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**TABLE
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Official Magazine

OF THE

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

TABLE DIGEST TENNIS

All correspondence must be addressed to the Editor "Table Tennis Digest", 83 Lark Lane, Liverpool 17.

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Editor : **Albert Montgomery.**

J. Green (News), T. H. Edge (Features), J. McKim, A. Upton and D. Cameron

Vol. XIV

January, 1964

No. 2

EDITORIAL

HOW does one write the first editorial of a New Year? This question had me puzzled for quite a long time, and I must admit that I read similar articles in various magazines and also in periodicals for guidance. Most of these were used to summarise events of the past year. Personally I fail to see what purpose is thus attained, unless it is intended to do something constructive, and not just repeating old complaints and frustrations.

This League is an amalgam of various types of people with only one common interest—table tennis! As with all amateur sports, from this assortment of types come a few super-enthusiasts, who are willing to give freely of their spare time merely to organise for the pleasure of the whole. Were it not for these few, we would have no organised table tennis in Liverpool, so let us take time out to offer them our thanks for their unceasing efforts on our behalf.

Let us approach our favourite pastime with enthusiasm and increased tolerance towards our fellow-players. Let us enter into this new year with a desire to play in a better spirit—a little less gamesmanship—and a lot more sportsmanship.

The Committee spend many, many hours every year trying to make the rules as simple and straightforward as possible. Unfortunately, the simpler the rule, the easier it seems for some smart Alec to drive a hole through it! What a wonderful prospect it would be if we could do away with rules altogether, relying on the participants to get on with the game without all the petty manoeuvres designed to "put one over" on the opposition. New Year resolutions are worthless, for we all know that they last for about half-an-hour at most, but we COULD all take a good look at ourselves and our behaviour, and then perhaps we would find those faults previously only seen in others. This might turn us into better competitors and result in much more enjoyment being extracted from the game.

Remember this: we play table tennis because we want to, NOT because we are forced to. People have different ways of spending their leisure hours, designed to bring pleasure into their lives. But does it help if we detract from the pleasures of others? So, I suggest that you all take a good look at yourselves, and boy, oh boy, you'll find plenty of faults. I know, because I tried it on myself!

THE POINTS SYSTEM

AS I mentioned in my last article, there has been much comment around the League about the new set up of the Divisions and the new points system. The points system appears to be well received by the majority, the few examples given in the previous issue of this system giving a false League position were, of course, meaningless, as the contributors must have been well aware. Working under our new system it is obvious that you cannot make comparisons after only a few matches, as some teams may have played strong opposition whilst others may only have met the weaker teams in the division. A glance at the final League tables for the past few seasons will show that League positions remain the same whether you work on the old or new system of points. Another point laboured time after time in the Saturday newspaper article regarding teams finishing level on points at the end of the season does not bear very close inspection, as previous seasons League tables show that it is almost unheard of for two teams to finish up at the top or bottom of a Division with an exactly similar total of sets won.

The new set up in the Divisions is a different matter and has been criticised quite a lot, much of the criticism being that the standard of play in any one Division varies too much. This is, of course, quite true and was to be expected in the first season of the new structure of Divisions. A possible solution, and one which may well be put before the A.G.M. next year, is to have two third divisions and two fourth so let us have your comments and views on this idea, and you teams in the middle of the third divisions start fighting for the extra points, because, if the fourth divisions were formed, they would presumably consist of the lower halves of the present third divisions. Incidentally, whether this new system has any bearing on the matter or not, I would not like to say, but the Fixture Secretary informs me that the number of teams giving away 10-0 walk-overs has dropped greatly this year.

Mention was made in the "Digest" last year of a Merseyside Federation. The Committee have followed this idea up, and have had two meetings with members of the Business Houses and Wirral Leagues Committees. Whilst there are many difficulties in the way of any very close federation, and we are all agreed that this is out of the question at present, we have found many topics of mutual interest, and we feel that a better understanding between the Leagues which must result from the meetings can do nothing but good for table tennis in Liverpool.

The E.T.T.A. are holding a Special General Meeting in London this month to discuss the findings of the Development Commission, which has been studying all aspects of the game over the last 12 months. Many of the rule changes which they are seeking to put through, we, as a Committee, do not agree with. Your Chairman and myself will be attending the meeting to speak, and vote, against three proposed rule changes in particular, as follows:

(a) A proposition to alter the fees structure of the E.T.T.A. which, if passed, will increase the amount we have to pay by about £16 (an increase of about 33%). We oppose this because we feel that the benefits we get at present from our affiliation to the E.T.T.A. are negligible, and we do not seriously consider that any further cash rolling into the E.T.T.A. will bring any further consideration to us in the North.

(b) A proposition to alter the set-up of the executive body which governs our table tennis. This is a complicated rule change, but in effect it provides for a Council, consisting of ONE member from each county. This, obviously, is against our interests as there would then be only ONE vote for all the players in Lancashire, and ONE vote for all the players in Yorkshire, whilst all the small counties in the South would have one vote each, thus putting control of our table tennis even further into the hands of the South.

(c) The third rule change to which we object on principle, is one which gives the County the right to use the votes for EVERY League in the County at an A.G.M. unless the League APPLIES to use its own vote. We believe that, as we pay our fees, we are entitled to our vote,

without having to ask for it! If we wish to give our 'proxy' vote to the County representative, that is an entirely different matter.

I will give full details of this meeting and any rule changes approved which affect you, in the next issue of the "Digest."

Letter to the Editor

47, New Fields Ave.,
Braunstone,
Leicester.
December 4th, 1963.

