

Basketball

It was a rainy day in November, 1891. An instructor at Springfield college in Massachusetts climbed up a ladder and nailed a fruit basket to the wall of the gymnasium. Then he climbed down the ladder. He picked up a football and threw it. The ball went into the basket. As he climbed back up the ladder to get the ball, the man was very glad. Maybe he had solved his problem! Well, we would soon see.

Ten minutes later, eighteen young men ran into the little gym. The instructor put nine boys on one side and nine to the other. He told them to throw the ball to each other or bounce it and, when they were near the wall where the basket was nailed, to try and throw the ball into the basket. The game started, and what a game it was!

When several of the young men fell onto the floor as they were playing, the instructor stopped the game. "Something is wrong in this game," he said. "This is too unpleasant."

He sat down and took out a piece of paper and a pencil. "Now let's have some rules – and let's observe them!" He paused for a minute, thinking. Then he began, "Rule number one: No one can run with the ball! You have to throw it or bounce it to someone else on your side." They all agreed that it was a good rule.

"Rule number two: If a man pushes another player to get the ball, the game will stop. The man pushed, will have a three throw at the basket. Nobody must try to catch the ball on its way to the basket."

That rule, was good too. Quickly, other rules were made. When the game started again, there was less pushing, fewer men falling, and better passing of the ball from one man to another. A second basket was nailed to the wall at the other end of the gym.

The man who nailed the fruit basket to the wall, was a young Canadian. His name was James Naismith, and he was a college teacher.