

Basketball

Every day when I walked on the court for practice, there was a chill that would shake me. Just the thought of seeing that ball bounce or that net swish was almost enough to inspire poetry. But with the start of the season, this feeling changed slightly. The chill, even in the warmest buildings, would begin earlier and last longer, up until the time I ran onto the court.

This is basketball. Even when you are cold, your palms sweat. When you are trying to rest, you are too jumpy, so all you can do is walk around zipping and unzipping your warm-up jacket. You wonder how on earth that J.V. game could last so long; you wonder about the man you will guard; you wonder about the attitude of your team; you wonder about . . . and then coach Dukes comes in and spreads his patented, glassy stare along the bench, and all the wondering is over, the battle is at hand.

That was the way it was, and the way it would be. If you wanted to play, you had to hustle, hustle every day, you had to take the punishment of elbows, the embarrassment of mistakes, and the hardwood court.



Eaton shoots jump shot against Blaney in a real thriller.

Basketball is the sweetest misery known to man. You step on the court, then run till your muscles are too weak to ache any more. Just when you feel nothing can ever move you again, a loose ball dribbles your way and you lunge desperately to grab it. Quick pass. Two points. Your hands and elbows sting; bruises begin to appear on your knees; all at once the tape begins to bind so tight, that you find it hard to move; but that doesn't matter. Just the feel of that precious leather in your hands . . . the satisfaction of knowing your job is well done . . . the solemn message from the quiet man, and you know it's all worth it.

Something about this man Terry Dukes. He quickly gained our respect with his tough, positive views about what the game was all about and our job we had to do. By the end of the season he had turned our big men into adequate rebounders and our guards into better than average shooters. He made us play defense, he made us play basketball.

We walked away winners.

—Stan Arazie.

Arazie lays it in for two more.