Dear Sir,

Thanks very much for my issue of "Table Tennis Digest" which I received today. What struck me was the outspoken way it was written. The word 'fiddle' is only said very quietly in Leicestershire though I have no doubt at all that some is done. Without wishing to sound pompous I rather feel you have more of it than we do. I am enclosing herewith a handbook of our largest League, the Leicester & District League. We had trouble for a number of years but for about the last four we have found that our rule 19 (page 13) has curbed this. Of course it has not prevented those who love to play in a division much too low for them. There are always those who will get more pleasure out of 100% in the lowest divisions than 50% in about division 2. They feel it makes them look something. It does! An idiot!! Wasting a season in a division which they are far too good. Luckily this state of affairs has usually been remedied the next season. The former good player finds one season in a low division long enough to bring him down to the standard of the division, and he can't do so well the following season.

We in our League have this 2A, 2B business. We used to have C's and D's in the third and fourth divisions as well, but found this wasn't brilliant. Too much variation between the top and bottom. I would rather have the divisions numbered 1, 2, 3, etc. But it takes so long to reach division 1 is the wail! And the following masterpiece "We should have to wait 15 years to reach division 1 if we were the best team in Leicester." NONSENSE! Any team which is any use wouldn't go into the bottom divisions anyway.

The bottom division is always over-applied for! And they could always miss divisions, i.e. from 7 to 4, etc., for teams always fall out of the League and these would be vacancies. That's my pet moan on that!

About your points system, i.e., one for each set. It sounds marvellous to me, though you, having had experience of it, obviously don't think so. I would have thought the best all-round team would win the championship. At the moment in our League (3-a-side) a team could win the League with two players. I would like our League to give it a trial, but I bet they won't!

I am most impressed with your magazine and would be pleased if you could give me more details in order that I can talk our League or Association into doing something similar. How many copies are needed to be sold to break even? How much notice do you need to give the Printers? They seem to be the main ones. I reckon we could sell a few hundred. We have 813 members in the Leicester League, and with the smaller Leagues in the County also interested, we would have over 1,000 members to go at.

Finally, I am enclosing a couple of copies of my "Twenty-One Points." This has had fairly wide distribution, but if you wish to publish it in your magazine, go ahead and do so.

Looking through your Leagues I cannot quite understand how teams do not necessarily run in numerical-alphabetical order. In our League we insist on the first (or higher) team going into the "A" division. E.g., my own club, Leicester YMCA have a team in 2A and one in 2B. The League would *insist* that the 4th team was the one in 2A and the fifth in 2B - not vice-versa. Of course, this A and B business lends itself to fiddling. For instance, a club has a team in 2A and one also in 2B (only one team from each of

2A and 2B being promoted—rule 6, page 11 &. They are set on getting to the 1st division, although relegation usually follows at once, such is the difference in standard. They lost the first team's first match in 2A, so they promptly transfer the team *en bloc* to 2B and get promotion. This HAS happened.

Anyway, I could write and write, but I think I've bored you enough. I might have given you something to think about—I certainly got plenty reading your magazine! In

closing, could you let me have a Liverpool League handbook some-time.

Yours sincerely,

PHILIP REID,
Chairman/Secretary,
Lancashire T.T.A.

Editor's Note. Thanks for your letter. It is always good to hear views from our colleagues in other parts of the country. Good luck with your plans for a magazine, and don't forget to let us know the result.

Lancashire and Cheshire League

NO RALF GUNNION.

FIRST let me correct a mistaken impression with regard to Ralph Gunnion. Despite this player having signed with this League once again, he has no intention of playing for the League. I spoke to him on the 'phone a day or so ago, and although I am sure that he would like to play for Liverpool, it is not feasible as he is situated at present.

Having cleared that point up, let me pass on to the position of the 1st Men's team. To date they have played two matches, losing both, 0-1 to Bolton and 6-4 to Preston, the latter match just a week after losing to the same team 5-4 in the Wilmott Cup. In the League match with Preston, played at Liverpool YMCA, it was a pity that Wally Allanson was unable to play, due to illness. At Preston the previous week he had won all his three sets, and had shown the sort of fight and determination that wins matches. His win over Kershaw was excellent, matched only by Norman Jones' win over the same player. For the League match v. Preston, Ted Mandaluff was drafted into the side at the last minute and had a splendid debut, winning two sets, and losing only in the third game to Kershaw.

By Jack McCaig

TITLES.

In with the best chance at the moment would seem to be the Youth team, followed closely by the Juniors. The Youth team, of Alan Tolson, Bob Eden and Roy Smith are undefeated, with further matches to play against Burnley, Blackburn and Barrow. The prospects of winning this division seem quite bright. Meanwhile the Juniors remain undefeated in five matches, one point having been dropped to Blackpool. It is early as yet to assess Junior prospects, especially in view of experience of past seasons, when all seemed set for an outright win of the division, only for hopes to be dashed in final matches. Perhaps this will be the exception.

Finally, here are a few home matches, together with venues:

Friday, 17th January---

Ladies 'A' v. Blackpool at J.P.A.S.

Friday, 31st January---

Ladies' 1st v. Crewe at Beauclair.

Friday, 31st January---

Men's 'A' v. Blackpool at Eng. Elec

Friday, 7th February

Men's 1st v. Blackpool at

Liverpool YMCA.

Friday, 14th February---

Youth v. Blackburn at

Wavertree Labour.

