Basketball History

Dr. James Naismith invented the game in 1891 in Springfield, Massachusetts at Springfield College. He was a Presbyterian minister (but never preached)… and a doctor (but never practiced medicine)… and an educator and physical education teacher… and a basketball coach. He was born in Almonte, Ontario of Scottish ancestry … so this great American (and now worldwide) sport was invented by a Canadian, with a Scottish accent! He was a thirty year-old assistant physical education director when he invented the game. He only played in two games! The first baskets were not peach baskets as the story often goes, but were vegetable baskets nailed to the railing of an elevated circular running track, which just happened to be about 9 or10 feet high.

He eventually became head of the physical education department at Kansas, and designed the first golf course in Kansas. His favorite sport was fencing and he was very good at it. He invented basketball for fun, as a simple physical education activity… not something to be serious about! He said often, "Basketball is just a game to play. It doesn't need a coach… you don't coach basketball, you just play it." Nevertheless, he became basketball coach at Kansas in 1900, and lost his first game 48-8 to Nebraska. He coached for eight years and his won-loss record was barely .500. But he started a great Kansas tradition. For years, the Kansas Jayhawks had one of the most winning programs in all of college basketball. Phog Allen (Kansas, record: 590-219), Adolph Rupp (Kentucky), and Dean Smith (North Carolina) were all Jayhawks.

Naismith never patented his game, and did not profit from it. Lawyers advised him to get a patent, but he was always adamantly opposed to it. At one point his personal finances were so bad that his house in Kansas was repossessed by the bank.

Dr. Naismith worked with the famous football coach, Amos Alonzo Stagg. He helped Stagg design the first football helmet. Stagg later gave credit to basketball for the development of the forward pass in football.

The first public game was in Armory Hill YMCA on March 11, 1892, with a crowd of 200 on hand, as the students beat the teachers 5-1. Amos Alonzo Stagg scored the only point for the teachers. The first women's game was March 22, 1893 at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. The first college game was Feb. 9, 1895… Minnesota State School of Agriculture beat Hamline 9-3. The first women's college game was in April 1895 between Stanford and California. The first men's professional league began in 1898 and was known as the National Basketball Association (but not the same NBA as today). The first national AAU basketball tournament was in 1897. Wisconsin claims to be the first state with a high school state tournament, which was won by Fond du Lac in 1905. High school basketball attracted national attention 12 years later in 1917.

Basketball was first played in the Olympic Games in 1936, in Berlin, when the USA beat Canada 19-8 for the gold medal. The game was played outdoors, in the mud and rain, on a tennis court.

Some of the early rules:

1. The ball.
The original ball was a soccer ball. The official sized ball came in 1894, was an inflated rubber ball, and sometimes was lopsided. So when you hear the game referred to as "roundball", remember that it wasn't always so.

2. The basket.
Peach and vegetable baskets were used, but it was a nuisance to get out the stepladder every time someone scored! In 1893, a carpenter designed a wire rim, with a chicken wire net. It didn't exactly SWISH! The term "cagers" relates back to the old chicken wire nets. Backboards were designed so that fans, reaching over the railing, couldn't deflect the shots.

3. Number of players.
Originally, 9 players were on each team… then 7, and now 5. Dr. Naismith once said that there could up to 40 on each team, if the floor was big enough!

4. Fouls
On your second foul, you had to sit down on the bench, with no substitution (sort of like hockey), until the other team scored a goal, and then you could come back in. On a flagrant foul, you were disqualified for the rest of the game, with no substitution… so your team might be playing with only 8 instead of 9 players. If your team committed three consecutive fouls, the other team was awarded a goal.

5. Out-of-bounds.
The 5-second rule was original. If the ref couldn't tell who hit it out last, the ref would just throw the ball straight out into the court, and whoever got it, got it!

6. Game times.
Two 15-minute halves, running watch. Halftime was 5 minutes.

7. The winner is:
The team with the most goals… 1 point per goal. If there was a tie, the captains on each team could agree to play until another goal was scored (so it was sudden death or victory).

8. Positions
Dr. Naismith suggested the 9 players be arranged on the floor as: a goalkeeper, 2 guards, 3 centers, 2 wings and a "home man" (basket hanger)… no 3-second rule in those days.

9. On roughness:
Dr. Naismith did not want it to be rough like rugby… "The time to stop roughness is before it begins". He found that after a team committed two consecutive fouls, they would really be careful not to foul again, since the third foul would give the other team a goal… and not many goals were scored in those days. The jump shot and the fast break had not yet been invented! Dribbling and ball handling was not as good, with a lopsided ball.

