BUILDING THE BASKETBALL MACHINE

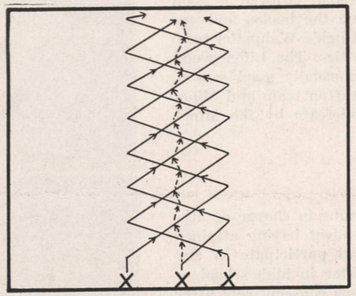
The coach of the Indiana state champions gives the details of his early work-outs

By Archie R. Chadd

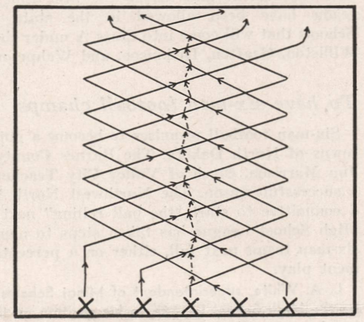
Mr. Chadd's Anderson High School team won the 1935-36 championship of basketball's "capital state"—Indiana. The author got his basketball schooling under Tony Hinkle at Butler University, with whom he has continued association, helping him put on the Hinkle system at summer coaching schools. Mr. Chadd will have another article next month, and in this he will explain the workings of the machine, complete and in operation.

A BASKETBALL machine is built on the same basic principles as all other machines: each component part must be evened and tempered to carry efficiently the load of its individual assignment. This is somewhat of a contradiction to the usual advice that coaches should "make the system fit the players, not the players fit the system." I believe that, with boys who have an aptitude for basketball and respond favorably to coaching, they can be "evened and tempered" to fit into the system in which the coach and they have confidence. This is the only sense that I have in mind in the use of the term "machine." I don't mean to suggest that our players, after I am through with them, have no thinking to do. Indeed, they have a lot more to do, and fourfold more choices and decisions to make in the flash of basketball's moments, than they ever would be called upon to make were they to play their basketball untouched by "machine methods." Enough theorizing. Let us get down to business.

We don't permit our basketball players on the floor until football is out of the way, early in November. This eliminates overlapping the sports with the danger of dividing the interest.



DIAG. 1. Well-known practice drill for inculcating habits of passing and ball-handling at top speed, and timing of cuts. The center man has the ball at the start at one end of the floor, and passes to either of the side men cutting in front of him: in this case the one to his right. The passer then cuts diagonally behind the man he passed to, and then cuts back into the line of play, timing his cut so that he comes in in stride to receive the ball from the third man. A shot is taken at the end by the man cutting closest to the basket.



DIAG. 2. Here five men are brought into the drill, the passer cutting behind two men. The ball moves in a more or less straight line (broken lines show path of ball, solid lines paths of players), and the players must cut toward the sidelines and regulate the distance of their cut so as not to retard the speed of the drill. When the ball is fumbled or dropped, the same players should be required to pick up the drill from that point, the advance men returning in line and the drill resuming from the point of the fumble.

Drag dribble

In the drag dribble the dribbler keeps his body between the opponent attempting to guard him and the ball. Through this medium competent dribblers can advance the ball close to the basket under circumstances when openings for other options have failed to present themselves. The dribbler "dragging" does not have for his objective a shot at the basket for himself, but a position from which he can initiate a renewed and closer passing attack. In these pictures the dribbler is dribbling with his right hand because of the angle at which he is moving from the left side of the court through his freethrow arc. A right-hand dribble here affords him much better protection than would a left-hand dribble. The latter would be used were he moving in the opposite direction at a similar angle. In Diag. 3 at the top of the facing page the dribblers going in from the left are to dribble with their left hand: they would be guarded on their right side because of the direct line they are beating to the basket. Below the dribbler is off at another tangent, and his objective is a pivot-post position on the right side of his freethrow lane. Note his use of the left arm. It is being made to serve for protection while it is kept free of contact with the defensive man. Drag-dribblers are usually not so observant of this point, for they know that this is the sort of foul easily concealed from the referee. Even more important than in the unguarded dribble is the need for keeping the bounces low.

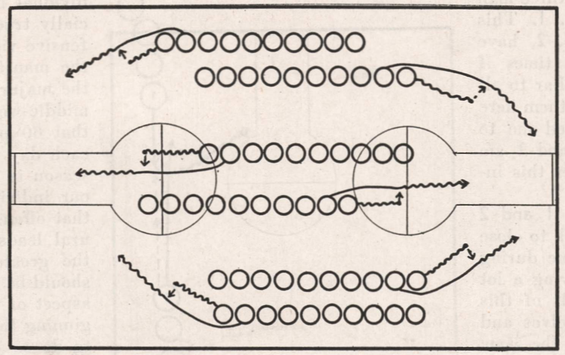
The basketball men report for the first practice about November 8. They report as their respective classes are called, such as sophomore, junior, and senior, giving every boy in school an opportunity to report. Each class works for 90 minutes for two days on ball-handling and shooting at the basket before a cut in the squad is made.

