

Tournament Time

It's tournament time in Iowa City. From the four corners of the state sixteen of the best boys' basketball teams have arrived to battle for the state championship. The Jefferson Hotel has been taken over by the Iowa High School Athletic Association — to house the teams, coaches, superintendents, game officials, sports writers, and announcers — three hundred people in a 128-room hotel.

The streets are crowded with thousands of high school boys in colorful athletic jackets whose teams fell by the wayside in the Sectionals, Districts, or Sub-state, but who will be in there cheering for their favorites. Five hundred of these will be housed in the University field house and eight hundred more in Iowa City public school buildings. Thousands more will be transported daily by school buses.

These students come from all sections of the state and from hundreds of Iowa communities. They lend color, enthusiasm, and dash to the tournament scene as they stroll about the University campus and jam the huge field house to capacity — a happy, boisterous, game-loving crowd that knows the score.

Much history has been written in the sixty years that have elapsed since basketball was first played in Iowa. The same is true of the nation. Iowans can well be proud that basketball is America's gift to the world. It is more widely played than any other team sport. As early as 1920 it had been adopted by 49 nations. It was played for the first time in the 1936 Olympiad by teams from 20 nations. At Helsinki in 1952 there were 23 basketball teams from all over the world. The United States defeated Russia in the 1952 Olympic finals by a score of 36-25. Happily, Russia has thus far made no claim to inventing basketball.

It has been estimated that 98 per cent of our American high schools have varsity teams, and approximately eight million persons play the game, more than in any other sport. The annual attendance at college, scholastic, independent, and professional games in the United States is 100,000,000. In our Iowa high school, college, and Y.M.C.A. teams we find mirrored a cross section of this most popular of all American sports. The climax of a year of hard training, good coaching, phenomenal individual skill, and team play is exemplified each year in the Iowa high school boys' basketball tournament — when the champions are crowned.

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