

May 20, 1953

Mr. Allan Donnell
Post Office Box 45
Almonte, Ontario

Dear Mr. Donnell:

I am deeply grieved to receive your letter of May 12. With no desire, I assure you, to belittle Dr. Naismith's contribution to university life, I wrote a very short letter, feeling that the biography would cover the entire life of Dr. Naismith. This biography was worked up by Mr. Don Pierce, our Sports Publicity Director, after conferring with Dr. Edwin Elbel and me. Dr. Elbel worked many years in our Physical Education Department with Dr. Naismith and was a devout friend. In fact, many of Dr. Naismith's belongings, such as his tuxedo and evening clothes, as well as many other belongings, were given to Dr. Elbel by the family when Dr. Naismith passed away.

This biography was sent to Mr. E. A. Thomas, Commissioner of the Kansas State High School Athletic Association, at Mr. Thomas' request. Most of the first page was contributed definitely by Dr. Elbel.

Personally, I had the pleasure of visiting in the home of Dr. Naismith's uncle, Peter Naismith, in Almonte. Dr. Naismith said to me, "I want to show you Uncle Peter's bed." We went upstairs to the southeast corner of the house, and there on the floor was a box 2½ feet wide, 7½ feet long, upholstered at the bottom and sides. The box had a lid on it to shut out the blast of the Canadian winter. That was Peter Naismith's bed, and so Scotch was he, that when he died that was his casket.

Back in 1920, after the war was over, I discovered that there was no mention in the basketball rules of Dr. Naismith, nor was there a picture of Dr. Naismith in the rule book. I went back to New York, met with the officers of the National Collegiate Athletic Association and protested vehemently of this injustice to the inventor of the game. Dr. Naismith's name and photograph was placed back on the rule books and later he was made an honorary life member of the Rules Committee.

Also, before 1936, Dr. Naismith had lost his home through failure to pay a mortgage. I personally got an option on the home from the Building and Loan Company and started a movement with the National Basketball Coaches Association that one game of that season should be set aside and that one penny from each admission should go into the Naismith fund. It was my purpose to restore the home and to have enough money so that Dr. Naismith and Mrs. Naismith could go to Berlin, Germany, to see his brain child for the first time in the Olympic games. Of course, I conferred with Dr. Naismith as to whether he wanted his home or not and he said that he did.