

April 30, 1945.

Sgt. C. F. Pechek,  
Co. D, 381st Inf.,  
APO 96, c/o P.M.,  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Sergeant Pechek:

I feel very apologetic in not answering your inquiry sooner. I have been out of town much, speaking at these "grapefruit and lettuce leaf" banquets, which we call basketball aftermaths of the season. These high schools must have an animated cartoon present when they celebrate their victories, or at least their moral victories, and I have been out almost every night for three weeks on that tour.

However, I am glad to tell you that in normal times the basketball play at the Denver A.A.U. tournament is high grade, and it is on a par with or better than any basketball played anywhere in the United States. This year, however, I attended the tournament and out of thirty-odd teams there were eight good teams, I would say, - no more. The fault of the A.A.U. is that they try to get a full bracket of 32 teams, and generally end up with 40. Many of the early games, at least the first half of the week, are putrid. Four top teams are seeded in the upper bracket and four in the lower bracket and the rest of them are poor opponents.

The idea of the A.A.U. in doing this is that they get the money for a full week's play. Three days would have been ample, maybe two would have settled the argument, but their gate receipts would have been reduced seventy-five per cent. I have always fought the policy of the A.A.U. in taking all the money and giving the teams practically nothing. The A.A.U. does not own a hurdle, a basketball goal, or anything else. They are a paper organization but they have the mechanism whereby these individual teams can meet for a play-off, and naturally the boys being out of college and in being in an organization that can play in a tournament anywhere else, they go for the trip and the tournament.

I would answer you very directly and say that any time the A.A.U. holds a tournament you see better basketball played there than anywhere else in the country because the top teams go there. The A.A.U. tournament is the same as the N.C.A.A. in college basketball. The top teams attend that tournament. The Invitation Tournament in New York City is nothing but the sport writers tournament. The sport writers get together and collaborate