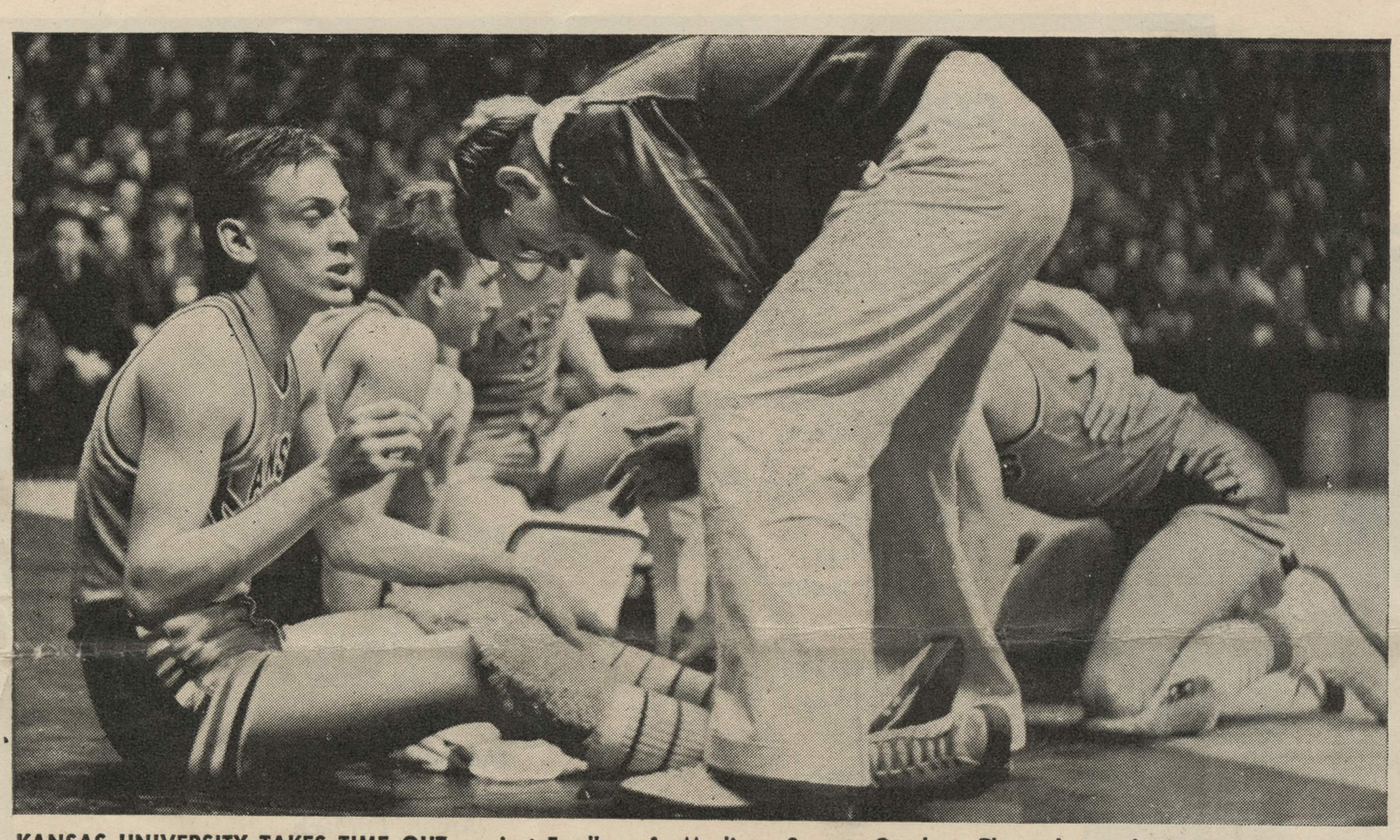
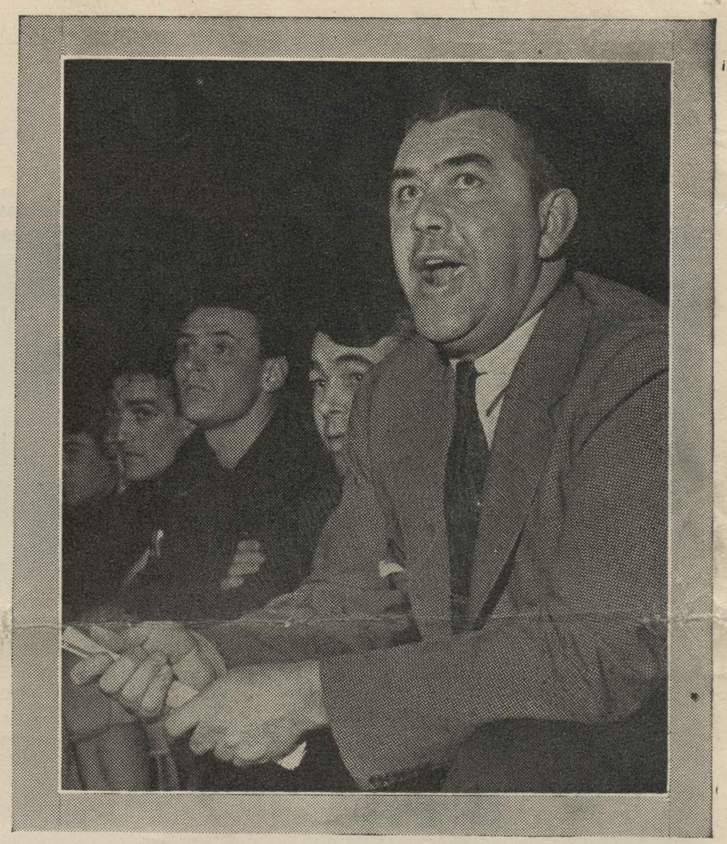
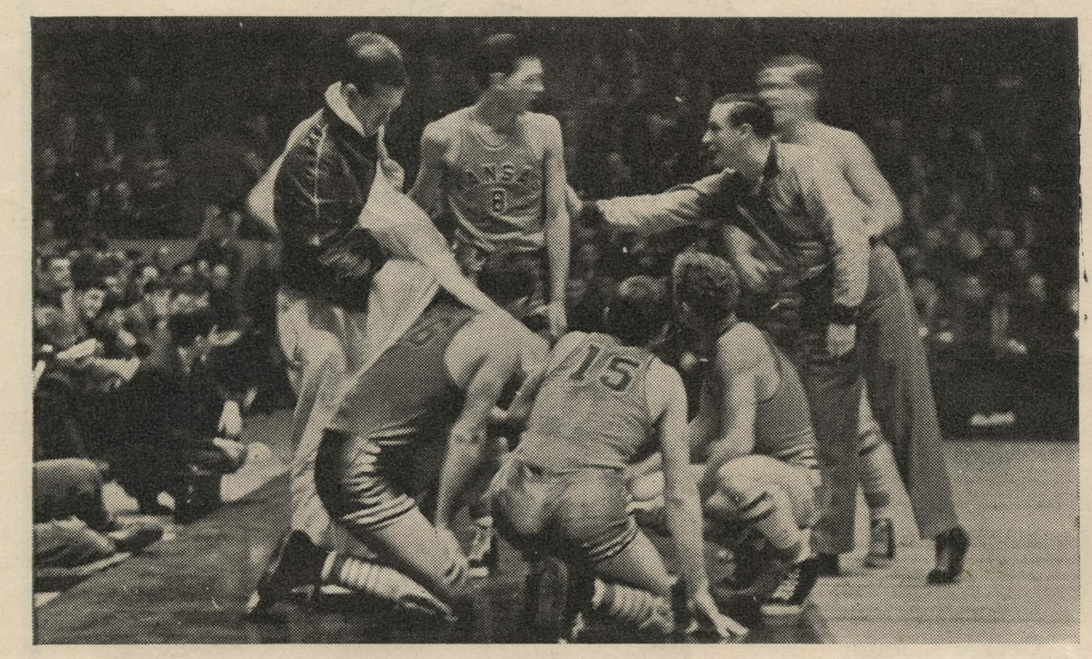


