

LET A COMMISSIONER OR COMMISSION

SELECT THE OFFICIALS -

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Following a close game, or when rival feeling runs especially high, the greatest cry one hears is "Why didn't they hire two GOOD officials!"

Without attempting to criticise officials, it must be said that several close contests are marred by poor refereeing. On the other hand, there have been closely played contests which have been so well handled that, irrespective of the outcome, no one dares accuse a referee of being either partial or incompetent. Instances, such as the latter, however, are less common than the alternate.

How can the officiating problem be improved, then? After closely watching basketball for the past 20 years, both in and outside New England, it appears to me that those who have the say here in New England are too conservative and suspicious and are playing a game that puts the emphasis upon the winning - - at the cost of the individual players, teams, college, students, officials, and, eventually, their very selves!

It seems to me that very few colleges are innocent to such a charge.

If one were to study the newspaper box scores of the various college teams here in New England, he will detect that several enlightening points stand out. In the first place, he'll note that certain colleges make it a point to employ a certain referee or pair of referees at most of their home contests. He'll note that such colleges (and their players, naturally) conform to a game or style of play that appeals to these selected referees.

Hence, a minimum number of fouls. The result? They're hard to defeat at home, and invariably lose or come near losing the moment a new set of officials is encountered.

By no means do I accuse, or infer, in the least, that New England officials are dishonest. In fact, I honestly feel that their integrity is as good as mine.

What we cannot deny is that we are all human!

Let's look at the present set-up of assigning officials to college basketball games here in New England. As a rule, the physical director (graduate manager, or coach) corresponds with officials, asking whether they would come down for such and such a game on such and such a date. It is understood that the two officials, on reporting, will be paid the fee, plus traveling expenses.

Like everyone else, I would like to regard refereeing as a hobby, an official being an individual, who, especially fond of the game, likes to pursue it in the capacity of an umpire. The pay, then, is incidental, being a remuneration for sacrificing an evening to execute his tasks.

However, when refereeing attains a point where an official (or officials) earn, during the winter season, remunerations that go well into three figures, and, in many instances, undoubtedly, far above \$1,000, then we can no longer term it a hobby, but, indeed, "big business."

Continued.