

# Four-on-Four's a Rough Game

By Grant Glickson

The game is what the big boys play, and those that can't take the inside heat shoot from the perimeter. It's played on a 47 x 25-foot court, so there's no need for a transition game. The game is four-on-four basketball and it features plenty of rough play.

"When you play a halfcourt game you're not running up and down where you get a lot of lost motion," said Ray Lumpe, a former NYU and Knicks player. Lumpe, 64, said he's "just a fan now." Of the four-on-four game, he said, "It's very interesting. There's no fast break. There's more defense because you don't have the wheelings and dealings of fast breaks."

Lumpe and other former pro and college players were at Woodmere Park last Sunday, along with more than 500 players and spectators, to honor the late Sid Tanenbaum by renaming the basketball courts in his honor. Tanenbaum, a former NYU all-America who played for the Knicks in the late 1940's, was fatally stabbed at his place of business in September, 1986. For nearly 13 years, Tanenbaum spent Sunday mornings playing in pickup games at the park.

Naturally, as part of the memorial ceremonies, there was a four-on-four basketball tournament.

Four-on-four pickup games have been played at Woodmere Park since it opened. The park may be the only one on Long Island that hosts this type of halfcourt game. "I have officiated for over 20 years all over Nassau County," said Bob Seroski of Wantagh, "and this is the first I've

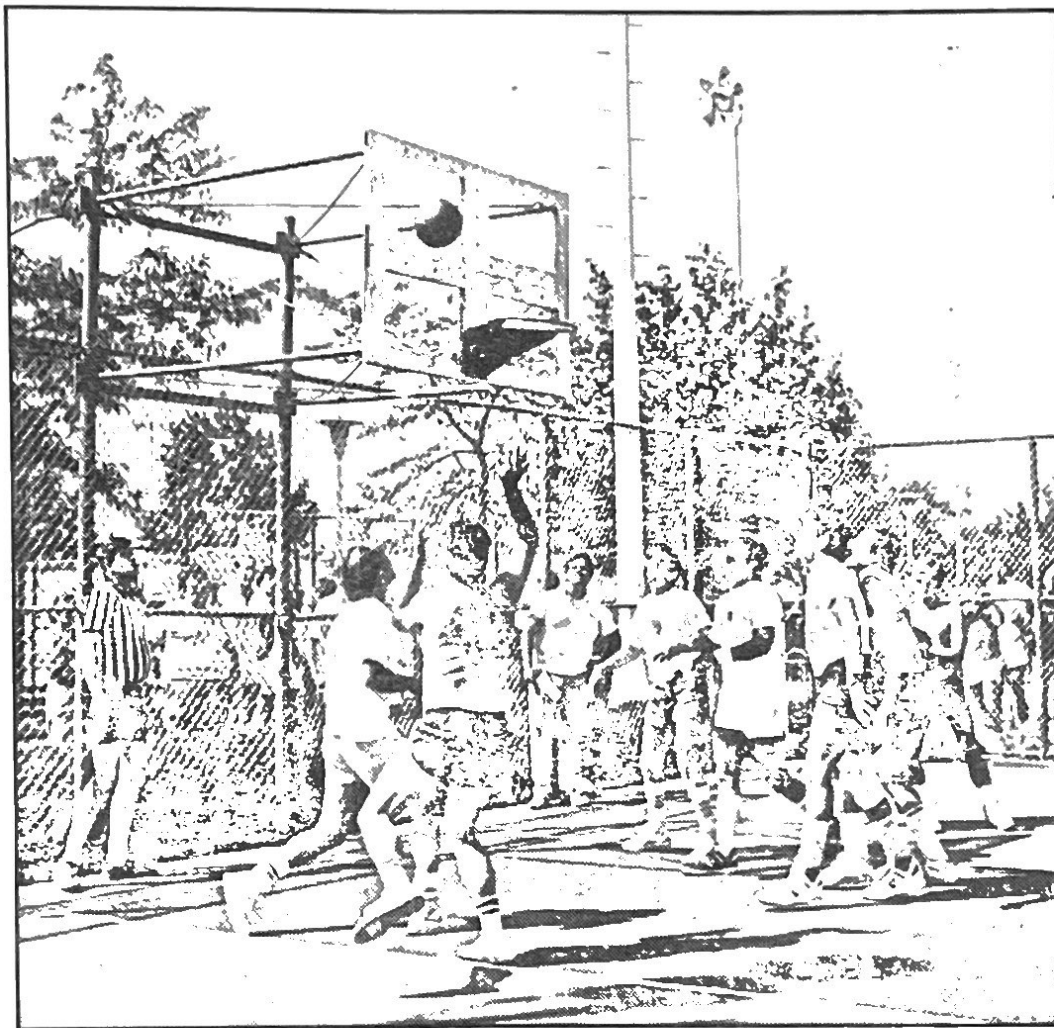


Photo by Lindsay Silverman

It gets crowded under the basket during a halfcourt game at Woodmere

heard of four-on-four basketball."

What do the players think about this version of basketball? It depends on their age. "We spread it out when we play," said 19-year-old Brett Moore of Glen Cove. "Three out of the four guys play at the perimeter and the big

guy plays inside. This gives us more room to work with and creates more one-on-one situations."

Four-on-four situations sometimes cause havoc for skinny players of average height. Tom Martinez, 30, of North Bellmore said he got leveled

twice, thanks to heavy traffic. "I kept putting the ball to my big men down low," Martinez said. "I would shoot from the outside instead of driving because when you drive they just collapse on you. Four-on-four cuts down on your whole driving game."

Does the transition bother a speedy fullcourt player like Martinez? "You just adapt," he said. "You put the ball among us fellows and we'll figure out what to do."

Frank Mangiapane, who captained the NYU team in the mid-40's, said it was the first time he'd tried four-on-four. "I didn't expect to play," Mangiapane said as he gasped for air. "I haven't played for many years. When I played halfcourt years ago it was a three-man game. But I guess when the fellows get a little older they need less space to maneuver."

One of his playground teammates remembered Tanenbaum for his sportsmanship.

"If he were fouled he'd never retaliate," said Sherman Smith, who captained Brooklyn College when Tanenbaum captained NYU. "I think if a guy like him didn't play here there would be a lot more violence on these courts today."

Former Knicks great Walt Frazier, who was on hand for the dedication, said the game is plenty rough. "I grew up playing two-on-two in the playgrounds of Georgia," Frazier said, laughing. "Many times when the Knicks didn't have enough players at practice, we played four-on-four. It's a lot of fun. You just have to look out for your backdoor plays."