

Kansan Writes Dr. Allen of First Basketball Games Played in State

~~Kansan Feb 24, 1923~~
Information as to the first organized basketball team in Kansas, has come to the desk of Dr. F. C. Allen, director of athletics and head coach of basketball at the University of Kansas, from R. A. Goerz of Newton, Kansas.

Mr. Goerz wrote this bit of history when it was recalled to him by recent stories of the first organized team at K.U. in connection with the ceremony honoring Dr. James Naismith, inventor of the game, at the Kansas-Iowa State game last week.

Mr. Goerz writes that he first played the game of basketball at Wichita, Kans., in 1894 and 1895, when the game was introduced there by Johnny Lutz, who came to Wichita directly from the Springfield, Mass., Y.M.C.A. Training School where Dr. Naismith had invented the game in 1891.

The game as played by Mr. Goerz at

Wichita, however, was not by an organized team, as the number of players wishing to play were simply divided up evenly on each side and the game went on with six or eight or fifteen or any number on a side.

In 1896, Mr. Goerz writes he moved to Newton and there the first team in Kansas was organized for the Y.M.C.A. by W. C. Kosa. However, that team could find no opponent and the games were obtained by organizing two Newton teams, the Ajax and Eagles.

According to Dr. Naismith, the first organized basketball west of the Mississippi was played at the University of Iowa in 1892. Girls teams played at the University of Kansas first prior to 1898 under the direction of a Mrs. Clark of the physical education department. Dr. Naismith had the first organized University of Kansas team in 1898.

ALLEN MAKES REPLIES TO NOTRE DAME COACH

Kansas March 21, 1924

Kansas Justifies Proposal to Raise Baskets to 12-Foot Height Against Criticism of Rambler Mentor; Keogan Called Perennial Rules Objector in Answering Statement

Dr. F. C. Allen, Kansas basketball coach and a member of the national rules committee, today gave out a statement, amplifying his previous suggestion that baskets should be raised to 12 feet from the floor for college competition, saying that this suggestion, along with a number of others which he expects to propose at the next rules committee meeting, was not necessarily intended for immediate adoption.

"The game is very satisfactory as it is," he said.

Dr. James Naismith, inventor of the court game, who has been a member of the Kansas faculty for 35 years, recalled yesterday that no particular reason for the basket's height being fixed at 10 feet had ever been advanced.

Set at 10 Feet Accidentally

"We set the height for the basket at 10 feet at the time I invented the game," Doctor Naismith said, "because there was a running track in the balcony of our gymnasium, at Smithfield, Mass., College, and we figured that the floor of the track would be about the right height. It happened to be 10 feet."

Doctor Naismith said that, although he had not advocated many of the rules changes made in the past few years, that he could find no objection to the proposed scheme of raising the basket.

"It might be an interesting experiment," he said.

Keogan Ridicules Plan

Doctor Allen also replied to a statement issued through newspaper channels yesterday by George Keogan, Notre Dame coach, which ridiculed the proposal to raise the baskets, and blamed the 10-second rule for the alleged massing of players under the basket. Keogan's comment in relation to the proposed change follows:

"This proposal is as absurd as the existing 10-second rule. If they want to legislate against big men, they can abolish the 10-second rule. This rule has legislated the uninteresting zone defense into basketball.

"Big men now jam in under the basket. If the 10-second rule is abolished, these big men will wear themselves out trying to follow the smaller men. The game will become faster and more interesting. Fourteen of the sixteen teams in the Indiana high school tournament used the zone defense, and it was generally agreed that this year's tournament was the least interesting in recent years."

Allen Answers Criticism

Concerning Keogan's criticisms Dr. Allen had the following to say:

"Coach George Keogan is running true to form as a perennial objector on basketball rules. Coach Keogan attended the basketball coaches meeting at Chicago two years ago where the 10-second rule was recommended by the coaches to the rules meeting, and he was one of the 160 university coaches who voted unanimously for the change.

"I fear when Keogan flays the center line across the court rule, he can count

his supporters on the digits of his hand. This rule has revived the indoor sport and made basketball play more popular than it has ever been before."

In commenting on his proposed changes, Dr. Allen continued.

"The game of basketball today is splendid as it is. There is nothing wrong with it. However, there is nothing sacred about the rules. Is it not thinkable that an improvement can be made upon anything.

Changes May Come Later

"I do not ask that these changes be made this year. I am just offering suggestions for trial and research investigation for the future. However, I do believe that some of these changes will be incorporated in the national rules in the course of the next three years. Some of them undoubtedly will bear investigation and trial."

Continuing, Dr. Allen said, "I have asked President Roy Mundorff of the Georgia Tech at Atlanta, where the coaches meeting is to be held, to install two 12-foot baskets for a trial game during the coaches meeting. I am sure the coaches will be surprised how very much the congestion under the basket will be cleared up by raising the height of the baskets two additional feet.

"Four teams of national reputation have been invited to Atlanta to demonstrate before the coaches assemblies, the style of each particular section: the University of Pittsburgh, University of Kentucky, University of Kansas and Illinois Wesleyan were invited, as the four representative teams. The University of Kansas found it impossible to attend because the Big Six rules forbid it, and because the boys would miss too much time from school after their strenuous basketball season."

