Trends in Interscholastic Basketball

by H. V. Porter

A Non-Contact Game

Interscholastic basketball has become a game with little contact so that fast footwork and clever headwork are determining factors. The non-contact game can be fast and free from excessive fouls if several fundamentals are kept in mind. If an offensive player is clever enough to obtain a good position for a try while having possession, he must be protected from a defensive player who has erred in allowing him to gain possession in such a position. When a player has possession out in the court, the defense must depend on intercepting or batting a pass rather than on charging in to push the ball holder off balance to secure a held ball. The various time limitations and the second clause of Section 3 of Rule 7 are designed to give some assistance to a defensive player to compensate for his inability to make contact in those situations. At the present time the small court is the greatest deterrent to the playing of a non-contact game. On such a court it is almost an impossibility for an Official to properly administer the rules. He is compelled to allow more contact than is desirable and to use his own judgment as to how much or how little contact may be used. Unless he does this the game on a small court suffers from too many interruptions.

The Intentional Foul

Intentionally fouling an opponent to prevent a try or to gain a chance to secure possession after a free throw is definitely unsportsmanlike conduct. Such a foul is never justified. The rules make it mandatory for the Official to award an extra free throw for such a foul if it is committed against a player who is not in the act of throwing for goal. If such a foul is against a player who is in the act of throwing, it is flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct and the guilty player must be disqualified. Coaches can perform a real service by instructing their players to adhere to the spirit of the rules.

Uniformity

It is essential that there be uniformity in the administration of the rules. Increased attention to this by the various state high school athletic associations has resulted in better training facilities for coaches and officials. The increased number of large playing floors, the publication of such material as the state association bulletins and the National Federation Interpretation books, and the sponsoring of well planned state-wide and section-wide interpretation and experimentation programs have been of assistance. Groups of coaches and officials can promote further progress by giving a reasonable amount of time and effort to work of this kind under direction of their respective state athletic associations.

Experimentation

Basketball has not yet become static as far as rules and equipment are concerned. Improvements are probably possible and the nature of these can only be determined through scientific study by progressive coaches and administrators. To encourage team work in this experimentation the following projects are suggested:

1. **On courts with at least 68 feet between the backboards, the end lines should be placed 4 feet behind the backboard. The end out of bounds space can be made less than has been necessary in the past. Data on comparative number of out of bounds at the end, on extent to which the additional court space behind the backboards is used and the effect on tendency to spread the defence should be collected.**
2. **Several conferences have been authorized by the committee to replace present free throw lanes with a rectangular lane 10 or 12 feet wide and extending only to the free throw line. Additional data are needed.**
3. **More experimentation is desirable on backboards of a smaller size and with the corners eliminated.**
4. **The new molded type ball is rapidly replacing the sewed type ball. Its use makes two lines of experimentation desirable. The new 29 inch ball which is now legal below the senior high school, should be tried in some senior high school games. It is possible that the new type of construction makes such a ball desirable for all high school play. Also data should be collected on what constitutes the best reaction of a ball. The resilence of molded balls can be controlled and only experimentation will enable rules authorities to properly fix this.**