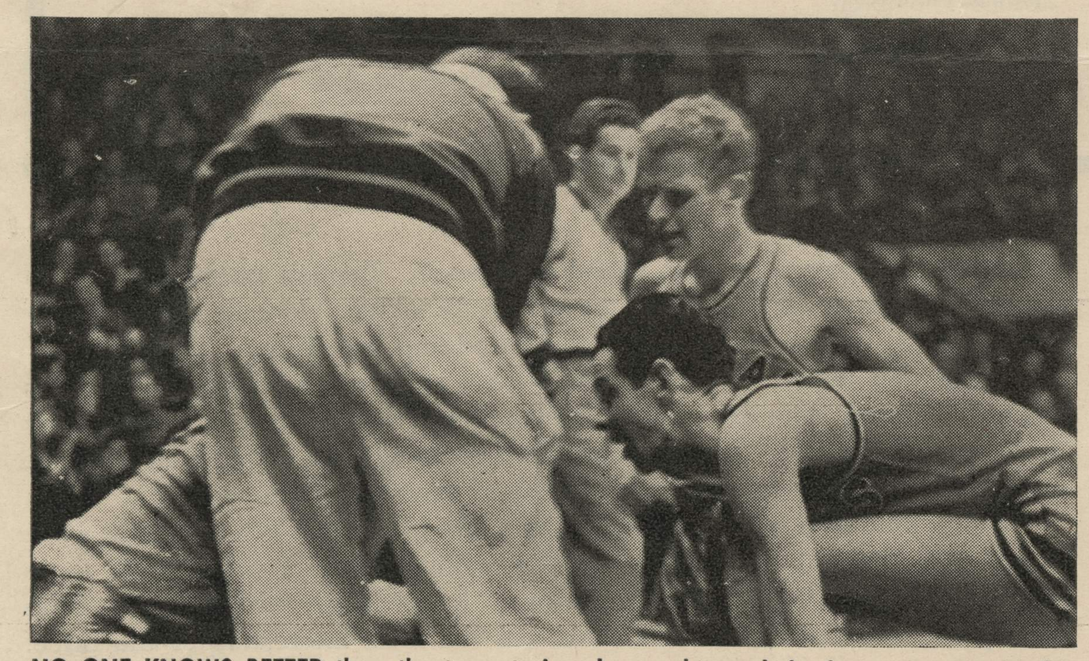
KANSAS UNIVERSITY TAKES TIME OUT against Fordham in Madison Square Garden. The exhausted players slump to the floor to regain their strength. Few players have the stamina called for under the present rules which keep the game in motion continuously. The constant starting, stopping, sprinting, jumping and dodging that the game requires is having a bad effect on many teams. Most coaches now develop ten- and fifteen-man teams in order to have fresh strength on tap.



