

HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF

BASKETBALL

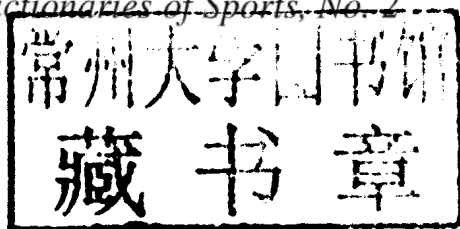


JOHN GRASSO

Historical Dictionary of Basketball

John Grasso

Historical Dictionaries of Sports, No. 2



The Scarecrow Press, Inc.
Lanham • Toronto • Plymouth, UK
2011

Published by Scarecrow Press, Inc.

A wholly owned subsidiary of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.

4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706

<http://www.scarecrowpress.com>

Estover Road, Plymouth PL6 7PY, United Kingdom

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Grasso, John.

Historical dictionary of basketball / John Grasso.

p. cm. — (Historical dictionaries of sports ; no. 2)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8108-6763-5 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-8108-7506-7 (ebook)

1. Basketball—History—Dictionaries. I. Title.

GV883.G73 2011

796.323—dc22

2010024468



TM The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

HISTORICAL DICTIONARIES OF SPORTS

Jon Woronoff, Series Editor

1. *Competitive Swimming*, by John Lohn, 2010.
2. *Basketball*, by John Grasso, 2011.

Editor's Foreword

Basketball is certainly one of the most popular sports in the world. It is played in virtually all countries, at all levels, from primary, to high school, to college. It is played by young and old, men and women, and there are countless professional teams that vie for national and international trophies, to say nothing of being included in the Olympics. That is already not bad for a sport. But what makes basketball really stand out is that the professionals have not taken over while the rest of us become spectators, watching it in stadiums or on television, although we do that as well. Wherever there is a basketball, and they seem to be everywhere, and wherever there is a patch of pavement big enough and some place to hang the basket, people almost naturally join in. So it is obvious that basketball should be one of the sports highlighted in this series, although this volume will deal more with the professional and semiprofessional level and the international tournaments. In just more than a century since it was "invented" by James Naismith, it has indeed conquered the world very peacefully but convincingly in ways he could never have imagined.

Historical Dictionary of Basketball traces the history of basketball, reaching back to the earliest times and emphasizing its situation at present. This is done twice, actually, first in the chronology, and then in the introduction, which tells us more about its intriguing career. The dictionary section focuses more sharply on some of the prominent people involved, pioneers in the sport, outstanding players, and also coaches. Naturally, there is considerable attention to the major teams at various levels and some of the schools that have regularly fielded particularly good teams. Other entries present the main leagues and associations as well as some of the technical aspects. The appendixes provide records and rankings of various sorts, including national league championships and Olympic Games. The bibliography is more than just an

afterthought. It includes numerous books readers may wish to consult to round out and supplement the information found here.

John Grasso bears out some of the comments above. He is not a former basketball player on a major team, but one of countless fans, only he was a fan who took an unusually serious interest in this sport. He has written extensively on basketball and is a member of the Association for Professional Basketball Research. Over the years, he has watched countless matches in the United States and other countries while attending seven Olympic Games. He is also an Olympic historian and treasurer of the International Society of Olympic Historians. As a writer, he produced two monographs of his own on basketball, *The Absurd "Official" Statistics of the 1954–1955 NBA Season* and *Olympic Games Basketball Records*, while also contributing to *Total Basketball*, *The Compendium of Professional Basketball*, and *Harvey Pollack's NBA Statistical Yearbook*. Of course, you can follow the sport without this book, but it is infinitely more interesting when you know more about its genesis and history and can look up players and teams and consult the main records. So this is a nice companion to have.

Jon Woronoff
Series Editor

Preface

It is impossible in a book of this size to cover all aspects of an activity that has been practiced worldwide for more than 100 years. The first draft originally contained more than 1,500 pages and still omitted many people and teams. For the dictionary entries I have selected players, coaches, contributors, teams, leagues, and phrases covering domestic and international, men's and women's, scholastic and professional basketball from the sport's beginnings to modern times. In doing so, I've limited entries to colleges that won National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Championships, countries that competed in more than one Olympic Games tournament, professional teams in the major United States' leagues, and selected individuals from all eras. Space limitations have restricted entries to brief sketches, but readers interested in more details are advised to make use of the extensive bibliography section. It is hoped that the information contained within this book will provide the neophyte reader with a general introduction to basketball and that some of the anecdotal details will be of interest to the reader with a broader background.

