

# Center Faked Out by a Bottle Shop

By GEORGE ROSS

Big Jim Hadnot is playing pro basketball with a fully-stocked liquor store on his back, and the burden may soon come down with a crash.

Jim's coach thinks he's tiring himself out for basketball by tending store in his off hours, for one thing.

But Jim's accountant tells him he's playing basketball for two other guys, his stand-in clerk at the store, and Uncle Sam's tax man.

Unless there's a way to score points in two games at once, this may well be the big Oakland center's last season.

"I love basketball and I think Coach Bruce Hale is building Oakland a good professional team and gave me a chance to be part of it, which I appreciate," Hadnot says. "But I don't know how I can come back next season, economically."

It's a matter of time and dollars for the former McClymonds High star and one of the nation's top collegiate stars at Providence.

"I'm playing basketball on a modest contract, and I'm paying nearly half of the amount to hire a replacement for myself at the store. And the tax on the basketball salary pretty well uses up what's left," he said. "In total effect, I'm playing for the fun of it. If you divide 82 league games into the amount of money I'll actually have left out of my pro contract, it's just a few bucks per game."

Jim isn't putting the knock on the game he has struggled so hard to play, and he's certainly not upset with the Oak-

lander has made him a lot of friends in Oakland, but it has hardly been touched with magic.

He signed with the original Oakland Oaks of the American Basketball League which died a sudden death in mid-season of 1962. The star of three successive NIT clubs as a collegian, Jim Hadnot wound up with Trenton, in the minor Eastern League in 1963 and 1964.

Then the liquor store, on San Pablo Ave. in Berkeley took him away from basketball except for a few pickup games until last summer when the American Basketball Association was formed.

Jim should never have tried it. He came out weighing 270 pounds, puffy and puffing. Hale shook his head after every day's workouts and said "All he's got is courage."

Jim worked and worked and worked, took off so much weight it weakened him, but he was there when the season started and has won Hale's respect.

"I'd have to say Mel Daniels is the best center in the league, but Jimbo has to rate right behind him," Hale said. "If he had a little breather now to work on his body and develop a little strength and stamina to make up for what he lost taking off that weight, he'd overcome the tendency to run down late in the game."

Damned by some as "too nice a guy" to play the punishing post position, Jim is getting the job done his way.

On a club which is 16-29 in the win-loss column and 13½ games out of first place in the

fifth in the entire league rebounding, with a 12.2 average per game, while scoring an average of 15.8 points.

"I figure I'd be able to help the club for the next two or three years," says Jim, who agrees with Hale that he needs an off-time stretch to work on the weights and running to build his stamina.

"Getting Barry Leibowitz helps the club and I feel that all-around we have the best balanced team in the league," Hadnot said.

The trade of Levern Tart for Leibowitz completely remodels the Oakland team.

While the high-scoring Tart was making the plays, usually working for a shot, the other Oaks played a reacting game. Now, with young Leibowitz as the ball-control backcourt man, the others must play better without the ball, making their moves to get open

for his passes.

"We've been standing for 42 games waiting for Tart to make his moves. Now we must make the moves and wait for Barry to get the ball to us," Hadnot said in explaining the difference.

In their second game together, Friday night against the Anaheim Amigos, Leibowitz was credited with 14 assists, Hadnot with 18 rebounds and 19 points as the rookie guard made his bid to take over a starting job.

"This club moves well without the ball," Leibowitz said later. "Everybody had a fair share of the ball and six players scored in double figures. Actually, we lost the game on defense. Our offense played quite well considering how new I am to the club."

All the Oaks, including Leibowitz and Hadnot, speak of next season and the addition

of Rick Barry as another great stride forward.

"Yes, I hope to be able to work something out so I can play then," Hadnot says.

"We're young and lacking in experience and it shows up from time to time. But this is going to be a very, very exciting team."