10. The center jump

After each basket was made, a center-jump was held at mid-court… the other team didn't automatically get possession. Dr. Naismith was very opposed to the rule change later that eliminated the center jump. He felt that eliminating the center jump penalized the team that just scored. The other team could now take the ball and stall with it for a long time, if they had the lead. The 10-second rule eventually came in to force teams to advance the ball up the court and speed up the game. Many teams held the ball for very long periods of time, and the scores were very low.

The game has come a long way. To quote Bob Broeg, "The roundball, not the snowball, is the symbol of winter now, and winter has never been the same since 1891!"

Basketball terminology

Like any sport or discipline, basketball has its own language. A novice could listen to two coaches talking to each other and not have any idea of what they are talking about! This is true in almost any subject. Studying to become a doctor, you first have to know the names of all the parts before you can cut 'em out! How do we come up with all these terms? It is an evolutionary process over the years. An expert coach uses some new term at a basketball camp, and it becomes part of the vernacular. A colorful TV commentator (Al McGuire and his "aircraft carrier", Dick Vitale, etc) come up with very colorful expressions, and it becomes part of the game, BABY!

This page will be like a basketball dictionary, trying to define our terms. Realize that sometimes coaches don't completely agree on what something means, and sometimes we have more than one term for the same thing... e.g. a "screen" and a "pick" (same thing to me).
This page can be a work in progress. If any one has a term to add to this list, or disagrees with my definition, please email me.

First, lets look at the "half-court" diagram below to define areas of the floor.

The "paint" is the area inside the lane lines from the baseline to the free-throw line. If your   *offensive* player has a foot on, our inside these lines for 3 seconds or longer, he will be called for the 3-second violation. There is no restriction on the time *defensive* players can occupy the paint.

"Free throw line", ("charity stripe") is the line you must stand behind when shooting a free-throw.

"Low post" area is the area near the "block" on either side of the lane (or "paint" area), to about half way up the lane toward the free throw line.

"High post" is that area along the free throw line, and both "elbows".

The "point" is out front, and the "wings" on either side. The "short corner" is between the corner and the basket, about 12 feet out.

"Ball-side" refers to the side of the floor where the ball is. "Weak-side" is the opposite side away from the ball. Players cutting on the weak-side toward the hoop, are using the "back-door".
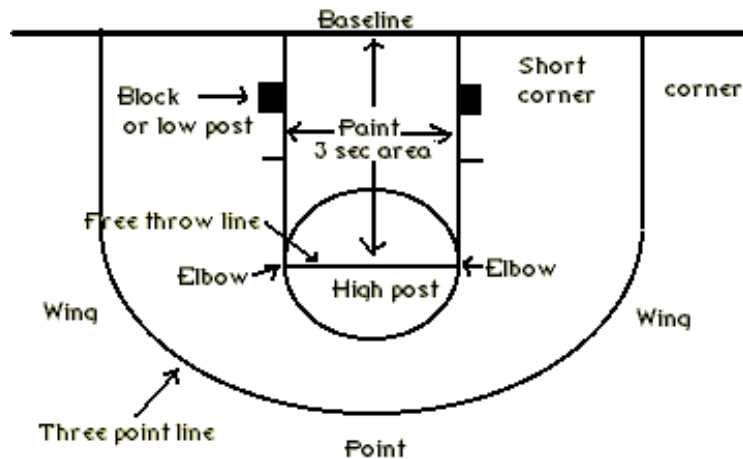
"10 second line", or half-court line, is the line down the center of the floor. It divides the "full-court" (entire playing area) into two "half-courts". Your "fore-court" is the half-court with your basket, and the "back-court" is the half-court with the opponent's basket. Once a team gets possession of the ball, it has 10 seconds to get the ball across the half-court line into its fore-court. Once across this line (all three points - the ball and both feet), they may not pass or dribble the ball back across this line, or step on the line (while having possession) or the "over and back" violation occurs. The offense may retrieve the ball without penalty if deflected across by a defensive player.

Numbering players, offensive terminology.
Years ago, numbers were not used. You usually had two "guards" who played the "perimeter" and brought the ball up the floor. The "center" usually played around the high-post area, and the two "forwards", started in the short corner to corner areas, extending out to the wings.

