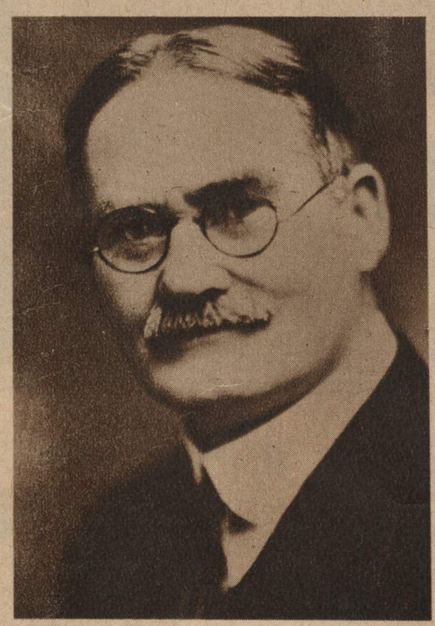
Basketball 50 Years Old

Just 50 years ago this winter 18 young men wearing long, tight trousers, turtle necked sweaters and (some of them) handlebar mustaches, trotted onto the floor of a gymnasium at Springfield (Mass.) college. When they had assembled themselves at various points, a whistle blew and a soccer ball was tossed from the sidelines toward the six men in the center. There was a jumble of wriggling arms and legs and then the ball emerged, sailing toward a peach basket suspended over one end of the gym.



Dr. Naismith, the founder

The first basketball game in history was under way. The game was the invention of Dr. James Naismith, a young instructor at the college. It caught on, was redesigned and gradually has been streamlined. Now it is estimated that more than 90,000,000 persons in the United States watch games each year.

Basketball's golden jubilee comes at an opportune time for Wisconsin followers of the sport, for the University of Wisconsin is the national intercollegiate champion, having taken the title from Washington State, 39 to 34, at Kansas City, Mo., last March.

Mister Basketball is John Kotz, University of Wisconsin forward from Rhinelander. As a sophomore last season, Kotz was picked on the all Big Ten team and chosen the most valuable man in the NCAA finals in Kansas City.

—Journal Staff

Basketball ballet—the grace of the modern game is illustrated in this action photo, made in New York's Madison Square Garden in a game between New York and St. John's universities.

—Acme

The first basketball "quintet" was nine—this is Springfield college's 1891 team with Dr. Naismith in civilian clothes. There were three forwards, three guards and three centers in those days.

—Acme