stanford, scored a 52-48 victory over the Olympic Club.