In 1951, the City College of New York’s basketball team found itself mired in a point shaving scandal after going on to win the 1950 NCAA tournament. Players and bookkeepers were convicted of bribery and conspiracy charges, and teams went on to be suspended for up to two seasons. However, basketball still found its place on television through sports broadcasting even after the college scandal. The fledgling NBA was able attract an audience that previously followed the NCAA games. Television found a way to transform the sport so that it became more appealing to watch behind a screen.

Around the same time, African American players were starting to have significant roles on their teams. In 1950, 27-year-old George Clifton became one of the first black players to appear in a NBA game. Black athletic organizations and clubs had existed for many years since Clifton’s arrival to the professional organization, but one decade later, professional basketball became a very heterogeneous sport. It was not much longer until teams with black starting players were reigning over a sport that had been dominated by native-born white athletes and European immigrants. What changed in the history of basketball that allowed college basketball and the NBA to win the interest of Americans and become as popular as the NFL and MLB?
While black players were finding their way into the sport, basketball was slowly becoming popular on television. Is it possible that basketball was able to come back onto television because of the rise of African-Americans in basketball?