

"I saw another type of decision in last night's game", continued Dr. Naismith. "A guard was planted with outstretched arms. His opponent tried an underhand swing shot. As his upward moving arms came in contact with the stationary arm of the guard you fouled the defensive man and allowed the shooter two freethrows. What in the world must the guard do? Must he always back away and permit unhindered shots? Personally, I feel that he is entitled to his position in this case and is not responsible for the contact."

The embarrassment written on the face of the official was quickly erased as Dr. Naismith continued with some details covering the otherwise fine work done in handling the game.

In reply to a question of game improvement, Dr. Naismith mentioned several moves that might help.

"On the whole we have a pretty good game as it stands. However, I am of the firm conviction that it was a mistake to install the center line and the ten second rule. The general plan of the game is simple: First, a team must score points; and, second, it must try to prevent its opponents from scoring as many points as possible. Thus, a team which has a lead is entitled to use any or all parts of the floor in any legal tactics which will conserve its margin, and the team which is behind is obligated to go after the ball if it wants to score enough points to win. The ten second rule requires the leading team to risk its lead by bringing the ball up to the defense when obligations actually should be reversed.

"In addition the rule has cut the floor space in half which is bound to encourage congestion and lead to more roughness and fouls. For these reasons I am opposed to the center line and the ten second provisions."

"Agreed", spoke one of the listeners, "but retreated defenses and stalling tactics were hurting the game, and something had to be done to force more action. What would be your suggestions to accomplish this?"

"Only some well-formulated experiments will tell us the solution. The Coaches Association is to be complimented for the work it is doing along research lines. Continuation of this may provide the answer. The enlarged basket may help by reducing the risk on longer shots. I doubt if changes in the location of the basket will help much. If you can make it easier to score over a retreated defense or make such scores more valuable, then it will become futile to retreat, and the winning team will be the one which is aggressive defensively.

"For sometime I have been thinking of a scheme which might have the desired effect. Draw an arc on the floor with the basket as the center and use a 30-foot radius or thereabouts. Count all field goals made from inside this zone the customary two points, but score all field goals made from outside as worth three or four points. Such a plan might make it less of a gamble for a player to try longer shots knowing that a few successful ones could build up a winning margin. Conversely, a defense could not afford to congregate under the rim, but would have a spread to hinder the longer trials. Perhaps, by placing a greater value on longer shots, combined with an enlarged basket, might be better still. I am convinced