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Twenty-One Points

1. Remember first and foremost that you are the most important player in the World. Nobody else matters.
2. Always play to win—AT ALL COSTS.
3. Never turn up smartly dressed at matches. Only cissies do that!
4. If you are given a point which should be your opponent's, say nothing. The Umpire is scoring, not you. If it is your turn to serve, it is as well to serve again as swiftly as possible, before the Umpire has time to rectify the error.
5. If your opponent is given a point which in your opinion should be yours, let the Umpire know in no uncertain manner. Under NO circumstances should you allow yourself to be swindled!
6. If you are experiencing any trouble with your opponent's service, implore the Umpire to watch it more carefully. Whether he is foul-serving or not it doesn't matter. By your action you are bound to have unsettled him.
7. If you have a good foul service use it often. If the Umpire has the nerve to pull you up, argue. If the Umpire happens to be a player, remind him that YOU may have the opportunity of umpiring one of HIS games later on, pointing out that you feel HIS service is open to question on its fairness.
8. Sometimes a point will occur which is open to question—whether it was edge or side, etc. THESE SHOULD BE YOUR POINTS. Argue over them until you get them! Remember two or three points (or even one) can turn defeat into victory.
9. If you lose, never hesitate to make excuses—the net, edges, lighting, floor, ball, table, umpiring—anything! Remember, your opponent could not possibly have played better than you!
10. If you get a net or edge, grin broadly, or laugh out loud. You are NOT sorry! Don't apologise, then you are not a liar either!!
11. If your OPPONENT gets a net or edge, scowl, look at the lights, or do anything you possible can to make him feel thoroughly uncomfortable.
12. Always turn up late for matches—it makes you look more important. But NEVER turn up too late for refreshments!
13. Never attend any meeting to which you may be invited. But never hesitate to criticise any decisions which are made there.
14. Never play inferior players if you can avoid it. Remember, playing them doesn't improve YOUR game.
15. When table tennis is the topic being discussed, monopolise it by talking about the only player who is of any interest—YOU. Even if table tennis isn't being discussed you can soon switch it round!
16. If you aren't selected for any match, tell all and sundry that "you have to be in the clique."
17. Never both to help younger players by coaching or giving advice. Why should you? It is of no benefit to YOU!
18. Never help out by umpiring or anything of that nature. Remember that you are a player, and they are lucky to have you.
19. In a doubles game always make your partner adapt his game to suit yours. As the inferior player he should be pleased to be allowed to play with you!
20. One player can easily win a doubles—YOU! Never hesitate to take all the credit. One player can also lose a doubles—your PARTNER! Point out his failings in front of everyone—it can do no harm.
21. Finally, when you win, let the World know. A spot of exaggeration can do no harm. Forget your defeats!

PHILIP REID.

Around the Divisions

DIVISION 1

-BY JIM GREEN

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Liverpool YMCA	11	11	0	0	101
Bohemians	12	12	0	0	99
Rafters	12	10	2	0	80
CADWA	11	8	3	0	71
L'pool YM 'A'	11	8	3	0	69
Anfield	11	7	4	0	61
Oakhill	11	4	5	2	54
Linnets	11	4	7	0	17
Waterloo Dock	12	3	8	1	14
Lucem	12	2	9	1	40
Balfour	10	1	6	0	38
Bohemians 'A'	10	2	6	2	35
Rafters 'A'	12	1	11	0	29
Bootle YMCA	12	0	12	0	13

AT the half-way stage Liverpool YMCA and Bohemians have drawn out ahead of the field, the YM slightly ahead with one game (v. Anfield) in hand. While seemingly the favourites, with the memory of losing 1-9 earlier to Bohemians in the Cup, they can yet be toppled from the lofty perch. It so happens that, as I write, the teams have to meet twice, and two decisive wins for Bohemians can put them ahead. A lot depends on both sides being at full strength, for when one man is away it can mean a vast difference. Rafters seem set for 3rd place, and Cadwa and the YMCA 'A' team appear to be set to battle it out for 4th and 5th. Anfield and Oakhill are safe and sound, and if they were to play at full strength throughout the second half, Anfield might shoot up to 4th place, but a lot depends on Stoddart being available each week.

The whole of the lower half of the division is engaged in the relegation battle. Bootle YMCA and Rafters 'A' trail well behind the field and must be favourites for the drop. Who their companions will be is much harder to forecast. Liverpool Pirates (*nee* Balfour) have two games in hand, as have Bohemians 'A', one being against each other, and both are hard on the heels of Lucem and Waterloo Dock. Linnets, lying 7th from bottom, with a game v. the Pirates in hand, have only a slender lead from Waterloo Dock, but every set earned in the outstanding match

can increase the gap. They owe a great deal to Frank Thomas and 'Dixie' Dean, the young man from last season's 8th division. Dean has won 14 from his last 16 sets, playing at 3 and 2, accounting for players such as Jim Rimmer, Harry Johnstone, Ted Barnes and Ian Rogerson and for a newcomer, barely 20, it is an impressive bag. But it has been a team effort all the same, and with hopes of occasional appearances by Ralph Gunnion, Gerry Cooklin and Ted Briscoe, Linnets feel that they might pull clear.