Now, most coaches use a numbering system, as the old definitions often do not apply any more, with players playing in multiple offensive formations. Using a numbering system, makes it easier for coaches and players to understand plays, sets, and know their roles. Different numbering systems exist and coaches have their own favorite ways of doing this. Here is the numbering system that I use, which I feel is very easy for young players to learn. The diagram below shows a "3-2 set".
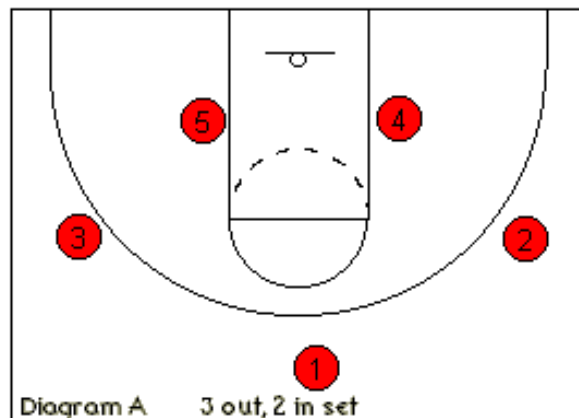
The "point guard" is #1. The right "<u>wing</u>" is #2, and the left wing is #3. The right low post is #4, and the left low post is #5.

This is easy for young players plays to learn if you tell them that the even numbers (2 and 4) are on the right side, and the odd numbers (3 and 5) are on the left.

In this set, you have three guards, or "<u>perimeter players</u>", and two "<u>post players</u>", rather than the old definition of two guards, two forwards and a center.
In a "<u>1-3-1 set</u>", you would bring one of the low posts up to the high-post area. In a "<u>1-4 set</u>", you bring both post players up to the elbows ("<u>stack offense</u>"), or you can drop both wings down to the corners ("<u>low stack</u>"). You could use a "<u>4-out, 1-in offense</u>" with four perimeter players and one post player. The "<u>open post offense</u>" (5-out) is yet another.

"<u>Pick and roll</u>" -- a play where an offensive player sets a "<u>screen</u>" ("<u>pick</u>") on a team-mate's defender, thereby freeing up the team-mate, after which the screener moves, or "<u>rolls</u>" off the screen to the hoop, or an open area for the return pass (see Setting Screens).

"<u>Give and go</u>" -- a very basic play where after passing to a team-mate, the passer quickly cuts toward the basket, and receives the return pass back from his team-mate for the lay-up (see "Play 23").

"<u>Reverse the ball</u>" -- this means to quickly move the ball, by passing, to the opposite side of the fore-court, either by a series of quick passes, or by means of a "<u>skip pass</u>" (a pass directly across court, thereby "skipping" one or more offensive players in the succession around the perimeter). You may want to reverse the ball quickly to "<u>over-shift</u>" a zone defense. By moving some of your offensive players to one side of the floor (e.g. against a zone defense), you "<u>over-load</u>" the zone.

"<u>Post up</u>" -- offensive move wherein a low post player positions himself, and "<u>seals</u>" his defender off so that he can receive the pass down low on the block, where he can use a "post move" for a score, or quickly pass the ball back outside to an open team-mate for a three-pointer (going "<u>inside-out</u>").

There a terms referring to types of offensive cuts made by players, usually moving without the ball. Rather than re-defining them here, please read the page on "Cutting and Faking".

There are terms that refer to various types of dribble moves (see "Dribbling").

To understand the terms "<u>triple threat position</u>", "<u>jab-step</u>" and <u>perimeter one-on-one moves</u>, see "Outside, Perimeter Moves".

"Out-of-bounds plays" are used in an attempt to get a quick scoring opportunity when you have to in-bounds the ball (either under your basket, or along the sideline.) There are many of these plays to choose from on the home page.

There are defensive terms.
"Man-to-man defense" -- each defensive player is assigned to guard a specific opposing player. He may "switch" his player with another team-mate if he gets screened. Man-to-man defenders must learn the meaning of "on-ball" (defending the player with the ball), "deny" (preventing your man from getting the ball), and "help-side" (sagging off your man to help your team-mates prevent inside "penetration" (see Basic Defense). The term "close-out", refers to the method in which a defender quickly slides up to, and contains the ball-handler, or ball-receiver.

There are the terms, "on the line" and "up the line". These two terms refer to a defender's position on the floor, relative to the ball-handler and his man. Use this illustration... stretch a rope between the ball-hander and your man (let's say between the point guard and the wing). "On the line" means your defensive position is such that you can see your man and the ball, and your body is directly on that imaginary line usually with chest toward the player, and head toward the ball with arm up in the passing lane, in a "full denial" situation. "Up the line" means you are in a position backed off from this imaginary line, toward the basket, in a position where you can see both ball and your man, prevent the "back-cut", and yet be able to force the ball-handler to pass away from your man. The farther apart the ball-hander and the wing player are, the more the defender can drop back "up the line", and still be in position to intercept or deflect the pass.

A "trap" is set when two defenders double-team the ball-handler, trying to force a turn-over or a jump-ball situation.

"front the low post" -- on defense, this has to do with how you defend the low post player. The defender can stay between him and the basket, or get out in "front" of him between the low post player and the passer, so as to "deny" him the pass.

"box-out" -- what every player should do when a shot goes up... try to block out, or "box-out", the person he is guarding to keep him away from the basket and prevent him from getting
"inside position" for the rebound.   See "Rebounding".

"Zone defense" -- each defender, rather than guarding a specific opposing player, is assigned to guard or cover a certain area of the floor, or zone. These man-to-man and zone definitions are very general and broad, as "a good zone looks like a man-to-man, and a good man-to-man looks like a zone", each incorporating certain aspects of each other, for an overall "team defense". Many different zone sets are used, 2-3, 3-2, 1-3-1, 1-2-2, etc (see "Zone Defense"). By definition, the term "zone offense" refers to a team's offensive strategy used to defeat a zone defense (see "Zone Offense").

There are various "gimmick" defenses that combine elements of zone defense and man-to-man coverage (e.g. "box and 1", "triangle and 2", etc). See "Junk Defenses" and "Match-up Zone Defense".

"Transition" is the process of changing from defense to offense, or vice-versa. "Transition offense" is the former, and "transition defense" is the latter. Transition offensive strategy may involve a full-court "fast break", or a "secondary break" (see "Transition Offense") wherein the offense attempts to quickly move the ball up the floor in hopes of getting the easy lay-up. Transition defense may be simply getting back down the floor as quickly as possible on defense, or may involve a "full-court press", which can be man-to-man, or a "zone press" (see "Transition Defense").   Against a full-court press defense, the offense will often use a "press-breaker", a play designed to counteract the full-court press.

What to Eat Before a Game or Practice

First, the athlete should maintain a healthy diet every day, not just on game day, for overall well-being.

Now on game day...
I have always believed in a diet high in carbohydrates (avoid fats, grease) about 1-2 hours before game-time or practice (you need time to digest it). Players should eat enough to feel their hunger is satisfied, but not overeat or stuff themselves. If it is a larger meal (lunch or dinner), eat at least 2 to 3 hours before the game; if it is a snack (you already had lunch or dinner earlier), eat the snack 1 hour before the game.

Suggested foods:
Some kind of pasta is a good lunch or dinner choice.

Others:
Cereals and grains
Vegetables
Crackers, peanut butter cracker or peanut butter sandwich
Pancakes
French toast
Bagels
Orange juice
Apples
Bananas
Grapes
Lean Meats

Avoid dairy products high in fat. Low fat yogurt would be fine.

Adequate fluid intake is important before and during the game to avoid dehydration... but again, too much is not good medicine. In addition to water, sport drinks or fruit juices are good choices.

If your practices or games are late afternoon, right after school, make sure you eat breakfast and lunch that day. Some fruit like bananas or oranges one hour before the practice or game would be a good booster.

About Food Supplements...

Creatine is a natural amino acid derivative (not a steroid). It is made in the liver, kidneys and pancreas, and is in food sources such as meat and fish.

Effects on Performance:
In one study, creatine led to an increase in body mass, mainly through water retention. A 28 day trial at 20 grams/day dose in 8 weight-lifters (a very small number for a study), showed some increases in strength, weight and fat-free mass. A summary of 31 short term studies (using the drug for one week) indicated that creatine may "modestly improve performance" in short duration (less than 30 seconds) bursts, but not in sustained activity... and this was only in a laboratory setting. No definite benefits were shown in actual field studies. Other studies showed "no consistent advantage during aerobic exercise".

Adverse effects (side effects):
One person with a kidney problem who took creatine developed kidney failure. While most patients taking creatine had no short term side effects, the long term effects are not known, and some patients reported some side effects including skin rash, shortness of breath, vomiting, diarrhea, nervousness, fatigue, headache, muscle soreness and weakness, convulsions and heart irregularity. Whether these effects were directly related to the creatine or not is debatable.

