

Sports of the Times

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

By JOHN KIERAN

Manufactured in the U. S. A.

THERE has come to hand the press booklet issued in connection with the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Basketball, and a nice bit of work the booklet is, with a fine picture of the inventor of basketball, the late Dr. James Naismith, on the front cover. He was a fine man and a fine-looking man and he certainly started something when he put a couple of peach baskets on brackets fifty years ago and enticed some students to try tossing a soccer ball into those baskets.

Golf came to us from overseas. So did tennis, polo, billiards, soccer and most of our other popular sports. Football traces back to the public schools of England and it is even asserted that our baseball is merely an outgrowth of the old English game of rounders. Without going into that debate, a fellow can move over to the basketball court and take a firm stand. There's no doubt about basketball. It's a native game, sprung from the soil—or, anyway, a hard floor—in Springfield, Mass. The official stamp can be put upon basketball: "Manufactured in the U. S. A."

The chairman of the executive committee for the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Basketball is Mayor Roger L. Putnam of Springfield, Mass., a Harvard alumnus, and it is to be hoped that he has appointed some sergeants-at-arms to repress the rooters for lacrosse who will be rushing around to prove that lacrosse is a better game than basketball and rooted deeper and longer in native soil, having been manufactured by the North American Indians before Columbus sailed westward ho! for the New World.

In Round Numbers

But this is no time to give the lacrosse rooters the floor. Let them dig back in history or legend and come up with their own jubilee year when they please. But not now. Basketball has the floor. There's no doubt about the evidence in the case. The date, place and very spot of its origin can be pointed out. Its growth in fifty years has been astonishing. It has not only covered this country but has spread far in foreign fields. The phrase "foreign fields" is used advisedly. They play basketball outdoors in many foreign countries.

Often there are warm debates over what game has the greatest number of players in this country. Since the government hasn't taken any official census in that direction and all other counts are largely guesswork, the issue has not been settled. Some say bowling has the greatest number of active addicts. Others howl for handball. Some claim it's baseball. The hunting and fishing fellows step in with statistics on the issuance of hunting and fishing licenses to lodge something of an official claim for their forces in the field.

This baffled bystander doesn't know where basketball rates on the list, but does know that it is played all over the country by teams of all sizes and shapes under a wide variety of conditions.

Going Through the Hoop

What was started as a fill-in, something to keep the boys warm through a cold New England Winter, is now played from Portland, Me., to Portland, Ore., and from Miami, Fla., to San Diego, Calif., with considerable fury. Boys and

girls play basketball in grammar school gyms and on neighborhood playgrounds. It's a high school game, a college game and an A. A. U. game. Athletic clubs and industrial organizations have teams in amateur competition. There are also some professional teams about, though, to date, the cash returns from that field have not been enough to cause a general rush of athletes in that direction.

But that's the situation at the end of the first fifty years of basketball and the followers of the sport think, with reason, that it's something worth celebrating. The celebrants are following the plan laid down by Naismith Memorial Executive Committee at the Great General Headquarters, Springfield, Mass.

All the high schools and colleges that have teams—and what high school or college hasn't?—have been asked to make one of their scheduled contests of this season a benefit game for the Naismith Memorial fund that will go to erect a Temple of Basketball at Springfield, Mass., on a site donated by Springfield College, the institution at which Dr. Naismith, as one of the instructors, invented a new game with two old peach baskets and a ball borrowed from another sport.

The College Spirit

The colleges are swinging in behind the program in large numbers. The Army-Navy basketball game of this indoor season will be for the benefit of the Naismith Memorial fund and the Golden Jubilee celebration. Columbia, Penn, Fordham, C. C. N. Y. and Long Island University have announced games for the fund. High schools and athletic clubs are in on it.

The A. A. U. teams are contributing, too. For all this observer knows, they may be the very first to produce cash for the fund. This very evening four A. A. U. teams will swing into action at Madison Square Garden for the benefit of the Naismith Memorial project and one outfit is the Twentieth Century-Fox team that won the National A. A. U. championship at Denver last March. The Hollywood squad will play the Roanoke American Legion team that won the Southern A. A. U. championship last year. The other teams that will take part in this program are the Ohrbachs, who won the Metropolitan A. A. U. championship last year, and the Phillips 66 outfit from Bartlesville, Okla., better known as "the Oilers." It's a short series in which these A. A. U. teams will indulge, a two-night tournament. The winners of this evening will meet next Monday night on the same floor, and so will the losers, however discouraged they may be.

The Shining Star

The shining star of the Phillips 66 team from the oil fields of Oklahoma is Hank Luisetti, who used to play for Stanford. This observer saw Hank in his college days and was duly impressed. Those who know more about the bouncing game of basketball say that he's the greatest player the game has produced to date. They have the statistics to prove it. All that this observer can say is that, when last seen in action, he looked the part.

Anyway, it's fine to find Hank Luisetti lending a hand in the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of basketball and here's hoping the whole program goes over in a big way.