



A Review of Historical Development of Basketball

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Abstract

The game of basketball originated in December 1891 by a Canadian born man by the name of James Naismith. Naismith was a teacher at the YMCA training school in Springfield, Massachusetts. He was required to train young men to become instructors at newly opened YMCA centres. With the cold weather keeping the class indoors, in December 1891, Naismith was asked by the schools Superintendent of Physical Education, Dr. Luther. H. Gulick, to create an indoor game that would keep the young men active during the cold winter months. With the help of his wife and memories of playing ‘Duck on a Rock’ during his childhood, he decided to create a game that would focus on skill rather than strength. For those who are curious... ‘Duck on a Rock’ was a game in which players threw rocks at a certain target placed on top of a large boulder or tree stump. The game he ended up inventing is the game we all know and love today – basketball.

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Introduction

A game that started with eighteen men in a YMCA gymnasium in Springfield, Massachusetts, has grown into a game that more than 300 million people play worldwide. The man who created this instantly successful sport was Dr. James Naismith.

Under instructions from the head of physical education at the School for Christian Workers, Naismith was given two weeks to invent an indoor game that would provide an “athletic distraction” for a rowdy class through the brutal New England winter. His creation didn’t come easily. His first intention was to bring outdoor games such as soccer and lacrosse indoors. These games proved to be too physical and cumbersome.

After brainstorming some new ideas, Naismith developed basketball’s original 13 rules and, consequently, the game of basketball. The new indoor game was played with a soccer ball,



peach baskets, and nine to a side. This first contest is believed to have been played on December 21, 1891.

The 13 Original Rules of Basketball

1. The ball can be thrown in any direction with one or both hands.
2. The ball can be batted in any direction with one or both hands, but never with the fist.
3. A player cannot run with the ball. The player must throw it from the spot on where he catches it.
4. The ball must be held in or between the hands. The arms or body must not be used for holding it.
5. No shouldering, holding, pushing, striking, or tripping an opponent.
6. A foul is striking the ball with the fist.
7. If a side makes three consecutive fouls, it counts as a goal for the opponents.
8. A goal shall be made when the ball is thrown or batted from the ground into the basket and stays there.
9. When the ball goes out of bounds, it shall be thrown into the field and played by the first person touching it.
10. The umpire shall be the judge of the men and shall note the fouls and notify the referee when three consecutive fouls have been made.
11. The referee shall be the judge of the ball and decide when it is in play in bounds, to which side it belongs, and shall keep the time.
12. The time shall be two 15-minute halves with a five-minute rest between.
13. The side scoring the most goals in that time shall be declared the winner.

Basketball History

Basketball was invented in 1891 by Dr James Naismith, a Canadian of Scottish descent at Springfield College Massachusetts. The college was the International YMCA Training School and the game was invented to provide an indoor activity for trainee YMCA leaders. When the game was first played, peach baskets were nailed up at each end of the gymnasium as “goals”, hence the origin of the name “basketball”.

The first set of rules was published and distributed through the YMCA movement in 1892 and this resulted in the game spreading rapidly throughout Canada and the USA. 1892 also



saw the game played in England for the first time at Birkenhead YMCA after the Club President was the game played whilst on a business trip to Canada. In 1893 the game was introduced into the Physical Training College in Hampstead (now Dartford College of PE) by Madame Berman Osterberg. Changes to the game to suit the girls led to the first rules of netball being published in 1901.

By 1898 a professional league was established in the USA and by 1911 basketball had spread throughout the UK as a sport. In 1924 it was introduced as a demonstration sport at the Paris Olympic Games and Great Britain won the title. 1927 saw Abe Saperstein a Londoner from the world famous Harlem Globetrotters and in 1931 FIBA the International Basketball Federation was formed with a Welshman as its first secretary.

The England Basketball Association was formed in 1936, 13 years before the NBA was formed in America, and by 1957 the English Schools Basketball Association was formed. The 1970's saw the introduction of both men's and women's national leagues in the UK, and by 1999, 219 teams were entered in the over 16 national leagues with almost 100 competing at under 15 levels. By 1990 there were 117 member countries in FIBA making basketball the second largest of all the world's governing bodies and also the world's fastest growing and largest participation sport.

To date there are 212 member countries worldwide, whilst in the UK alone there are over 500,000 people who regularly participate in recreational basketball and it has become increasingly common to find the sport as part of the curriculum in schools at all levels. It is also used widely as a community activity as anyone of any age or gender can participate. Basketball is now included in the Commonwealth Games and the sport in general received a lot of coverage when the GB wheelchair team performed very successfully in the Paralympics recently, proving that it is a sport that is accessible and playable by all.

Growth of the game

Basketball grew steadily but slowly in popularity and importance in the United States and internationally in the first three decades after World War II. Interest in the game deepened as a result of television exposure, but with the advent of cable television, especially during the 1980s, the game's popularity exploded at all levels. Given a timely mix of spectacular players—such as Earvin (“Magic”) Johnson, Julius Erving (“Dr. J”), Larry Bird, and Michael



Jordan—and the greatly increased exposure, basketball moved quickly to the forefront of the American sporting scene, alongside such traditional leaders as baseball and football. Four areas of the game developed during this period: U.S. high school and college basketball, professional basketball, women’s basketball, and international basketball.

Conclusion

Basketball, game played between two teams of five players each on a rectangular court, usually indoors. Each team tries to score by tossing the ball through the opponent’s goal, an elevated horizontal hoop and net called a basket. The only major sport strictly of U.S. origin, basketball was invented by James Naismith (1861–1939) on or about December 1, 1891, at the International Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) Training School (now Springfield College), Springfield, Massachusetts, where Naismith was an instructor in physical education. The only major sport strictly of U.S. origin, basketball was invented by James Naismith (1861–1939) on or about December 1, 1891, at the International Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) Training School, Springfield, Massachusetts, where Naismith was an instructor in physical education.

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