I'd like to thank Dorothy A. Grasso, interior decorator, for putting up with my reclusive hobbies for more than forty years. Thanks also to Steve Grasso, manufacturing engineer, my Beijing companion and the future Dr. L. A. McMonkey, aka Laurel Zeisler, speech therapist, for their encouragement and support. Many thanks to Dr. Tomasz Małolepszy, mathematics professor and European sports expert, and Stuart Demsker, New York Jets fan extraordinaire and college sports expert, for their help with the text. And thanks to Dr. Bill Mallon, orthopedic surgeon and Olympic Games expert for getting me involved with this project; and the staff at Scarecrow Press, including Jon Woronoff, series editor, Andrew Yoder, production editor, April Snider, acquisitions editor, and Nicole McCullough, copyeditor, for helping to bring it to fruition.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAU	Amateur Athletic Union
ABA	American Basketball Association
ABAUSA	Amateur Basketball Association of the United States of America
ABL	American Basketball League (several)
AIAW	Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women
AKA	also known as
BAA	Basketball Association of America
BFUSA	Basketball Federation of the United States of America
BYU	Brigham Young University
C	center
CBA	Continental Basketball Association
CBL	Central Basketball League
CCNY	City College of New York
CIAW	Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EBA	Eastern Basketball Association
EBL	Eastern Basketball League
F	forward
FIBA	Fédération Internationale de Basketball (originally Fédération Internationale de Basketball Amateur)
FIBB	Fédération Internationale de Basket-Ball
G	guard
HRL	Hudson River League
IAAUS	Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States
IBL	International Basketball League
IOC	International Olympic Committee
LIU	Long Island University
LSU	Louisiana State University

MBC	Midwest Basketball Conference
NAIA	National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
NAIB	National Association of Intercollegiate Basketball
NBA	National Basketball Association
NBADL	National Basketball Association Development League
NBC	Nashville Business College
NBL	National Basketball League (several)
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NFL	National Football League
NHL	National Hockey League
NIBL	National Industrial Basketball League
NIT	National Invitation Tournament
NPBL	National Professional Basketball League
NYSL	New York State League
PBL	Philadelphia Basketball League
PBLA	Professional Basketball League of America
PF	power forward
PG	point guard
PSAL	Public School Athletic League (New York City)
SF	small forward
SG	shooting guard
SPHA	South Philadelphia Hebrew Association
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
ULEB	Union of European Leagues of Basketball
UNLV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
USA	United States of America
USBL	United States Basketball League
USC	University of Southern California
USMA	United States Military Academy (Army)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union)
UTEP	University of Texas at El Paso
WBL	Women's Professional Basketball League
WBL	World Basketball League
WNBA	Women's National Basketball Association
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YMHA	Young Men's Hebrew Association

Chronology

1891 United States December: Dr. James Naismith invents basketball. **21 December:** Eighteen students at Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts, participate in the first game of basketball.

1893 United States 21 March: The first women's basketball game is played at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, using rules adapted by Senda Berenson.

1895 United States: Clara Baer publishes the first women's basketball rules called "Basquette." **United States 9 February:** The first men's intercollegiate basketball game is played at Hamline College in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Minnesota School of Agriculture defeats Hamline, 9–3.

1896 China 11 January: A basketball game is played at the YMCA in Tianjin, China. **United States 16 January:** The first men's intercollegiate basketball game with five players to a side is played between the University of Chicago and the University of Iowa. Chicago wins, 15–12.

1897 United States: The 23rd Street YMCA wins the first Amateur Athletic Union tournament in New York City.

1898 United States 30 July: The National Basket Ball League (NBL), the first professional basketball league, is organized. **United States 1 December:** The first professional league basketball game is played. Trenton defeats the Hancock Athletic Association, 21–19, in Philadelphia before 900 fans in the opening game of the NBL.

1902 United States 2 November: Harry "Bucky" Lew is the first black player to play in a professional basketball game when he plays for Lowell against Marlborough in a New England League game.

1903 United States 5 January: The professional Philadelphia Basketball League (PBL) begins play in direct competition with the NBL. Eight teams in the Philadelphia area form the league that schedules doubleheaders with the clubs' junior teams playing in the first game.

1904 United States 2 January: Due to competition from other professional leagues the NBL plays its last game. **United States 15–16 July:** At the Olympic Games in St. Louis, Missouri, a basketball tournament is held. The tournament is won by the Buffalo Germans, who defeat five other teams from various cities within the United States. Olympic historians consider this basketball tournament a “demonstration” event.