The first two days of practice we spend in ball-handling and footwork, organizing a group of fifty to eighty boys in the manner shown in **Diag. 3.**

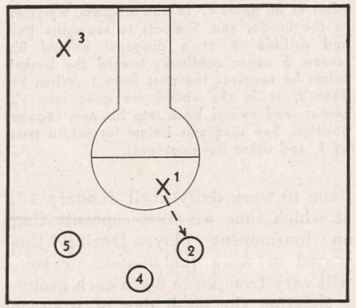
We use four groups of ten boys—two groups on each side of the floor utilizing each basket, and sometimes we put an additional twenty boys in the center of the court, ten working at each basket, thus using thirty boys at each basket, putting in action sixty boys, as **Diag. 3** shows. Ball-handling and footwork show up in this drill. As the more efficient boys stand out, their names are checked and at the close of the practice for the second day, the boys are told by posting a list on the practice bulletin board those who are to return for the third day.

Using thirty boys driving at each basket may appear dangerous but to date we have not had a boy injured in this work. I feel that perhaps the only advantage in using a large group at each basket is that the boys learn to protect themselves.

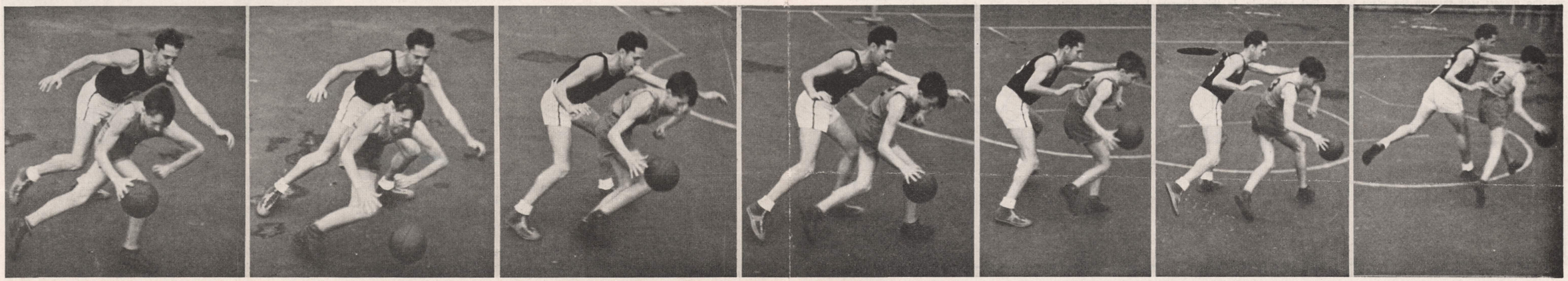
We use two assistant coaches while working fifty or more boys, as we want the mistakes corrected as they take place. We do not use student assistants.



DIAG. 3. Accommodating 60 players in a drill that brings into play skill in handling the ball and footwork. The players in each line work in twos. The first player, holding the ball in his position in line, fakes a dribble to the inside, then drag-dribbles toward the basket, coming to a stop halfway to the basket with his inside leg advanced. He pivots toward the sideline on his rear foot, and hands a quarterback pass to his trailer coming along at top speed. The trailer drives right through the ball, taking it from the first man without stopping, and drives right on to the basket as fast as he can dribble. Players in lines on the left (as they face the basket toward which they are moving) should use the left hand in dribble; those in lines on the right, the right hand. This is to keep the ball removed from the imaginary guard, with the dribbler using his body as a screen between guard and ball.



DIAG. 4. Defensive drill. X1 and X3 are defensive men working on a man-to-man basis against any two of the three offensive players, 2, 4 and 5. X1 has the ball and, to start the drill, passes it to 2, from a short distance so that X1 can be in a good defensive position on 2 when the pass reaches him. If X1 throws the ball to 2 from a distance, 2 will get his shot away and X1 will derive no good from the exercise. If the ball is passed from X1 to 2 at close range, 2 has an opportunity to shoot long, fake a shot and dribble to basket going around X1 on either side into the basket or going around on either side starting a dribble to basket, stopping suddenly and shooting if X1 has a tendency to overrun his position. X1 tries to recover the ball before 2 makes the basket. If X1 recovers the ball, he passes to X3 who is calling for the ball as he would if he were the teammate of X1 in a regular game. If 2 recovers the rebound, 2 shoots again or passes to 4 or 5 who are his teammates and the exercise starts again involving X3 and 4 or 5 according to the one who receives the ball. While X1 is guarding 2, 4 and 5 are watching for mistakes that 2 may make in attempting to score on X1. At the same time X3 is watching for mistakes made by X1. Only one basket is used in this exercise. Three offensive men are preferred to two in order to prevent the defensive men working against the same offensive men throughout the exercise.

In making this first cut of the squad we disregard the size of the boys entirely. We are most concerned with individual cleverness and basket-shooting ability. This first select group will number approximately 85 to 100 boys, necessitating three practice periods for the third day with approximately 30 boys working each period.

This third day of practice should be a strenuous one. With only 30 boys to handle, each boy should be kept moving with special emphasis on cutting for the basket from various angles. On this day, if the practice has been successful at the close of one hour of real work, the boys will show fatigue with a tendency to run lightly—not slow up, but rather lighten their steps, which is an indication of tender feet. This is the time for some teamwork rather than individ- [Turn to next page]