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Basketball - From Students to Players

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Basketball began in 1891, it was invented by James Naismith, as being a less injury-prone sport than football. He was a 31-year-old graduate student when he created the sport, keeping players indoors during the winter.

The game of basketball was invented to condition athletes during the colder months. Naismith was a prior physical education instructor at YMCA International Training School, which is now Springfield College.

At the request of his superior, he was tasked with creating an indoor sport that would help athletes to stay in shape during the cold weather. It originally consisted of peach baskets and a soccer-type ball. He made 13 rules for his game and divided his class of 18 students into two teams of nine players, and started teaching them the basics.

The objective of his creation was to throw the basketball into the fruit baskets that were nailed to the lower railing of the gym's balcony. Each time a point would be scored, the game had to be paused so that the janitor could get the ladder to retrieve the ball. After some time, they finally removed the bottoms of the fruit baskets, having to retrieve the ball after each score was far from practical.

Dribbling, one of the most critical techniques in basketball, was introduced in the late 1800s. It gave players control over ball movement and a chance to move with it, since running with it was prohibited.

Still, it wasn't until World War I that the sport became truly international. That's when the US military used basketball recreationally as a way to release pent-up energy during long hours in the barracks. The soldiers and members of the YMCA, who were discharged as a part of the reparation efforts, taught their European colleagues the rules of the game, and the sport took off in popularity.

Basketball got introduced to the rest of the world thanks to the US Army and the YMCA. Then in 1903, the first ever international basketball match was organized, and members of the took the game to India, Persia, China, and Japan.

By 1900, a majority of major colleges were fielding a team, and in 1905 formal collegiate rules were introduced for basketball, and in 1909, the NCAA took over the game for good. The very first NCAA DI tournament was held in 1939.

Basketball's reach grew in the 1940s thanks to broadcast TV. The first collegiate game was broadcast in the US on February 28, 1940.

The NBA was also formed during this time frame. There were two major professional basketball leagues in the late 1940s: The Basketball Association of America (BAA) and the National Basketball League (NBL). The NBL had its first season in 1898-1899. The BAA, on the other hand, was a much newer league, established in New York City on June 8, 1946.

During this period, basketball became a national phenomenon, with big names like Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell rising to fame.

In the 1980s, basketball began to dip in popularity and most arenas were half-empty on game nights. But players such as Earvin "Magic" Johnson and Larry Bird turned it around, and the 1980s eventually became a transformative decade for basketball. The formation of the 1992 USA Olympic basketball team also helped revitalize the fan base. The Dream Team included Johnson, Michael Jordan, Bird and Scottie Pippen. They easily outsmarted their opponent's moves and secured the gold medal.

Their immense success accelerated media coverage around the sport, which has resulted in sponsorships and brand deals for the most famous players.

Now millions of players all around the world play the game, from