1906 United States 3 February: The Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) is founded as a result of President Theodore Roosevelt requesting the presidents of three major Ivy League schools to take steps to improve the safety of collegiate athletics. In 1910, the organization becomes known as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). **United States November:** The professional Central Basketball League (CBL) is organized with six teams in the Pittsburgh and eastern Ohio areas. After a successful 30-game season is played, a second 20-game postseason is held.

1909 United States 2 January: The first recorded death in a professional basketball game occurs when Charles Ritter of the North Wales team dies in a game against Stratton in the PBL. **United States 9 January:** The PBL terminates play, as four of the league's six teams drop out for financial reasons. **United States 16 March:** In the CBL, Johnstown defeats Alliance by the score of 110–9 on 55 field goals. Bill Keenan scores 38 field goals for 76 points. The individual total points is not surpassed in a professional basketball game until 1961, and the individual total field goals has never been topped. **United States 18 September:** The Hudson River League (HRL) begins play. **United States November:** Sportswriter-promoter William J. Scheffer organizes the Eastern Basketball League with teams in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and including some of the former PBL teams. This league is one of the most successful of the early professional leagues and lasts until 1923.

1912 United States 20 January: The HRL terminates operations. **United States 12 November:** The CBL disbands.

1913 Philippines 4–12 February: The first Far Eastern Championship Games are contested in Manila. Six countries enter the multisport festival—the Philippines, Japan, China, Malaysia, Thailand, and Hong Kong. The Philippines wins the basketball tournament.

1923 Japan May: Luis Salvador of the Philippines scores 116 points in a game against China in the Far Eastern Championship Games in Osaka. **United States 3 November:** The New York Renaissance plays their first game. Over the next 26 years, the all-black team plays more than 3,000 games and wins more than 80 percent of the time.

1925 United States 27 April: The American Basketball League (ABL) is formed in Cleveland, Ohio. This is the first professional basketball league with teams in major cities. Professional football executive Joseph F. Carr organizes the league. Eleven clubs apply for membership, and nine began the season.

1926 United States 7–9 April: The ABL holds a best-of-five game championship series billed as the “World Series of Basketball.” The first half champion Brooklyn Arcadians lose to the second half champion Cleveland Rosenblums in three straight games.

1932 Palestine 28 March–6 April: The first Maccabiah Games are held. Jewish athletes from around the world are invited to participate in a series of sports competitions. **Switzerland 18 June:** The Fédération Internationale de Basket-Ball (FIBB) is organized in Geneva by representatives from seven European nations and one from South America. Leon Bouffard is named president. The organization’s name is later changed to the Fédération Internationale de Basketball Amateur (FIBA).

1934 United States 29 December: Promoter Edward “Ned” Irish stages the first college doubleheader at Madison Square Garden in New York City. More than 16,000 fans watch New York University defeat Notre Dame University, 25–18, and Westminster College defeat St. John’s University, 37–33. The success of the event causes Madison Square Garden to frequently schedule college basketball programs over the next 50 years.

1935 Switzerland 2–7 May: The first FIBA men’s European Championships are held in Geneva. Latvia defeats Spain, 24–18, in

the championship game. Czechoslovakia defeats Switzerland for third place. **United States November:** The Midwest Basketball Conference is created by Akron Firestone Tire and Rubber Company athletic director Paul “Pepper” Sheeks and Indianapolis businessman Frank Kautsky. The league, composed of nine company-sponsored teams, proves to be successful and evolves, two years later, into the National Basketball League (NBL).

1936 Germany 7–14 July: The first Olympic basketball tournament is held at the Berlin Olympics. Twenty-three nations are scheduled to compete, but Spain withdraws at the last minute due to its civil war. The Hungarian team also withdraws prior to the tournament. Initial matches for both countries are considered as forfeits. The United States defeats Canada 19–8 in the final match played outdoors in the rain. Mexico defeats Poland for third place. Dr. James Naismith is invited and attends the Games.

1938 United States 9–16 March: The first National Invitation Tournament (NIT) is held at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Temple University defeats the University of Colorado, 60–36, in the final game to win the championship. **Italy 12–16 October:** The first FIBA women’s European Championships are held outdoors in Rome, with Italy finishing first and Lithuania second.

1939 United States 17–27 March: The first NCAA National Championship tournament is held. Oregon State University defeats Ohio State University, 46–33, at Evanston, Illinois, in the final game to win the championship. **United States 28 March:** The New York Renaissance defeats the Oshkosh All-Stars 34–25 to win the first World Professional Basketball Tournament in Chicago.

