

slightly by the fact that it's bread and butter to them, but we feel that they're giving their sincerely honest opinions.

"No normal boy is going to be hurt playing basketball any more than in any other strenuous sport," declares Harold E. Olsen of Ohio State University. "To my knowledge there is no medical evidence to support the assertion that basketball is too fast and is hurting the boys. The game should not be played by anyone with a heart defect."

Frank Keaney of Rhode Island State, whose teams average better than sixty points a game, has similar ideas. "This so-called 'race-horse' type of basketball is not detrimental to the health of the player," he says. "By actual tests, players at the end of the season are in better shape than boys who do not participate. If a player gets himself into good shape, his heart will not be injured."

"After thirty years of coaching I have come to the conclusion that basketball as played today is excellent. The crowd loves the new game. Give them what they want and they'll come back to see you again. Put the boy into shape and he'll enjoy the fast tempo."

Coach Keaney also declares that among other things, a coach should see that his boys get plenty of rest, good food and lots of sleep. "We found that a boy who dances the night before a game is not at his best the last ten minutes of a game," he observes.

Sam Barry at the University of Southern California is another who insists there is no harm in the present style.

"With the elimination of the center jump there was a tendency to race-horse the game," says the Trojan coach. "But after a year's experience, teams have adjusted their pace. The new type of game is more pleasing to the spectator and has increased scoring. It has many other favorable advantages."

Wesley Fesler, Harvard's basketball coach, doesn't think the game is detrimental if proper conditioning work has been done. "Our kids don't feel that they are being overworked—and we don't have very many," he opines.

This also is the viewpoint held by Ward Lambert of Purdue—one of the best known coaches in the business. "In twenty-five years of coaching I know of no ill-effects from basketball," he adds. "We use a fast break and invariably our players have gained weight by the end of the season. They are given thorough physical examinations before the season and also 'cold shots.'"

But hold—here comes the rebuttal, the dissenting voices among the coaches who uphold Phog Allen's views!

One is from Clair Bee of Long Island University, whose quintets have made basketball history in the past few years. Two seasons ago his Blackbirds set an all-time college record of 44 straight wins.

"I can't say whether basketball as played today is detrimental to

health," he asserts, "but I do know it is extremely strenuous—mentally and physically. There should be a break in the game after a basket is scored so players, coaches and spectators can relax."

And another—from Dr. H. C. Carlson of the U. of Pittsburgh.

"Elimination of the center jump makes for a game which is exhausting to spectator and player alike," he says. "The average fan likes a few seconds to reflect and possibly comment to his companion on a successful shot. Under the new rules we certainly have action, but possibly we have too much action—for both spectators and players."

This continuous, unrelieved tension perhaps was responsible for many startling incidents last winter, such as the one at Fulton, Missouri, where teams from Tarkio and Westminster Colleges were battling in a heated game. As the bitterly-fought first half came to a close, the timer raised his gun. The shot rang out. And down from the rafters floated a dead guinea hen. That crowd, at least, relaxed.

It will be noted that coaches and others who favor the modern game assert it is not harmful to a boy in good physical condition.

And there's the rub. What is good physical condition? Even doctors are puzzled at times. C. Paul White, President of the Kewanee, Illinois, Board of Health, wrote a letter recently to the *Illinois Medical Journal*, asking physicians of the state to arise in protest against the dangers of basketball. In it, he declared:

"The game has been speeded up to such an extent that in my opinion it is actually dangerous... Recently, a boy in a nearby town collapsed at the close of a game and died an hour later... No matter how well checked these boys are, there are bound to be some whose hearts cannot and will not stand the strain."

And then there's the scholarly dissertation written by Dr. J. A. Walce of Columbus, Ohio, and published in the *Journal Lancet* of Minneapolis.

"Inadequate recognition is given the condition known as potential heart disease in cases involving participation in athletics," he states. "The question of what constitutes... a degree dangerous in athletic competition is not settled."

In other words, heart trouble is something that doesn't make itself known the next afternoon. A check-up over a period of weeks on pulse, blood pressure, etc., may show no immediate ill effects—but one doesn't need a volume of medical books to realize that a little strain here and a little strain there sooner or later becomes a big doctor bill.

Coaches and surveys to the contrary notwithstanding, these are the facts. Heart ailments still constitute a vast medical mystery—and race-horse basketball is sowing a crop of ailing tickers that many of today's young players will reap regretfully in later life.

But the turnstiles click merrily on! #



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