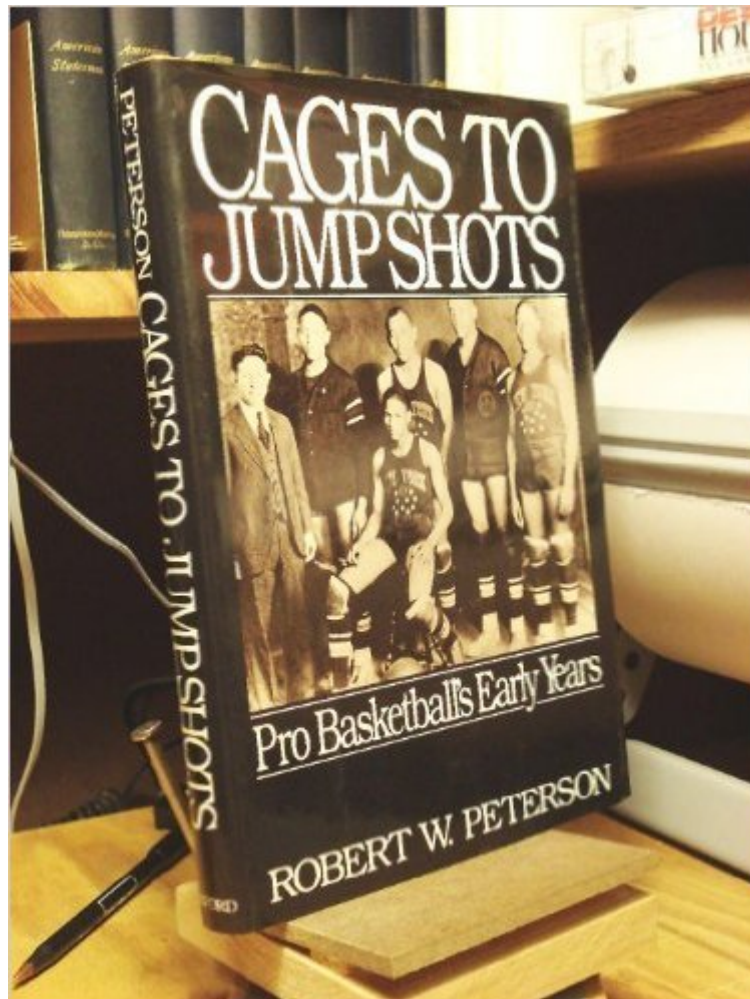


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# Cages To Jump Shots: Pro Basketball's Early Years (Sports History And Society)



## Synopsis

Robert Peterson has emerged as one of America's finest writers on sports history. His groundbreaking book *Only the Ball Was White* won wide acclaim as a compelling account of baseball's Negro leagues in the days before Jackie Robinson. Now comes *Cages to Jump Shots*, an insightful and entertaining look at early professional basketball from the birth of the sport through the first years of the NBA. In *Cages to Jump Shots*, Peterson paints a vibrant portrait of how this sport gained its place in American life. He traces the game from the day in 1891 when the father of basketball, James Naismith, drew up the first rules, through the early barnstorming professional teams playing in gaslit social halls, to the advent of NBA games in Madison Square Garden. His richly detailed account brings to life every aspect of the changing game and the society that grew to love it: the players, the fans, the owners, the officials, the rules, techniques, and equipment. Peterson draws on interviews with old players to recreate the experience of this dramatically evolving sport, as it went from a brutal, slow-moving game (with a sewn leather ball, underhand set shots, center jumps after every score, and a wire or rope cage around the court) to the high-scoring contests that emerged in the 1950s, with the start of the team foul limit and the 24-second shot clock. Along the way, he illuminates the impact of a changing society, such as the YMCA's early hopes that basketball would foster Christian values, the indignities suffered by black teams in a segregated society, and the influx of Jewish players during the Depression. Peterson brings the story up through the founding of the NBA and its final success in overtaking the popularity of college basketball. *Cages to Jump Shots* offers a unique and vivid look at a fascinating side of American life. Whether capturing the flavor of the rough-and-tumble early games, discussing the career of the Harlem Globetrotters, or tracing the origins of today's big teams, Peterson lends a lively and perceptive voice to the story of America's most popular sport.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A year ago I went to the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA and was disappointed that the gift/bookstore did not have a single history of early ball. I returned to the new Hall of Fame (a must see by the way) last month and found this paperback reprint of a book that appeared about ten years ago. Peterson's book is a well researched, well written history of pro basketball from the 1890's to about 1950. While baseball has dozens of books written about its early years, basketball has, other than this one, none that I could find. This one is very satisfying, and provides a good roadmap for hopefully even more books about the early years and teams, which Peterson shows are filled with colorful characters and great scenes from American life. If you like basketball, you ought to know about its history, and this is a good (and-other than visting the Hall of Fame-practically the only) place to start.

A good source for information on basketball's early years. I would recommend to anyone interested in the game's history.

A great book detailing how it all started

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