Lucem are staging another dramatic revival, as they have done so often in the past. Next to bottom last month they have risen to 5th from bottom, thanks to No. 1 Heyes in the main. He has collected an impressive array of scalps, headed by League champion Wally Allenson, and the whole side have pulled their weight in the sudden change of position (forecast in last month's notes). Rafters 'A' are struggling manfully, but lack strength at the top. Here again, a bit of luck at odd times can add to their sets tally. Bohemians switch of Eric Davies to the 'A' team in place of Bernard Hand might possibly strengthen their chances, but I feel that they will eventually be one of the unfortunates, for one of their outstanding matches is against Liverpool YMCA 'A' who must win every possible set to try to oust Cadwa from 4th spot, and I see little joy coming to Bohs that night. The most unpredictable of the lower sides are the newly-named Pirates. Norman Jones has not been at his best to-date, and the team has not been playing up to its man-for-man potential. Perhaps with a more settled side they might improve their position. All in all, more interest would seem to be centred in the lower half than at the top, where the issue is more or less clear cut.

Finally, I find that Pete D'Arcy has now won 23 sets from 26 played. What a pity he has been so out-of-touch? He might have done better!

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
W'tree Lab. 'A'	11	11	0	0	98
RAFA	11	10	1	0	83
Cadwa 'A'	11	8	3	0	69
Linaere	11	8	3	0	67
Bath St. 'A'	11	5	5	1	59
Beauclair	11	6	4	1	58
English Elec.	9	4	3	2	40
LPAS 'A'	11	2	7	2	43
Oakhill 'A'	11	2	6	3	42
Liverpool P.O.	10	2	7	1	33
Waterloo Park	8	3	5	0	36
Fairlawn 'A'	11	1	8	2	31
Rafters 'A'	10	0	10	0	15

OVER the last two months the situation in league affairs has remained virtually unchanged, with the exception of Beauclair who were one of my bright hopes, but have now fallen by the wayside, and they will have to play extremely hard now if they are to come into the reckoning for promotion. It does appear from the playing records that their No. 1 Brian Pardy is having to do more than his fair share of winning.

It is rather difficult to understand why English Electric are so far down the division, for surely their playing strength is potentially stronger than two or three of the teams above them. Is it due to bad luck? Or,

perhaps rather reckless play on the part of some members of the team? I do feel that with more concentration they could fill a considerably higher place.

In the Runjain Cup we have two representatives in the semi-finals, but to be quite truthful I cannot see either of them winning the cup. RAFA are drawn against Wavertree Labour, and Wavertree Labour 'A' play Bath Street. It looks like being an all-Wavertree final, and one must obviously nominate their first team to win.

Perhaps it is my imagination, but over the last few months it appears as if a far more friendly atmosphere has developed during matches, and if so, in the humble opinion of yours truly this is a very good thing, as for much too long we have endured this habit of coming in, a perfunctory 'good evening', get the game over as soon as possible, an equally terse 'goodnight' and home. Surely a little more get-together will make for pleasant evenings, which in the long run make for the good of the game.

Finally, better late than never, I would like to take this opportunity of wishing everyone a very happy and prosperous New Year.

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	P	W	L	D	Pts.
W'tree Labour	10	10	0	0	94
L'pool YM 'B'	11	8	2	1	82
Bath Street	10	7	2	1	69
LPAS	11	7	2	2	67
Anfield 'A'	11	6	3	2	63
Fairlawn	11	5	5	1	63
Crawfords	11	5	5	1	58
Bohemians 'B'	11	4	5	2	53
Cadwa 'B'	11	4	7	0	51
University	11	2	4	5	50
Linnet 'A'	11	2	6	3	39
Bath St. 'B'	10	1	9	0	16
Waterloo Pk. 'A'	11	0	11	0	5

THE interest in this division regarding the battle for promotion seems to be centred on who will finish in 2nd position, for Wavertree Labour have established a commanding lead, and unless something approaching a miracle occurs, are certs for the 1st division next year. Bath Street are lying second at present, and have well earned their high placing, but they must keep up the pressure for hard on their heels are Bohemians 'B' and Liverpool YMCA 'B', with Fairlawn showing an improvement after a slow start. It would be an interesting situation if either Bohs 'B' or YMCA 'B' were to gain promotion, for they would then be in the position of having three teams in the premier division, a position only achieved once before, by Balfour some ten years ago.

The clash between these two sides provided a most interesting encounter when the respective No. 1's clashed for the two players in question were none other than Vic Chesham (Bohs) and Roy Jones (YMCA), both of whom would not disgrace the No. 1 spot in either of their clubs 1st teams, which perhaps says something for the strength of their clubs—or does it cast doubts on the rules which allow players of their

calibre to turn out for their 'B' teams? Just for the record, Roy Jones beat Chesham 21-16, 21-17.

Joyce Randall had a truly excellent win over Judy Crafter for Bohs 'B' v. Cadwa 'B', coming back to win 25-23, 21-19 after trailing 12-21 in the 1st game, but Judy must have had some satisfaction in beating S. Stirzaker 21-16, 14-21, 21-15. Bohs eventually ran out winners at 7-3.

Bath Street recorded a triumph by beating Liverpool YM 'B' by 8 sets to 2, and an interesting result in this game was Alec Goulds narrow win over Cyril Bradshaw at 25-23 in the 3rd—a very good win indeed! Bradshaw gained some revenge by beating Joel Johnson 21-4, 21-10, who also lost his sides only other set to H. Kewley 21-13 in the 3rd. Not his happiest evening for sure.

LPAS just scraped home over Anfield 'A' 6-4, but the result might have been different had not Reg Gray (Police) gained one set 'walk-over' over J. Brannigan. And Crawfords must have thought that they were playing Bohemians ladies' team when Bohs arrived at Olive Lane with Muriel Willcox, Joyce Randall and young Barbara Cain in the team. Crawfords won 7-3, but two of the sets were won by Miss Willcox (1) and Mrs. Randall (1).

