



*The First Team, consisting of nine players and their coach, on the steps of the Springfield College gymnasium in 1891. Dr. Naismith is in civilian attire and grouped about him are, left to right, back row, John G. Thompson, Eugene S. Libby, Dr. Edwin P. Ruggles, William R. Chase, Captain T. Duncan Patton. Centre row, Frank Mahan and Dr. James A. Naismith. Front row, Finlay G. MacDonald, William H. Davis, Lyman W. Archibald.*

## Origin of the Game of Basketball

**B**ASKETBALL came into existence fifty years ago. Dr. Gulick, the head of the Department of Physical Education of Springfield College, asked Dr. James A. Naismith, a young instructor, to design a game that could be played indoors as well as out, that was devoid of the physical contact of sports like soccer and lacrosse, yet possessed all the elements of skill, amusement and science.

Dr. Naismith complied with the request by prescribing certain principles on which his new game was to be based. He decided not only to prohibit personal contact, but also decided there would be no kicking of the ball or striking of it with the fist. The goal was to be horizontal and above the reach of the players.

All these fundamental principles were primarily to avoid injury on hard wood floor, in the limited confines of a small indoor gymnasium.

The first game was a most successful experiment. The players immediately appreciated the unlimited possibilities the new sport offered. Skill, speed, cleverness, strategy and sportsmanship were intrinsic parts of the pastime. Its popularity was assured from the very beginning, but not even imaginative Dr. Naismith ever dreamed it would flourish as it did, and as it does today.