

# Original Celtic Rivalries

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Between World War I and World War II professional basketball grew from adolescence to adulthood. Two of the top teams in the 1920s and 1930s, as acknowledged by the fans, players, and newspapers alike, were the Original Celtics and the New York Renaissance. The Original Celtics, a white team, played independently, and then eventually, for two years in the American Basketball League. The New York Renaissance, a black team, played independently. Due to their color they were denied admittance into league play. Nonetheless, the Celtics and the Rens played each other, as well as other white and black teams, regardless of the legalized color barrier. Both teams displayed a unique style of play which distinguished them from all other professional, and amateur, teams. Various teams attempted to duplicate the play of these teams and some did, but none were able to gain the loyalty and respect obtained from fans and sportswriters by them. Both the Celtics and the Rens took to barnstorming in the 1920s in order to stay in business.

Both teams barnstormed across the northeast and the midwest, gaining fans wherever they played. Fans soon identified with various teams, and many favored the Celtics and the Rens. As with other sporting teams throughout history, these two teams garnered a sense of community among their respective fans. Fans generated the funds needed by both teams to remain in business, and rivalries generated fans. The rivalries gained strength from sportswriters from both black and white newspapers. The relationship between the sportswriters and the teams was very close and often direct.