Basketball Encyclopedia Article

Basketball

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Basketball

Baseball is America's favorite pastime, but it's basketball that is wholly American in origin. While baseball evolved from cricket and rounders and football from soccer and rugby, basketball has no origins in the foreign sports world. In 1891, James A. Naismith (1861-1939), a physical education professor at the International YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts, was asked to develop an indoor game that could be played during winter at night. He nailed two peach baskets to opposite walls of the gymnasium and published the rules of this new game in the school paper on January 15, 1892. Five days later, the first basketball game was played. There were no backboards, and, when a shot went into the basket, a student was obliged to climb a ladder and fish out the ball. Soon, the peach baskets were replaced with wire-like wastebaskets with pullcords. In 1893, bottomless cord nets were standard fare. Other additions to the game included regulation-size basketballs in 1894, backboards in 1895, and dribbling in 1900. Within four years of its invention, basketball was a country-wide craze. The first collegiate game was played between the University of Iowa and the University of Chicago. Now, colleges and universities across the nation take part in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). In 1936, basketball was included in the Olympic Games for the first time.