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# Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union

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## Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union

Most states do not have organized basketball for girls. The growth of strong state high school groups for boys has advanced rapidly since the middle 1920's. With the increase in organized boys' sports we find a decrease in the strength of girls' athletics — except in Iowa.

Iowa's prep organization began in 1923 as the Iowa High School Athletic Association with George A. Brown as secretary. This body conducted both girls' and boys' activities until 1925, when it decided at a meeting in the old Central Presbyterian Church in Des Moines that competitive sports before crowds that paid admission was good only for the boys of Iowa, not for the girls.

Two well-remembered speeches were delivered at this momentous meeting. Speaking against the girls' sport, one opponent said in effect: "I coached girls' basketball once, and my conscience has bothered me ever since for the harm I might have done the girls." For continuance of the girls' game, John W. Agans, then superintendent at Mystic, shouted: "Gentlemen, if you attempt to do away with girls' basketball in Iowa, you'll be standing in the center of the track when the train runs over you!"

John W. Agans' remark proved prophetic. His statement was colored with strong emotion, for those who supported boys' athletics to the exclusion of girls' cannot be considered as "run over." Their program has grown proportionately as well or better than the girls'. Happily, where bitter rivalry once prevailed harmony and cooperation now exist between the two groups. For the first time since the rift in 1925, the boards of both the Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union were able to work out a complete tournament program for 1950 with no conflict existing between the two series of tournaments.

After the meeting in Central Presbyterian Church, about twenty-five school men, the majority from small towns, met in a corner of the church and decided to begin the new girls' organization. The pioneer board members appointed at this time were M. M. McIntire of Audubon, Claude W. Sankey of Ida Grove, and the fiery John W. Agans of Mystic. Since no one from northeast Iowa was present, A. W. Clevenger of Waverly was later appointed to the board to round out the four-man committee.

The fifteen men who have served as directors on the board of the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union between 1926 and 1950 from the four districts into which Iowa was divided are shown on the accompanying table.

# DIRECTORS OF THE IOWA GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC UNION

1926-1950

## NORTHEAST

Name	A. W. Clevenger	A. E. Rankin	Clair Ellis	K. E. Amsberry	Lovell Diddy
Towns	Waverly	Hampton	New Providence	Steamboat Rock	Meservey
Years	1926-1928	1928-1944	1944-1946	1946-1948	1948-1950

## NORTHWEST

Name	Claude W. Sankey	G. L. Sanders	M. O. Moe
Towns	Ida Grove	Plover, Rodney, Gruver	Lake Park
Years	1926-1932	1932-1944	1944-1950

## SOUTHWEST

Name	M. M. McIntire	Ray McIntire	R. H. Chisholm	O. H. Rutenbeck
Towns	Audubon	Gray, Oakland	Exira	Avoca
Years	1926-1934	1934-1941	1941-1947	1947-1950

## SOUTHEAST

Name	John W. Agans	Forrest P. Hagan	John H. King
Towns	Mystic	Allerton	Numa, Allerton
Years	1926-1934	1934-1946	1946-1950

The men who have served on the Union's board have been unusually able in their leadership. Girls' basketball was not yet well established in 1926 and a catastrophic depression was soon to add to their woes. As superintendents and principals, they were leaders in their communities and they found their home towns solidly and enthusiastically in favor of continuation of the sport.

Many were distinguished coaches. M. M. McIntire had coached Audubon to four state championships from 1921 to 1924 inclusive. Agans also coached good teams, and is today, at 75, the oldest active coach in the state. Ray McIntire coached at Gray; Hagan — for a period during the war — at Allerton; Moe at Lake Park; Diddy at Minburn, West Bend, and De Soto; and Chisholm at Gray. Agans coached teams to the state tournament from Hiteman and Mystic, Chisholm from Manilla and Exira, Sanders from Plover and Gruver. Board members who have coached state champions, since tournaments were sponsored by the Union in 1926, are: O. H. Rutenbeck, from Avoca, 1931; Lovell Diddy, from West Bend, 1939; John H. King, past chairman, from Numa, 1941; and Kenneth E. Amsberry, from Steamboat Rock, 1943.