Coach Allen explained that there were a few college or university courts which would not allow a 12-foot basket height. The new auditoria and gymnasias are constructed with very high ceilings. An extra 3 feet on the width of a basketball court would be subject to the same ruling, he pointed out, saying that many college and university courts that are played on are very much less than 50 feet wide.

He also stated that unless the baskets are raised the proposed three points for a field goal would not be considered. By raising the basket this rule would technically kill the pivot post play in which the tall man stations himself out in front of the basket for a spinner shot.

Would Eliminate Pivot Play

The Kansas coach expressed a belief that the raising of the basket to a height of 12 feet would lessen fouls (52 per cent of games are now won or free throws) and would properly evaluate and equalize a field goal over a free throw. The pivot post play would be done away with and a small, fast offensive player would have greater advantage than he now enjoys around the basket.

For several years Kansas has had two 12-foot baskets installed at the ends of the court and the players after practicing on the 12-foot baskets, find their loop shots on the 10-foot basket are more easily executed.

Summing up the suggestions that he will present to the coaches meeting for their consideration, and further to the rules body, Coach Allen listed the following:

1. Raise baskets to a height of 12 feet.

Purpose: to equalize the scoring chances of short and tall players and to clear up the congestion under basket; to reduce the great number of fouls that are now made by players driving in for lay-up shots who are fouled by the guards on this play. This will decrease fouls at least by 30 per cent. Rebounds from shots will fall further out into the court, making it impossible for big, powerful guards to block out the opponents coming into the basket.

2. To increase width of court to maximum of 56 feet instead of 50 feet as now used.

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Dr. F. C. Allen has received a well deserved honor from the Olympic basketball committee in being appointed director of the American basketball representation in the coming games. Dr. Allen has been one of the leading coaches of the sport for years, played a big part in the national basketball coaches association, and worked hard and long on the matter of getting basketball adopted as an Olympic sport. Lawrence and Kansas still hope Dr. Allen may put his University of Kansas basketball team over the road to the winning of the Olympic try-out finals, altho that is perhaps a big assignment to ask as some of the great A. A. U. teams should stand a much better chance of winning the honor because they are a collection of star college players who have long experience with the first points of the game.

With Dr. Allen, and Dr. James Naismith, inventor of the game of basketball, seemingly sure to go to the Olympics in honor positions, Lawrence and K. U. are enjoying the basketball spotlight in a way no other part of the country or institution can.

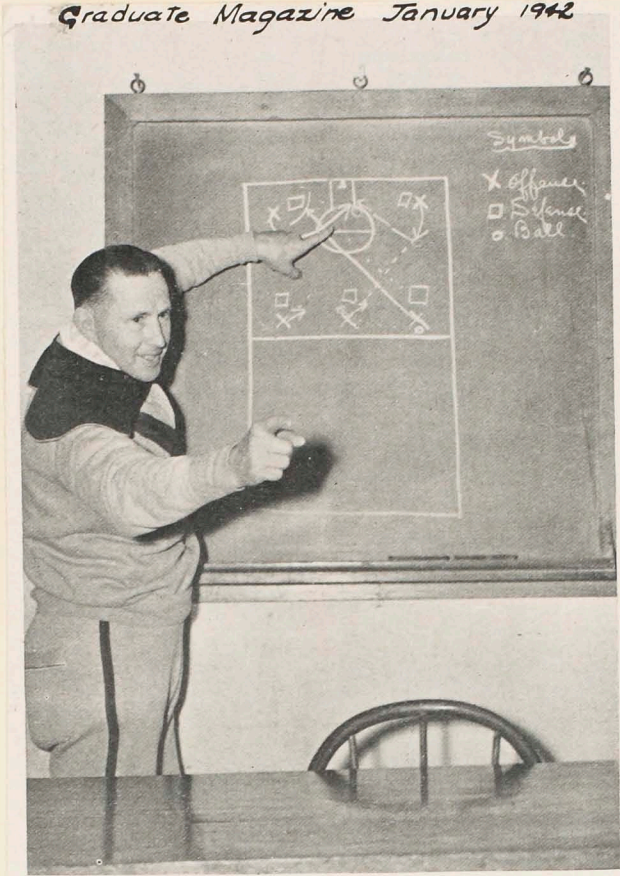


Dr. Allen

Dr. Vaismith

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—Courtesy Jayhawker Magazine

Dr. F. C. 'Phog' Allen Outlines the Strategy

Newsletter 1944

Famous Cage Mentor Presents Sportscast

K.U.'s "Sportscast," heard over KF KU each Thursday evening at 9:30 o'clock, presents Dr. F. C. "Phog" Allen, chairman of the department of physical education and director of University intramural sports, as commentator. During the next few months, Dr. Allen, famous cage mentor, will highlight basketball on his 12-minute sportscasts.

The "Sportscast" is designed to give radio listeners an opportunity to keep up on athletics and athletes at the University. Dr. Allen summarizes sports news on the campus, reviews past intercollegiate games, gives interesting sidelights on future contests, and occasionally comments on high school athletics. In addition, he manages to put in a few words about former K.U. athletes who are in the service or are otherwise contributing to our national war effort.

"Phog" Allen has been director of athletics at the University since 1917. His cage teams have won or tied for 19 conference championships in 26 years with the University. Dr. James Naismith, founder of basketball and a member of the University's staff for 40 years, called Allen the "Father of American basketball coaches." Last spring Coach Allen was selected as the "greatest basketball coach of all time" by the Helms Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles.