



OFF THE BACKBOARD

By J. E. O'BRIEN

DEAR BASKETBALL FANS:

Some strategists once said the best defense is a good offense. And so before the postman comes around with a batch of poison pen notes, time bombs and orders to cease and desist as the result of these columns to come, we're going to get the jump by addressing one to you.

Basketball, you can rest

assured, hasn't really

changed much since you

saw it in March. The rule-

makers have dabbled a little

with the high school version of

this cage-y pastime but you'll

recognize it as they roundball of

1939-40. Of course, we still have

proposals to revise radically the

game, and the most novel came

to us recently from Football

Coach Robert Ball of Tech who

wears a whistle and a striped

shirt during the coal-bill season.

Mr. Ball was longing for the

good old days and suggested that

with the 10-second rule, the fast

break and all that, why not just

play in half the customary floor

space. "If it's action the fans

want," said Mr. Ball, "they'd get

it that way. Play now is only

in half the floor, anyway. Why,

you could shoot from out-of-all

bounds underneath one basket all

the way to the other."

And maybe Mr. Ball's sugges-

tion is something to think about.

The College Picture

SINCE UNITED PRESS guest

writers are giving the morning

line on the state high school

teams, we thought we might de-

vote today's little effort to skim-

ming the college surface.

First, what do the coaches want

most?

Well, Tony Hinkle out at But-

ler wants an opening game—that

is something other than that

long-and-siren party with Indi-

go-a-week from Thursday. Tony

would take on just about anybody

in a lid-lifter. The phone num-

ber is HU. 1349 if you want to

discuss terms.

That, incidentally, recalls a re-

cent story in which Mr. Hinkle

tried to get the goat of a young

reporter. Tony, it seems, dropped

the word that Butler had

signed for an opener but told the

reporter he wasn't permitted to

release the name of said team.

Whereupon the enterprising news-

gatherer tried to contact his usual

reliable source for about an

hour and a half.

Meanwhile the Butler regulars,

leaving practice, would come

through the athletic office where

the reporter was dialing away.

"Who you opening against?" he

would ask. Each basketballer

would glance around, then cau-

tiously whisper, "Furdue."

The reporter nearly went

crazy before he learned he was

being duped. No, it wasn't us.

He Wants to Be Alone

SECOND ON the gift list is

Coach Branch Branch (double-

talk) McCracken McCracken,

who wants only to be left alone

at Indiana. Branch knows he's

on the spot, having the nation's

No. 1 team of a year ago in his

care, and it only makes matters

worse when the visitors tell him

as much. If you want to start a

miniature riot, drop in on him

during breakfast and declare:

"Say, Mac, I hear last year's regu-

lars won't even make the team

this season." Then duck.

If you want to send a present

to Coach Piggy Lambert at Pur-

due, a big package of defense

strength will be most appreciated.

The Bollermakers who turned in

a high-scoring performance as

they won the undisputed Big Ten

title last season, are expected to

miss keenly the defensive services

of Capt. Fred Beretta and Elwood

Yeager, outstanding guards, and

Dan Fisher, versatile jack of all

trades.

Lambert makes no secret of the

fact that losses by graduation and

a general lack of height are apt

to hamper seriously the Boll-

ermakers in rebound control and

defense.

A Center Please

COACH GEORGE KEOGAN of

Notre Dame is looking for a cen-

ter. The graduation of Rex Ellis

and Capt. Mark Eitel has made

the replacement job at the pivot

position the largest of Coach

Keogan's problems. For duty he

has Joe Gillespie, an Indianapolis

junior, but Joe has been slowed

by a sprained ankle and won't be

right, they say, for three or four

weeks. Frank Quinn, another

Indianapolis junior, is third in

line for the spot.

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