During 1930-1931 a movement gained some headway to combine again the boys' and girls' organizations. The proposal failed because of the solid alignment of larger high schools and colleges

against competitive girls' basketball. The girls' association was in no financial position to hire a full-time secretary and George A. Brown meanwhile had resigned to give all his efforts to the boys' association. The Girls' Union then decided that each of the four board members would serve as part-time secretary every four years.

By 1947 the association had grown to such an extent they found it necessary to employ a full-time executive secretary. Then it was that R. H. Chisholm of Exira, board member from Southwest Iowa, was appointed to the post. Iowa is the only state whose volume of business necessitates the employment of a full-time person, with office staff, to conduct the affairs of girls' athletics. The office has been in Des Moines since its inception in 1947.

The men who have directed the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union have exhibited unusual ability and initiative. In 1939, as an outgrowth of a conversation held at the national women's A. A. U. basketball tournament, the first complete rule book was published for girls' high school interscholastic basketball. Sam Nuzum, a sporting goods salesman, wrote the first rule book. A revised edition was published each year with Nuzum as editor and rules interpreter. In 1941 the Girls' Union bought Nuzum's copyright but retained him as editor until 1947, when the Union bought Nuzum's rights and appointed R. H. Chisholm as editor and interpreter.

Previous to 1939, Iowa girls followed the A. A. U. rule book supplemented by a single sheet of differences, published each year. Until 1934 the game was played in three courts; two forwards, two guards, and a running or "side" and jumping center. Perhaps the greatest major change was made when the game went to two courts with three forwards and three guards. This eliminated center jumping and started play with the referee throwing the ball to a girl in the center circle in what is known as the "center toss."

In 1941, another major change developed in the guarding rule. Previously, a player was not permitted to tie up the ball or knock it from an opponent's grasp under any circumstances. The change permitted a guard to secure the ball or strike it from the opponent when the latter was in the act of shooting. Many opponents of this revolutionary rule argued that scoring would be lowered, but since passage of the change, forwards have developed more finesse in avoiding their guards and the average scores for games within the past few years have mounted.

The 1950 rule book attempts to coordinate boys' rules and girls' regulations in every respect in which a phase of the game not peculiar to girls' basketball is not involved. The reasoning behind this is that most Iowa officials referee both a boys' and a girls' game on the same program. The plan makes for more uniformity of officiating. In spite

of this, we find listed in the 1950 rule book about thirty differences in the boys' and the girls' game.

In 1943 a Girls' Basketball Yearbook (then named "Scrapbook") was started by R. H. Chisholm at Exira. This was a record book of past years; it also featured the current season in picture and news story. The publication was absorbed by the Girls' Union as an official publication in 1949. Within six years it has grown from 18 to 148 pages. In 1945, the Yearbook editor also started a column devoted exclusively to the girls' sport. Since then thirty Iowa newspapers have subscribed to "With the Queens of the Court."

The Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union has developed and improved other services. A scholarship loan fund has been established. Schools of instruction for coaches and officials are financed; a library of books on all sports is available to coaches; official rules examinations are conducted; and a clearing house for officials, coaches, and teachers is maintained. In addition to the publication of the rule book and Yearbook, the Union publishes brochures on basketball, books on play-situations of the game, and semi-annual bulletins of official business which are sent to each member school and registered official. It also furnishes sound movies on basketball and on physical education which are available to all schools. The members of the executive committee are always



available for talks at athletic events; the editor of the rule book is conducting seventeen rules talks during the 1949-1950 season; while three extra rules clinics and coaching schools have been approved in addition to the five already sponsored.

The Union subsidizes the sectional and district tournaments; pays all expenses of the teams participating in the state tournament; provides all insurance and supplies for the tournaments; and furnishes 128 trophies in the sectionals, 48 trophies in the districts, and 4 large trophies in the state tournaments. Each girl receives an emblem and identification bracelet from the Union. Free-throw tournaments give some 1,300 girls on losing teams an opportunity for recognition.

Other states — Tennessee, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Wyoming — have received help from the Iowa Union. For the first time in any state, the Union, through the newspapers and radio stations, is conducting a bi-weekly poll of the girls' coaches to select the outstanding teams in each district. With all these services, the Union is probably the only school organization in the state which has not raised its dues since its formation in 1926. Member schools pay \$1.00 annual dues plus a \$2.00 entry fee.

R. H. CHISHOLM