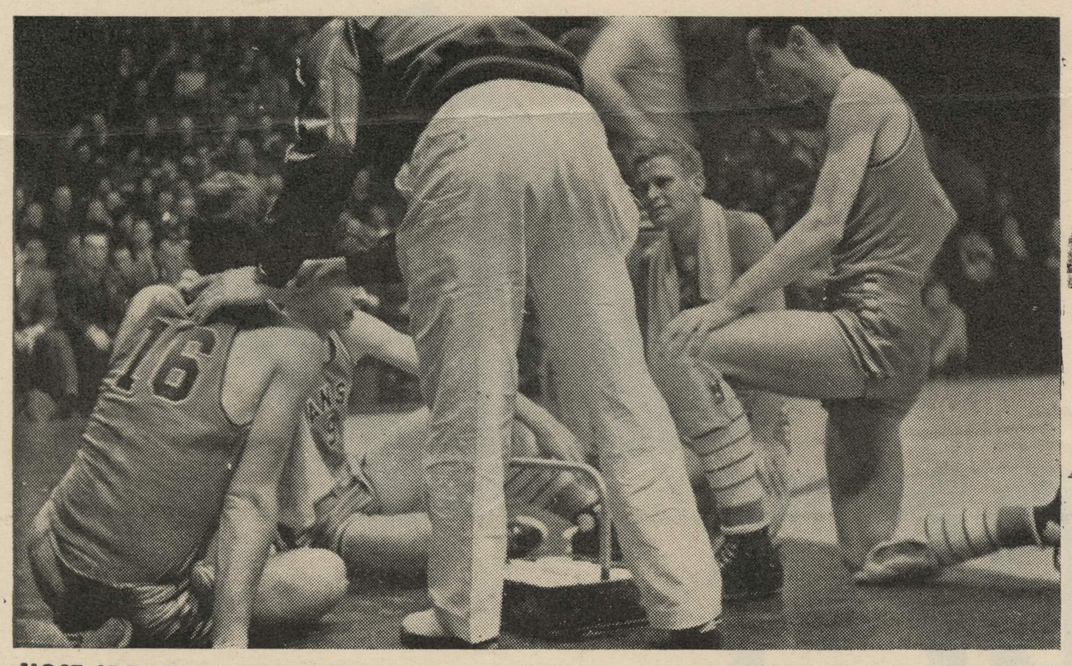
BECAUSE I GET EXCITED, as I am above, I am worn out before the game ends. Most fans feel the same way. A slower game would be better for everyone. The pace of basketball now is too much to take.