University earned a good draw v. LPAS mainly due to a double scored by R. Francis who dropped down to No. 4 to beat Don Gauld and Alan Heague. The bottom of the table clash between Bath St. 'B' and Waterloo Park 'A' just about sealed the fate of Waterloo Park when they lost 2-8, and I think that they will be much happier playing against sides more nearly of their own calibre next season in one of the lower divisions.

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	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Balfour 'A'	10	10	0	0	91
Maghull	13	9	4	0	82
Colonsay	11	10	1	0	78
St. Mary's O.B.	12	6	5	1	68
Wav. Lab. 'C'	11	7	4	0	64
L'pool Jewish B	11	7	4	0	56
Linnet 'C'	11	5	6	0	51
Stanley House	9	5	2	2	50
Oakhill 'B'	11	4	7	0	49
Eng. Elec. 'C'	11	4	7	0	45
University 'A'	11	4	7	0	42
Fairlawn 'B'	12	2	9	1	40
L.V.C.A	12	2	10	0	37
Anfield 'D'	12	2	10	0	35

AS we are nearing the half-way mark it seems a good time to look for promotion candidates. Balfour 'A' (or to use their new title Liverpool Pirates 'A') must be certain of a division 2 place next season. I have not had the 'pleasure' of playing them as yet, nor (unfortunately) have I had a chance to see them, but from all accounts they are going to take a lot of stopping—if indeed they ARE stopped! Their closest match to-date has been against Colonsay when they wnerged as 7-3 winners, but six sets went to three games, which proved that it was a fight before victory was ensured.

Colonsay could well be considered as possible runners-up, although they have a long way to go, and their

2nd division place cannot be guaranteed as yet.

Maghull lost a lot of ground in their title chase when they went down 3-7 to Liverpool Jewish on December 4th in what must have been a truly exciting scrap, for no fewer than seven sets were decided in the 'third'. But Maghull cannot be counted out yet.

If Oakhill 'B' had done as well in their first 5 matches as they have done in the last 6 they would have been right up among the leaders, but they have little or no hope of making up the lost ground and joining them now. They did have a good win over English Electric 'C' though, which gave more heart for the second half.

A lot of interest has evaporated from the bottom of the table since there is no relegation to fight against. Anfield stay firmly rooted in the bottom spot, and seem destined to stay there unless they can strengthen their team.

I would like to mention that many score cards are not fully completed before posting. May I urge Captains to complete the result, and also the 'record' on the bottom line, for it does save a lot of time when checking. I would add that this applies in only a very few cases. A happy New Year to you all.

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Linnets 'B'	12	10	2	0	96
Wav. Lab. 'B' ..	11	11	0	0	95
Sefton General ..	11	9	2	0	74
Crawfords 'B' ..	12	5	0	1	70
Bath St. 'C'	12	0	5	1	62
Mossley Hill	10	5	3	2	60
Eng. Elec. 'B' ..	12	5	0	1	52
Balfour 'B'	10	4	6	0	39
Crawfords 'C' ..	11	1	8	2	33
Orrell 'A'	11	1	9	1	32
Colonsay 'A'	11	2	8	1	29
Coll. Tech. 'A' ..	11	1	8	2	22
Linnets 'F'	10	1	7	2	19

AS these notes go to press Anfield 'B' are still grimly hanging on to their lead from Linnets 'B' and Wavertree Labour 'B'. Only one point separates the three although Labour have a game in hand, and have defeated both Linnets 'B' and Anfield 'B' by the narrow margin of 6-4. On 8th January, Linnets and Anfield meet for their top-of-the-table duel, and then the gap may start to widen!

The only other team to afford any possibility of a threat to the top threesome is Sefton who are notched into 4th place, 23 points behind the leaders, but with one match in hand. Sefton doesn't seem to have hit top form as yet this season. Although they have lost only two matches and scored a victory over Linnets 'B' away from home, there have been many valuable sets dropped which this season constitute points.

Congratulations to Alan Tolson of Wavertree Labour as the only 100 percenter still in the division, all his games being played at No. 1 or 2. Thorley (Anfield) has dropped one game only, and Gilmour (Wavertree

Labour), Leeming (Linnets) and Kettle (Sefton) three apiece. Top lady of the division at the moment is Mabel Francis of Crawfords with 15 wins from 20 played.

In spite of the obvious difference in table-tennis ability between the top teams and those struggling manfully (and womanfully) at the bottom of the table, it is a pleasure to note the keenness, sportsmanship and camaradie which is gracing our division. There has been only one team walk-over so far this season, and even this has been satisfactorily explained. The number of individual walk-overs is still being kept to a bare minimum. A pat on the back to all of us—let's keep it up!

We have an 'Elusive Pimpernel' in the division (alias 'Jim') who has been popping up all over the place. On 29th October he made his first appearance for the Linnets 'B' team, and, after demolishing his opponents, went back into hiding! He re-appeared at the end of November, this time in the 'F' team, winning the only game for his side. The following week the 'B' and 'F' teams met across their common table--problem—where to play Jim? After much top-level discussion it was finally decided to keep him in the 'F' team, where he lost both his sets. The next week found 'Our Jim' back winning in the 'B' team. Perhaps in the second half of the season we'll find him bobbing up at irregular intervals for Crawfords 'B' and 'C' teams!! (That would take the biscuit!—*News Editor*).

In closing, let me wish you all health, happiness, and many, many good points and net-decisions in 1964.

