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James Naismith *Top 100 Americans*

James Naismith (November 6, 1861 – November 28, 1939) was a Canadian American sports coach and innovator. He invented the sport of basketball in 1891. He wrote the original basketball rulebook, founded the University of Kansas basketball program, and lived to see basketball adopted as an Olympic demonstration sport in 1904 and as an official event at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, as well as the birth of both the National Invitation Tournament (1938) and the NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship (1939).

Born in Canada, Naismith studied physical education in Montreal before moving to the United States, where he developed basketball in late 1891 while teaching at the International YMCA Training School (now Springfield College) in Springfield, Massachusetts. Naismith also studied medicine in Denver, taking his MD in 1898 before moving to the University of Kansas. After a decade (1898–1907) serving there as a faculty member and part-time basketball coach during the sport's fledgling years, he became the Kansas Jayhawks' athletic director. He became a U.S. citizen in 1925 in Lawrence, Kansas.

Naismith's contributions to basketball have earned him several posthumous honors, such as in the Canadian Basketball Hall of Fame, the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame, the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, the Ontario Sports Legends Hall of Fame, the Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame, the McGill University Sports Hall of Fame, the Kansas State Sports Hall of Fame, the NAIA Hall of Fame, and the FIBA Hall of Fame. The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, where he is a member of the original Hall of Fame class, was named in Naismith's honor.

Naismith was also a National Guard chaplain with the First Kansas Infantry Regiment. He taught his soldiers basketball to control their excess energy. His effort helped increase morale and even lowered the rate of disciplinary actions among soldiers.