BECAUSE HIS LEGS ARE no longer young, the referee takes a terrific drubbing under the new rules. To save himself he tries to run less, which impairs his impartiality and efficiency. Referees would probably favor some changes in the rules.



NO ONE KNOWS BETTER than the team trainer how exhausted the boys are. But it's his job to do everything he possibly can to keep them going, priming them on such refreshments as oranges and water. What they really need is a little breathing space.



MOST SPORTS HAVE their let-ups as part of the game itself so that the athlete can catch his breath. Football, boxing, tennis, swimming, permit players to relax. This is not possible in basketball under the stress of the present regulations.

By HOWARD "JAKE" CANN

N.Y.U. Basketball Coach

AS TOLD TO LEWIS B. FUNKE

SINCE 1937, when streamlined rules were adopted to speed up the game, basketball has become the whirling dervish of winter sports. To stay in the game today, the players must continuously exert every ounce of strength they have. They come off the floor wilted, completely exhausted, their hearts pounding like trip hammers in high.

How many, I should like to ask, will pay for their exertions in later life? How many should not even be in a game as fast as basketball? How many have had an evening of real fun? Or have they submitted themselves to what many persons are calling a "man-killing" game simply for the amusement of the crowds, as did the gladiators of Rome?

I have been in sports for more than two decades as a coach and player. I have played basketball and football and was a member of the 1920 Olympic track team as a shot-putter, having won the intercollegiate championship in that event that year. As a player I led the N.Y.U. basketball team to the national championship at Atlanta, Ga.

But these years, if they have taught me anything, have impressed me with this—the last person considered in sports today is the player.

It certainly was the player who was forgotten when basketball's new rules were set up. To satisfy the general sports public's demand for speed and action, he was sacrificed. It was for the public and the public's money that they speeded up basketball. But this increased tempo is dangerous.

Under the old regulations, the game started off with a tap-off at center and the ball was brought back to the center for a tap-off after every field goal or successful free throw from the floor. Now the tap-off is used to start the game and at the beginning of the second half. The rule on a tap-off for the ball after two players have gotten hold of the ball and refused to relinquish it, is the same as before.

Before, you could expect to have the ball brought back to center as many as forty times. Each trip required ten or fifteen seconds. During these shifts, players managed to relax. Now, however, it requires no more than three or four seconds to get the ball back in play after points are made, since once the ball is through the hoop the team scored against automatically gets the ball. The game speeds on with hardly a halt . . . and without mercy.