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DIVISION 3C

BY JIMMY BOWDEN

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Crawfords 'A'	12	10	1	1	95
Coll. of Tech.	11	9	0	2	90
L'pool YM 'C'	12	10	1	1	83
L'PAS 'B'	12	6	5	1	76
L'pool Jewish	11	7	2	2	74
Balfour 'C'	12	6	4	2	74
Orrell	12	7	5	0	73
Bohs 'C'	12	7	4	1	72
Beauclair 'A'	11	4	6	1	47
Eng. Elec. 'D'	12	4	7	1	43
Lowlands 'A'	12	2	10	0	29
Linnets 'E'	10	0	7	3	22
Bradstones	12	0	10	2	19
Oakhill 'C'	12	0	10	2	16

WITH the season half over Crawfords 'A' lead the field, but breathing down their necks are College of Technology, who, with a game in hand, could well take over the top position, and with Liverpool YMCA 'C' lying a close third, the ultimate championship seems to rest between these three.

However, spare a thought for the teams who turn up each week knowing that one set or at most three, will be their lot for the night! Teams such as Oakhill 'C', Linnets 'E' and Bradstones, for while these teams are finding it extremely hard going against the top guns of the division, they are having a rare old battle amongst themselves, with the Oakhill 'C' v. Bradstones, and Oak-

hill 'C' v. Linnets 'E' matches resulting in 5 sets each.

It is nice to see quite a few ladies in the division, and with this season behind them they could well be showing us the way home next year. A special word of mention for Marion Lewis of Linnets 'E', for although not winning regularly, she is putting up a great fight in all her games, and her set against Eddie Hand of Balfour 'C' which she lost in the third was a notable effort, for Eddie is notoriously one of the most difficult opponents one is likely to meet in this division. Well earned words of praise must go also to C. Dingwall (Crawfords 'A') who has to date played 20 sets, winning all, and having been taken to the third game in only one set.

Bradstones are having a lean time, but their four sets v. Liverpool Jewish must have given them a tonic, for they have collected a further twelve sets from their last five matches. Orrell, Beauclair 'A' and English Electric 'D' are comfortably placed, while Bohs 'C', Liverpool Jewish and L'PAS 'B' keep hard on the heels of the leaders, waiting for a slip. Lowlands 'A', although near the bottom, have, I think, just that little bit more than the teams below them, and should keep clear of the wooden spoon.

DIVISION 3D

BY JACK LAMBERT

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
St. Edward's	11	10	0	1	92
L'pool Jewish 'A'	11	10	1	0	88
Anfield 'C'	11	7	4	0	80
Balfour 'D'	10	9	1	0	77
Eng. Elec. 'A'	10	7	2	1	72
Lowlands	11	7	4	0	67
Beauclair 'B'	10	4	6	0	40
Linnets 'D'	11	3	7	1	36
Dom. Miss.	9	3	6	0	36
L'pool YM 'D'	9	2	6	1	30
Lussac	11	1	10	0	25
Lucean 'A'	10	2	8	0	22
Bradstones 'A'	10	0	10	0	5
Eng. Elec. Withdrawn					

(Record expunged)

HOW refreshing to have some reasonable competition at the top of the table instead of the run-away wins to which we have become

accustomed, when the championship has been sewn up after the first few games. Even so, St. Edward's have established themselves as firm favourites, mainly as a result of a 6-4 win over Liverpool Jewish, who until then were themselves undefeated. Double wins were scored by ice-cool Lawson, and explosive Tom Smith, and by Prydman for the losers. The return could well be the championship decider. Jewish, in turn, had scored an excellent win over English Electric 7-3 (Cameron D. 2), while both Electric and Balfour 'D' have beaten Anfield 6-4, with George Moon and Maureen King winning two apiece. Sort that summary out and you have the champions! How about order of mention?

There are many 10-0 and 9-1 wins which call for little comment, except perhaps to disagree with last month's correspondent, and say that it WOULD be a consoling thought to many of the lower teams if there WAS relegation to look forward to, so that these teams could find their own level!

Two wins from Rix gave Beauclair the edge over Linnets. Arthur Richardson, back in harness after a couple of years keeps chalking them up, including two against Linnets in one of the rare draws. Gower (Lussac) earns praise for his two wins v. Anfield in a 2-8 loss, and two gallant wins by Summers of Bradstones, who keep plodding away with full teams every week without much success. They set an example to many more established sides, and should be given every encouragement.

A few good individual performances

particularly by Hopwood (Lucem) who seem to enjoy breaking through the big five—in one set he won 21-18, 21-23, 27-25. K. Smith (Lowlands) is his partner in success with many good scalps added to his collection. Murphy (Lussac), Birch (Anfield) and junior Peter Wass (Linnets) all earned good doubles for their losing sides.

I have a scheme which, subject to Management approval, and interest shown by you, would give our division an individual champion at minimum inconvenience to the players. (Put it to the Committee, Jack—Editor).

A side is to be selected to represent the Division against representative teams of the other 3rd divisions for the 'Micklefield Medals.' No more than one player from any one team to be selected, so be on your toes to get into the team.

WOMEN'S DIVISION

BY AMY BELL

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Bohemians	11	10	0	1	83
Bath St.	10	8	2	0	77
Cadwa	9	8	0	1	71
Crawfords	9	7	1	1	67
Linnets	11	4	4	3	61
Rafters	10	4	3	3	57
Cadwa 'A'	10	3	5	2	51
Anfield	9	4	3	2	49
Balfour	10	2	6	2	35
Cheshire Lines	10	3	7	0	30
Eng. Electric	12	0	10	2	23
Bohemians 'A'	7	2	5	0	20
Linnets 'A'	10	0	9	1	16

IT begins to look as though the 'old firms' of Bohemians and Cadwa are going to fight it out for both the League championship and Bartholomew Cup. It would be stupid to make a hard and fast forecast of the ultimate destination of either, but I confess that I have a sneaking feeling that this will be Boh's year, especially if Moya Jones were turned out more often. However, although there are a group of teams such as Bath Street, Crawfords, Rafters and Linnets, all keeping close hoping for a slip on the leaders part—even though the chances of both slipping are very remote. The two sides drew in their first match of the season, and it may well be that the return will decide the eventual champions, but both teams must keep on collecting every set possible to keep in the hunt.

