



Sold to the bidder from Austin, Texas for \$4.3 million. 13 rules, two pieces of paper, one certified check. David and Suzanne Booth are now the proud owners of [basketball's origins](#) .

The [Kansas City Star predicted](#) the Sothebys equivalent of a Walmart Black Friday:

Naismith's rules for basketball should draw frenzy at auction

The [New York Times burst that bubble](#) :

The auction began at \$1.4 million, with [David] Booth bidding against one other person.

Still, \$4.3 million is a nice piece of change. Ian Naismith, grandson of James, hopes to net (no pun intended) \$3.8 million, which he intends to donate to the family's Naismith International Basketball Foundation. [According to the KC Star](#) , the Foundation, which serves underprivileged children:

... has fallen on tough times in line with the economy, forcing Ian Naismith to approach Sotheby's.

Ian Naismith says that in the past he was offered as much as \$5 million to \$10 million for his grandfather's 13 rules, which resided in Lawrence for 41 years following James Naismith's arrival in 1898, when he joined the KU faculty and became the Jayhawks' first basketball coach.

Naismith retired in 1937 and died in 1939.

Rick Telander, Chicago Sun Times, [tells of seeing the sacred sheets up close and personal](#) :

Ian [Naismith] had taken me into the vault of a Chicago bank years ago and shown me the yellowed pieces of paper.

"My grandfather did this," he said proudly.

One day, there was not basketball. The next day, there was. There was no evolution.

Basketball was a meteor.

Why sell now? [Rick reports](#) :

Ian sold the rules because the burden of ownership was too much. Like Frodo and the one ring.

"I'm tired of all the lying," a clearly exhausted Naismith told me. "Coaches making \$5 million a year? The game is about integrity, sportsmanship. People don't seem to remember that. The proceeds should fund the foundation all the way through, help get our message out about fair play."

"But the game now is being hurt by money. Nobody ever has enough."

And what of Mr. Booth? Why would anyone, [in Mr. Booth's own words](#) :

... pay more than anyone else in the world would pay or more than anyone in his right mind would pay ...

In fact, according to the [NY Times](#) :

Booth and his wife, Suzanne, are paying the most ever for an article of sports memorabilia, exceeding the \$3 million for the 70th home run ball hit by Mark McGwire in 1998.

David Booth lives in Austin but you'd think [he grew up in Lawrence, Kansas](#) :

David Booth grew up in Lawrence, Kan., the college town where James Naismith began coaching basketball at the University of Kansas a few years after inventing the sport in Springfield, Mass., in 1891.

Stop it. What was the name of his street - [Naismith Drive](#) ?

Booth and his family lived at 1931 Naismith Drive, a half-mile from where the basketball team plays.

Oh.

So what now? Residents of Lawrence, Kansas and beyond want to keep the rules in town almost as much as all of Ohio wanted LeBron to stay in Cleveland. Josh Swade, raised in Overland Park, Kansas, and currently living in New York, is one:

[Those rules belong in Lawrence, Kansas](#) . To me, it's a no-brainer. I think Dr. Naismith would

want them to be in Lawrence. He's buried there.

And it is this same [Josh Swade, who](#) :

. . . visited Booth in Las Vegas. Booth was on a company retreat, and they met at a hotel. Swade, who grew up in Overland Park and attended Kansas, is an associate producer for New York-based Maggie Vision, which creates film and television productions.

When Swade heard about the rules' uncertain future, he got in touch with Ian Naismith and put together a documentary to help persuade potential bidders.

[Bill Self's input](#) didn't hurt; Booth was convinced. And Booth's vision for his new purchase?

"I could see something in front of the fieldhouse [at K.U.]," Booth said, "a place for people to come and see a piece of history and have a great experience."

Parting with the rules will be an emotional day for Ian Naismith:

[The rules rarely left Naismith's side](#) .

He'd carry them in a metal display case on sportsmanship tours and to events like the Final Four.

With a weakness for spicy chicken wings, Naismith once thought he left the rules behind at the Hooters in Overland Park but was later told by the waitress she had seen him carry the briefcase out the door. The case had slid to the back of his van.

"There have been some adventures," Naismith once said.

Now there's an understatement. [Rick Telander](#) :

Dr. Naismith had invented the new sport so rowdy and bored YMCA kids would have something to do indoors in wintertime.

From that has come LeBron, Yao and Planet Basketball.