Summary:
Creatine may mildly improve performance in brief aerobic activities in the laboratory. Whether this translates into improvement in an actual athletic competition is unknown, and has never been proven. No data is available yet on long term safety. The potency and purity of creatine sold as a dietary supplement is unknown since it is not under FDA control, and many users tend to exceed the recommended doses.

Personal Comment:
Creatine does not replace conditioning, weight training, practice, and hard work in achieving athletic success. Any benefits are probably minimal, and could be achieved by weight training and practicing more. Certainly when a young player sees Mark McGuire using it, it is a powerful influence for him to try it also. Mark McGuire's success I believe relates mainly to his hard work, great hand-eye coordination, training, etc. Who knows if creatine really helped him hit all those homeruns. If, instead of using creatine, he put a plug of chewing tobacco in his mouth as he walked up to the plate, would we all think that it was the tobacco that gave him his great success? If you use it, do not exceed dosage, and drink plenty of fluids, and don't whine if you develop side effects 10 years from now, because the long term effects are not known.

Androstenedione is an androgen (male hormone). It may cause an increase in the male hormone testosterone. There are no proven data showing that it definitely increases muscle mass or performance. If it did increase muscle mass, it would be in a way similar to taking androgenic steroids and would probably carry all the same long-term side effects: prostate cancer, liver tumors and liver failure, loss of male fertility, behavioral changes. Women who use testosterone become more male-like with deeping voice, cessation of menstrual periods, scalp hair loss, acne, facial hair growth. In adolescents, stunting of overall height can occur. Androstenedione has been banned by the IOC, NCAA, NFL and many other athletic organizations. Again, its long term effects are not definitely known.

Personal Comment: Don't use it!

Conditioning

"Don't play sports to get into shape. Get into shape to play sports." - Unknown

Endurance, strengthening, stretching and flexibility all are important parts of playing any aerobic type sport such as basketball. Close games are won late in the game often by the team with the best physical conditioning. When you are tired, your shots come up short, you miss your free throws, your defense, hustle and rebounding suffer... and these are the things that win games. If you are a quick, full-court pressing and fast-breaking team, you must be in top physical condition and you can win against more talented teams by pushing them to their point of fatigue.

Ideally, the conditioning process should begin before the season starts, as each serious-minded player should come to the first practice already having begun his/her conditioning at home a couple weeks before practices begin. A home program can involve stretching exercises, home strengthening exercises, running distances and sprints and jumping rope (good for foot speed, coordination and endurance).

Once practices start, use a program of stretching, followed by running drills that stress aerobic conditioning. Finish with strengthening exercises or weight room work-out (two or three days a week). Players are stronger these days and this translates into confident, athletic teams that can rely on their strong rebounding, defense, and hustle to win many games.

Many teams run sprints ("gut busters", or whatever you like to call them). However, I believe that it is better to run specific conditioning drills using a ball, rather than just running sprints. If you are going to make your players run, have then do it with a ball... speed dribbling, dribbling moves, full court defense 1-on-1, etc. There are a number of great drills that combine conditioning and specific skills. When you do these drills, your players will get tired quickly. When they are tired, let them catch their breath by having them shoot free throws or work on shooting form to simulate the fatigue that occurs in a game situation. But be sure to start your practice with stretching exercises first, to enhance flexibility and avoid injuries.

Below is a list of drills that are all excellent for aerobic conditioning as well as developing a specific skill. If you use the 3-man weave, the "piston" and "pitch 'n fire" drills, 4-on-4 transition, and the full-court dribbling drills, your players will definitely get an aerobic workout, and if you run some of these drills every practice, your conditioning will be much better. You can vary the drills from practice to practice. Make sure all drills are run with intensity and speed, no "dogging it". If you feel the team is loafing, stop the drill and as "punishment" (or motivation) have them each take a ball and speed dribble back and forth full-court several times (down with left hand, back with right hand). But don't go overboard... follow a high intensity aerobic drill with free-throw shooting or some other less aerobic drill, or even a "time-out", which simulates the rest in a game situation, to discuss or demonstrate some concepts of your offense, defense, etc.

Also, when using competitive drills (where the losing team has to run a few sprints), instead of just running sprints, always have them take a ball with them and speed dribble back and forth, so they are working on dribbling as well as conditioning and their "punishment" (motivation).