Playing a game of continuously shifting fortunes, basketball players are called upon to be constantly on the alert, sprinting up and down the floor, shooting off in diagonal stabs, backstepping, cutting, stretching forward, back and sidewards, leaping high into the air to snag passes, pivoting, lunging upward to reach the goals. Worst of all, it is a game of constant stopping and starting. And any mechanic can tell you that it's the stopping and starting that saps the life of an engine.

Since the speed-up was launched I have noticed some of my boys come off the court so exhausted they could not think after having played only ten minutes. That rarely happened under the old rules. My players complain of fatigue repeatedly. Nervous players seem to be the worse hit.

The fact is that I am now unable to keep my squads scrimmaging regularly. In my day, and with teams I have coached, we could play almost without end and get fat on it. Today's intense speed forces me to limit the number of practice scrimmages. And by a strange coincidence,

MANKILLER

IS STREAMLINED BASKETBALL TOO FAST FOR ITS PLAYERS' HEALTH?

illness has hit my squad, something that never happened before. Colds, grippe, and general susceptibility to disease have afflicted my star players.

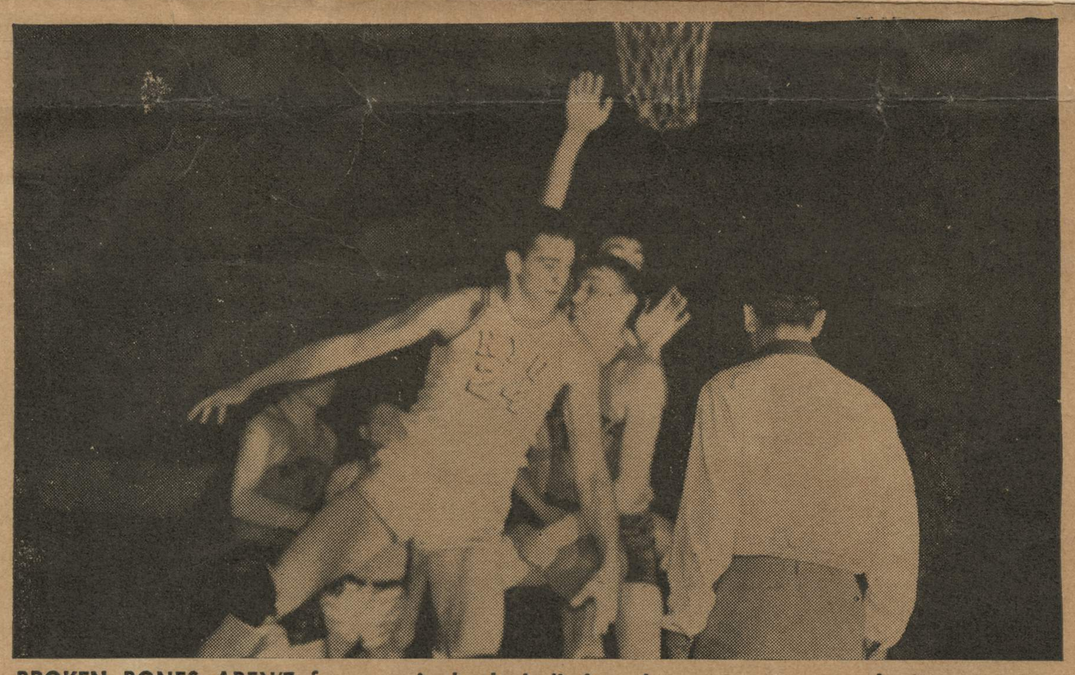
Notice the box-scores of various games and you will see that teams are using a dozen or fifteen players. Before the new rules were set up, you used the bench boys only against a weaker rival. Today you cannot win unless you can go "all out" from the start to the finish. Coaches now develop ten-man teams.

Note also the findings of Dr. Marcus Hobart, team physician at Northwestern. His research, while not conclusive, shows that since the change in rules the player's heart-beat after the game had increased to 108 from a normal 60-to-90. In one instance it hit 144. "I'm not a heart specialist," said Dr. Hobart, "but even these sketchy experiments indicate that the game is too fast for most boys. Basketball under present conditions is a test of speed and stamina instead of a test of skill as it originally was meant to be."