Maureen King of Liverpool Pirates (ex Balfour) is getting into her stride now. During the summer she made radical changes in her game, and for the first few weeks seemed rather uncertain, but she is settling down now, and has collected a number of scalps including that of Jean Reynolds (Rafters). In the same match she took Eileen Mansell to 26-24 and managed to take Moya Jones to a deuce in the third, and at the rate she is improving it cannot be long before she will earn a place in one of the city teams. Milly Harris (Linnets) is another whose improvement this year is marked, and again, she has beaten Jean Reynolds in her side's first-ever win over Rafters. Pat Brown out at English Electric has struck a bad patch, but there is no doubt that she will come back again. It is a pity that her teammates don't take their games more seriously, for I'm certain that they could become a fairly strong side with more application now.

Crawfords are having a good season, and each year they get that little bit better so that in a year or two we should find them among the leaders. Balfour are having little success, for although they have three strong players, they seem to find it difficult to find a fourth—playing short four times from ten matches, and in addition their women's team

suffers from calls for one of their men's teams, with the result that their League position is nothing like as high as it might have been, had they concentrated more on this division. It seems a pity that our division has to take second place to the men, but of course that is the domestic affair of each club! I feel a great deal of regret that the name 'Balfour' is being lost to the League after so many years, during which the name has been synonymous with the best of our League table tennis. There are very many who will share my regret.

Bath Street are having a fine season—a real team effort, as is called for by the new points system, but if one player can be pin-pointed it must surely be Joyce Newell, whose

15 wins from 18 sets played at No. 2 shows a tremendous advance on her previous performances, and makes her a force to be reckoned with. Marion Lewis (Linnets 'A') has won three of her last four sets at No. 1, and her improvement will show with even better results in the second half. Practising several nights a week, she must surely be one who will shoot rapidly into our top grade. Angela Parker and Carole Flood of the same team are also showing signs of improvement, and all three are names who will be heard much more as time goes on.

I take this opportunity of wishing all and sundry 'all the best' for the New Year—good matches, hard fought, and enjoyed by all.

The Devastation of the League

BY TOM GORDON

WHEN I read my League handbook this year I was astonished to find the League structure so radically changed. Try as I might, I could conceive no possible justification for such a re-hash of the League tables. To my mind the modifications just didn't make sense and I failed to see how they could possibly work out. I reasoned, however, that there **MUST** have been a reason which would no doubt become apparent as the season progressed. And now the season **HAS** progressed and the pattern is clear. The new system is a ridiculous and outrageous failure! The third divisions appear to be the worst hit. In each of these various levels of strength are mixed. There are 3 or 4 strong teams who continuously thrash the rest and are no doubt quite fed up doing so. Then there is a band of medium strength teams who get thrashed one week and win 10-0 the next, for whom the 'hot and cold' pattern is annoying and frustrating. And finally there are the weak teams who are invariably hampered. For this unfortunate band there is no solace that eventually they will find their own level and play enjoyable and close games for most of the season. Under the present system there is nowhere for the weak teams to go, and their prospects will remain bleak.

I quote two examples to illustrate the point: my own club, English Electric, registered six teams this season, graded according to strength. But a glance at Division 3B show that the 'A' team and 'E' team were placed in the same division! **WHAT NONSENSE!!** Then, compare the following results: Anfield 'B' 10, English Electric 'B' 0; Tech. Students 'A' 1, English Electric 'B' 9. What sort of game can the Students expect against Anfield 'B'?

The League has degenerated into a disorganised shambles, the entire blame for which can be laid at the door of the faulty League structure. On theoretical grounds the 'pyramid' system is one of the worst that could have been chosen. To illustrate this, let us imagine for a moment a league of five divisions each of ten teams. Let us say further, that the teams had been undisturbed for many seasons, so that, with regular promotion and relegation a position of equilibrium had been established. Now, at the end of a season, let us join all the teams together to make one big list of fifty teams. If, for some reason, we wanted to alter the League, what would be the optimum number of teams per division to produce the closest grading? The perfect answer is 25 divisions each of two teams, but this is hopelessly

impractical, so what MUST be done is to compromise between the number of teams required per division and the best grading, the number of teams depending upon the length of the season alone, and the grading upon the League structure. The only structure which will maintain good grading is a league of straight divisions, the careful balance of which has been evolved over a period of years—a practical version of our 'perfect arrangement'.

Consider for a moment what would happen if, in our imaginary League, it was decided to change the last two divisions into two sections of one division. The balance would immediately be disturbed. The previous 4th division teams would naturally predominate and form the top halves of the two sections. This situation would never improve: the strength would always be split. If this were taken a stage further, and 3 divisions changed into sections the grading further deteriorates, and taken to the limit, we would finish up with five sections of one division, each incorporating two teams from each division, at which stage the confusion would be complete.