1942 United States 26 November: The Sheboygan Redskins of the NBL defeat the Chicago Studebakers, 53–45, in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The Studebakers team consists of four white players and six black players. This is the first integrated game in the NBL.

1945 United States 7 February: In a regular-season college game between Columbia and Fordham, experimental rules are used. One of these rules provides for three points for field goals taken from beyond 21 feet.

1946 United States 23 April: The Eastern Pennsylvania Basketball League is organized, with play to begin in the fall of 1946. The minor league, with several name changes, survives until 2001. **United States 6 June:** The Basketball Association of America (BAA) is formed at a meeting of the Arena Managers Association of America in the Hotel Commodore in New York City. The 11-team league will begin play in November. **Canada 1 November:** The newly formed BAA begins play in Toronto, Ontario, as the New York Knickerbockers defeat the Toronto Huskies, 68–66, in the league's first game. **United States 11 December:** The Chicago Stags defeat the Cleveland Rebels, 88–70, in a BAA experimental game played with 15-minute quarters instead of the usual 12-minute ones.

1947 United States 22 April: The Philadelphia Warriors defeat the Chicago Stags, 82–80, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to win the BAA's first league championship. **United States 24 October:** The 16-team Professional Basketball League of America (PBLA) begins play with a game in Wichita, Kansas, between the Atlanta Crackers and Oklahoma City Drillers and is won by Atlanta, 44–43. The league features the Chicago American Gears and George Mikan. **United States 13 November:** The PBLA disbands citing losses of more than \$600,000.

1948 United States 10 May: Four of the NBL's strongest teams resign from the league and join the BAA. **England 30 July–13 August:** The Olympic basketball tournament is held in London. Twenty-three nations compete, including several who are not proficient at the sport. The team from Iraq loses games by scores of 102–30, 100–18, 98–20, 120–20, 125–25, and 77–28. The Irish team loses games by scores of 71–9, 73–14, and 55–12. The United States, which was nearly defeated by Argentina in a preliminary round, defeats France in the final, 65–21. Brazil defeats Mexico for third place. **United States 17 December:** The Detroit Vagabond Kings of the NBL disband and are replaced by the New York Renaissance, who play as the Detroit Rens. The Rens are the first all-black team in an integrated professional basketball league.

1949 United States 10 February: Joe Fulks of the Philadelphia Warriors scores 63 points in a BAA game against the Indianapolis Jets to set a league record that stands for 10 years. **United States 3 August:** The

BAA and the NBL merge to form the National Basketball Association (NBA). A 17-team league plays the 1949–1950 season.

1950 United States 28 March: City College of New York defeats Bradley University, 71–68, to win the NCAA National Championship. They had defeated Bradley two weeks earlier to win the NIT and become the first (and only) school to win both events in the same year. **United States 25 April:** Walter A. Brown, owner of the Boston Celtics, selects Charles “Chuck” Cooper in the second round of the NBA draft. When told by an associate that Cooper was black, Brown replies, “I don’t care if he’s striped, plaid, or polka dot, Boston selects Cooper.” Cooper was the first black player to be chosen in the NBA draft, but Earl Lloyd is also chosen in a later round, and other black players are invited to several teams’ training camps as the NBA decides to integrate. **United States 31 October:** Earl Lloyd of the Washington Capitols becomes the first black player in an NBA game. He scores six points against the Rochester Royals in an otherwise uneventful game in Rochester, New York. Chuck Cooper on 1 November, Nat Clifton on 4 November, and Hank DeZonie on 3 December are the other three black players to play in the NBA this year. **Argentina 22 October–3 November:** The first FIBA men’s World Championship is held in Buenos Aires and is won by Argentina. Ten nations enter, with the United States finishing second and Chile third. **United States 1 November:** The eight-team National Professional Basketball League (NPBL) begins play. Four of the former NBL teams that played the 1949–1950 season in the NBA but were expelled following that season are joined by four other Midwestern teams in the new league. **United States 22 November:** The Fort Wayne Pistons defeat the Minneapolis Lakers, 19–18, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the lowest-scoring game in NBA history. George Mikan scores 15 of the loser’s 18 points.