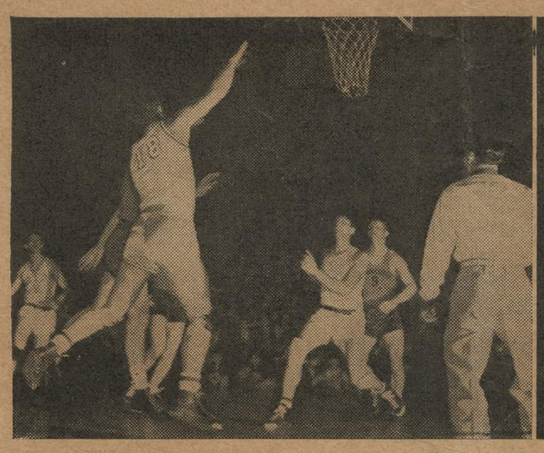
Last year Dr. Forrest C. "Phog" Allen, Kansas University's brilliant coach, and chairman of the research committee of the National Basketball Rules Committee, said at a conference of coaches that "since the elimination of the center-jump, the game has become too fast for the younger, immature players of junior-high-school and high-school age. Research by physicians has revealed that the health of the youngsters has been impaired. They, the boys, have found their growth stunted and their general physical organs injured by the terrific speed now called for in basketball." More recently Dr. Allen asked for the restoration of the center-jump, or at least "a ten-second respite before play is resumed after baskets, out of deference to the players' hearts and kidneys."

Let's give basketball back to the players.

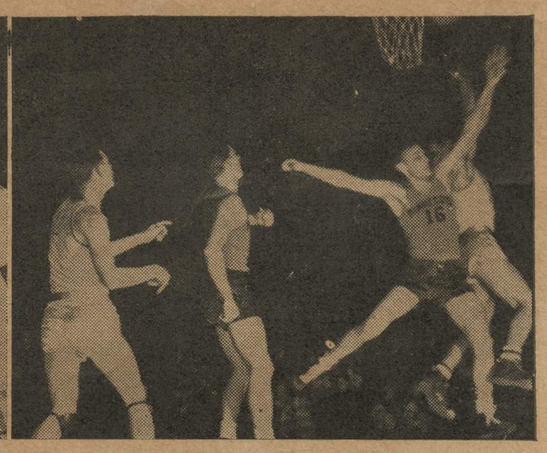
BASKETBALL IS GENERALLY not thought of as a contact sport like football. But try a few minutes of it, and you will find yourself bumped and jarred all over. It's a rough game.



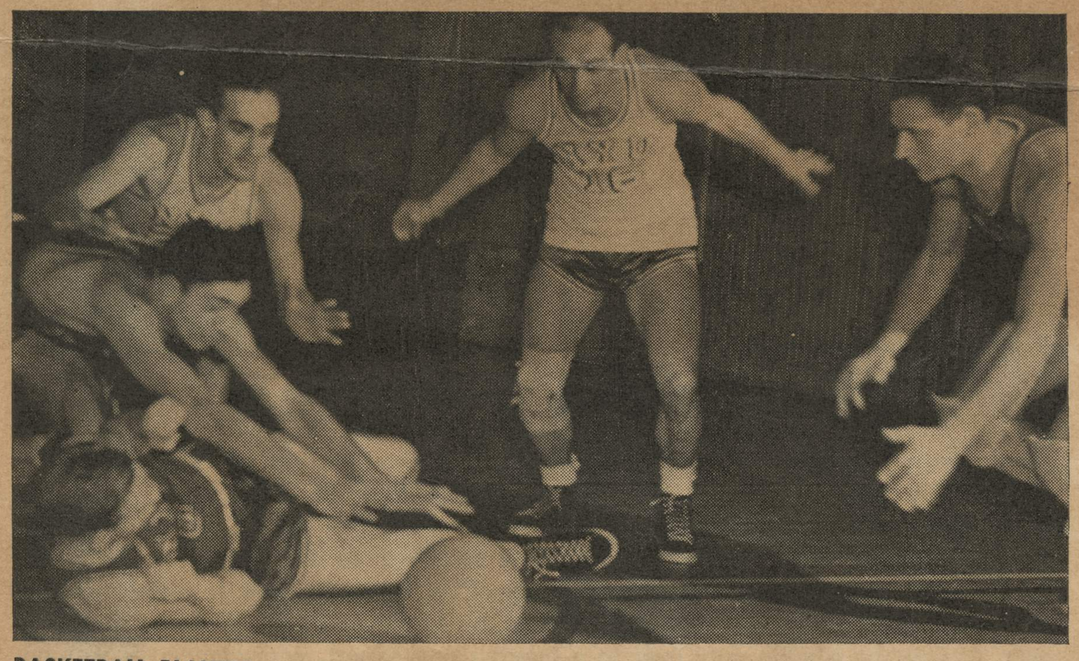
BROKEN BONES AREN'T frequent in basketball, but they are not unusual. However, torn ligaments and tendons are common. Note how this Minnesota guard's leg is taped at the knee.