So the structure is hopelessly wrong! The overwhelming questions are—why and how did this happen? For the answer 'why it happened' we must turn to the April 1963 edition of the "Digest". Under the heading 'A New Look for the League' our honourable League Secretary propounded the whole works! Here, in black and white, was the present system in embryo! This illuminating article is well worth closer inspection. Reasons for the proposed re-organisation were given as follows:

- (a) To promote interest, particularly in the lower divisions;
- (b) Make it possible for a new team joining the League to reach the top quickly, if they were good enough;
- (c) Maintain interest throughout the season; and
- (d) Be fluid enough to permit of alterations from year to year to accommodate the differing number of teams.

Apparently, judging from (a) there was a lack of interest in league table tennis. Is *this* why the Committee wanted to change the League structure? Because of lack of interest?

Let us go back to McKim's article! His ideas for implementing item (a) to improve interest are as follows:

- (1) A Men's Singles tournament for 3rd division players only;
- (2) A challenge cup for the best 3rd division team; and
- (3) A knock-out for 3rd division champions.

Why, Mr. McKim, is it necessary to butcher the League simply to instal fancy named tournaments? What is the difference between a tourney for 3rd division players and one for the members of the original 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th divisions? Wouldn't exactly the same players take part? Is there any essential difference between Hyde Cup and a 'challenge cup for 3rd division teams'?

Now, let us examine reason (b)—'to make it possible for a new team to reach the top quickly'. I simply cannot believe that the Committee would turn the League inside out just so that the odd brilliant team may attain the top quickly. This would be like burning the house down to get rid of dry rot in a window sill! Surely the obvious answer is for the brilliant team to replace a side dropping from a higher division? This should not impose too great a strain on the Committee's judgment!

I hesitate to look at reason (c) for it is too ludicrous! 'To maintain interest throughout the season'. This McKim amplifies as follows: 'Item (c) will be fulfilled by virtue of the fact that most clubs will be involved in struggles either to gain promotion or avoid relegation'. THIS IS PATHETIC! There are LESS teams involved in promotion and relegation than with the original structure! Far from maintaining interest the new idea has simply given birth to widespread dissatisfaction.

Item (d) was simply to enable the Committee to alter the whole business if they found it didn't work.

My impression is that few people took the Committee's ideas seriously, they regarded McKim's article as quixotic of passing interest only. In itself, however, the article meant nothing. The important thing was the A.G.M. I imagine most players thought that 'it may be brought up at the A.G.M. but the issue will

surely be defeated immediately—after all the cross-section of club representatives are eminently sensible and will soon correct the distorted ideas'. WHAT DID HAPPEN AT THE A.G.M. ?

The proposal to change the League was the most important subject of the meeting. Did a Committee member, possibly McKim, stand up, explain the proposed ideas, and invite comment? I SEE NO MENTION OF THIS IN THE MINUTES.

Did the Committee simply propose an amendment to rule 22 and leave it at that? It is my opinion that most members present that evening had forgotten the article in the April "Digest" and voted for the amendment because it seemed sensible to do so. If the situation should arise when two or more sections of a division rank equally then it is commonsense that promotion and relegation would have to be effected somehow. I AM CONVINCED THAT IN VOTING FOR THE AMENDMENT, THE BULK OF MEMBERS PRESENT DID NOT RELATE IT IN ANY WAY with the abortive system outlined in the April "Digest". The important business, the drastic changing of the divisions, didn't need a vote—the Committee already had the power. AND THEY USED IT!

To the average player the important thing is that he has a good game each week. Whether or not he does, depends upon whether or not the teams in his division are evenly matched. This, in turn, depends upon the careful balance of the League which has evolved through many seasons. The League structure is, therefore, ALL IMPORTANT. It should never be altered as its careful grading depends upon non-interference. If, however, changes are considered, their authorisation should be the responsibility of not a few men, but of ALL LEAGUE MEMBERS. The only democratic and proper method would be to put the proposals to a mass vote. The mechanics of this can easily be worked out—one method would be for proposal forms to be duplicated and sent to each club secretary. This official would, in turn, append the names of all his club members, every one of whom would be asked

to read the proposal and mark 'yes' or 'no' against his name.

Now I know the Committee's attitude to ballots. Their line was clearly stated by Mr. Caird in the January '63 edition of the "Digest" in connection with an article by Mr. Rix . . . 'it was the Feature Editor's intention to take up Mr. Rix's suggestion of a secret ballot . . . but on reflection we have decided that this would be quite improper as the machinery is there for amendments to League Rules without having to resort to ballots (secret or otherwise)'. What Mr. Caird says is quite true—it would be improper to entertain unofficial ballots. These ballots must be OFFICIAL. An integral part of our constitution; and this must be put forward as a rule amendment.

The Committee know, and we all know, that voting at the A.G.M. is not always representative of League feeling. I am fully aware that the machinery exists for it to be so—I know that club members should charge their representatives with their point of view—but this doesn't work! The majority of players are simply interested in enjoying their table tennis, they don't want to be concerned with League rules and regulations (I am not particularly interested in these myself). As long as our League ticks over efficiently I am quite happy to simply enjoy the game, and this general indifference is a fact which must be faced. BUT, when an issue involving the League structure comes up and this is one of the very few really important issues—the interest of ALL League members must be safeguarded. THE MASS VOTE MUST BE WRITTEN INTO OUR CONSTITUTION.

By special arrangement with the Printers the above article was printed on asbestos paper. PHEW!

—Editor.

The Editorial Board feel that it is unfortunate that Mr. Tom Gordon should make Mr. McKim the target for his attack. We would point out that articles by Mr. McKim are written on the instruction of the Management Committee after full discussion and majority agreement as to their content.—Editor.