1951 United States 6 January: The Rochester Royals and Indianapolis Olympians play six overtimes in the longest game in NBA history. Indianapolis defeats Rochester, 75–73. Three of the six overtimes are scoreless. Only 19 personal fouls are called on the two teams, still a league record. **United States 17 January:** New York City district attorney Frank Hogan has five people arrested on charges of bribery and conspiracy for fixing college basketball games. Over the next several months, the scandal spreads and seven colleges and 32 people are even-

tually involved. **United States 21 January:** Milt Schoon of Denver scores 64 points in a NPBL game, the most by a professional since the early years of basketball. **Argentina 25 February–8 March:** The first Pan American Games men's basketball tournament is held in Buenos Aires. The United States wins, Argentina is second, and Brazil is third. There is no women's basketball tournament. **United States 2 March:** The first NBA All-Star Game is played in Boston, Massachusetts. The East defeats the West, 111–94, before 10,094 fans. **United States 24 March:** The NPBL disbands. **United States 21 April:** The Rochester Royals defeat the New York Knickerbockers, 79–75, in the seventh and deciding game in the NBA Finals. The Knicks had fought back from a three games to none deficit to require a seventh game.

1952 United States 10 February: The Baltimore Bullets use only five players in an NBA game and defeat the Fort Wayne Pistons, 82–77. **United States 31 May:** The Harlem Globetrotters begin a four-month around-the-world tour, the first ever for a basketball team. **Finland 14–18 July:** An Olympic qualifying tournament is held at Helsinki immediately prior to the Olympic Games. Thirteen nations compete, and six qualify to continue in the regular Olympic tournament. **Finland 25 July–2 August:** Sixteen nations compete in the Olympic Games at Helsinki. Teams are divided into four groups for the preliminary round, with the best two teams from each group advancing to the quarter-final round. The United States defeats the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, also known as the Soviet Union), 36–25, in the final match, after the Soviet Union plays a possession-type offense in an attempt to be competitive. The third-place match is won by Uruguay over Argentina.

1953 United States 10 January: Jack Molinas of the Fort Wayne Pistons of the NBA is suspended for life by Commissioner Maurice Podoloff for betting on his own team. It later is disclosed that Molinas was heavily involved in fixing college games, and a decade later he is sentenced to prison. **Chile 7–22 March:** The first FIBA women's World Championship tournament is held in Santiago. Ten nations enter, and the United States wins, followed by Chile and France. **United States 9 January:** Bevo Francis of Rio Grande College scores 116 points in a game against Ashland Junior College. The record is later not recognized by the NCAA, as it was not set against a four-year school. **United States 21 March:** The Boston Celtics defeat the Syracuse Nationals,

111–105, in four overtimes in a playoff game. Bob Cousy makes 30 of 32 successful free throws and totals 50 points.

1954 United States 2 February: Bevo Francis scores 113 points against Hillsdale College. This record is accepted by the NCAA. **United States 7 March:** The NBA experiments with 12-foot baskets in a game at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, between the Minneapolis Lakers and Milwaukee Hawks, won by the Lakers, 65–63. **United States 8 March:** A regular-season doubleheader between the same two teams is experimented with by the NBA in Baltimore, Maryland. The Milwaukee Hawks defeat the Baltimore Bullets, 64–54, and, 65–54, in both games of the doubleheader played before 3,000 fans at the Baltimore Coliseum. Games consist of four 10-minute periods instead of the regular 12-minute periods. **United States 21 March:** Milan High School, with an enrollment of only 161 students, wins the Indiana State High School Championship. **United States 23 April:** The NBA adopts the 24-second shot clock to be used in the 1954–1955 season. **Brazil 22 October–5 November:** The United States wins the FIBA men's World Championship at Rio de Janeiro. Brazil is second and the Philippines third of the 12 competing nations. **United States 27 November:** The Baltimore Bullets of the NBA disband. The league rules that the 14 games the Bullets played will not count in the standings and some (but not all) of the individual statistics achieved in those games will count.

1955 United States 27 February: In the lowest-scoring NBA game played with a 24-second shot clock, the Boston Celtics defeat the Milwaukee Hawks, 62–57, on a slippery floor before 6,068 fans at the Providence Auditorium in Providence, Rhode Island. **Mexico 12–26 March:** The second Pan American Games is contested, and the first women's Pan American Games basketball tournament is held. The United States women's team is undefeated in eight contests and wins the gold medal. Chile is second, and Brazil is third. The men's team is defeated by Argentina in one game but, although tied with Argentina and Brazil, each with records of four wins and one defeat, is declared the winner based on the difference between points scored and allowed. Argentina is placed second and Brazil third.

1956 Australia 22 November–1 December: The Olympic basketball tournament is held in Melbourne. Sixteen nations are invited, but Israel