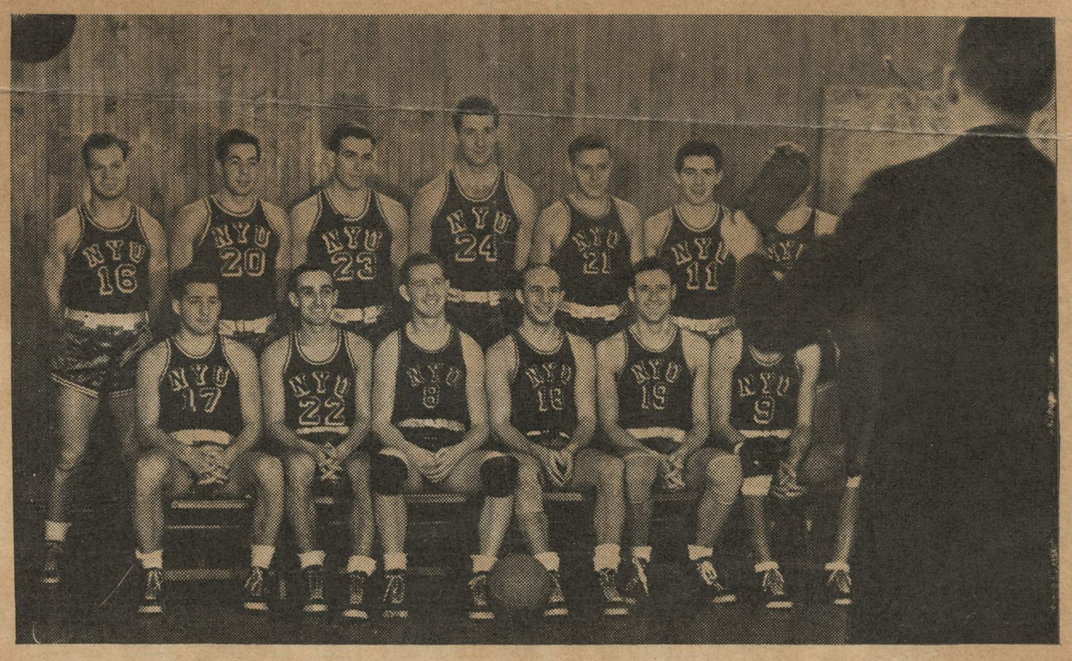
LUNGES SUCH AS THIS cost great effort and may strain the player's heart.



N.Y.U. AND MINNESOTA tied eight times. Close games leave the players wilted.



BASKETBALL PLAYERS ARE just as familiar with the "ground" as football players. Spills and pile-ups are common. By learning how to fall most players avoid striking their heads on floor.



AFTER THEY'VE RUN themselves to a frazzle all year and perhaps ruined their health, we reward our basketball heroes magnanimously—we ask them to pose for a picture.