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**TABLE
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DIGEST**

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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A. E. Upton, J. C. McKim and S. D. Cameron

Vol. XVI

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No. 4

Editorial

FROM letters received throughout the season it seems that the League A.G.M. will face a number of rule change proposals with regard to such matters as the points system and four-a-side teams, and also (it seems) that some debate will come up about the "twin-strem" and "straight division" structures or divisions. While these are all to the good in one way, for they show an active interest in the League, I feel that some of the arguments used will not bear too close scrutiny. As an example, one of our latest correspondents appears to consider that all clubrooms *must* be suitable for doubles play to be in use today. Obviously this cannot be so, for clubrooms are extremely difficult to find, and there are few which could not be faulted in some respect. It is relatively easy for teams such as works teams to provide a good playing arena, for normally there is plenty of accommodation, but for the independent club, it is always a matter of making the best of what is available. Equally obviously, the inspection of any clubroom *must* be of a "general" nature . . . not over critical . . . good lights, reasonable space, etc., and it is undoubted that some are NOT completely suitable for doubles play. It would be quite impossible for every club to find such premises, and to insist on perfection would probably decimate the League membership.

Club meetings, whether general or Committee, should talk these (and other) matters over, before instructing their representatives on voting. These are matters to concern every League member next season, and Secretaries should always know the views of members, not, as so often happens, voting entirely on his own viewpoints because the members are not bothered to give him guidance. A Secretary who acts with the full knowledge that his club-mates have certain wishes is in a strong position.

The Liverpool "Closed" is upon us. The Referee and his colleagues need all the help you can give, so do not be bashful. Come along and offer your aid, which will be most acceptable. Do not leave everything which concerns your League to an overworked few.

Finally, on a happy and "non-preaching" note, I have learned that a club Secretary, who is also one of our regular contributors DAVID COHEN, is to be married in Birmingham, on March 27th. David has been a member of the League for a long time, and has always been both popular and respected with all those who have come to know him, and in wishing him and the lady whom he is to marry a long and a very happy married life I know, without doubt, that such are the feelings of the entire League. The best of luck to you, Dave, and to the future "Mrs. Dave".

THE Micklesfield Medals competition will be held as a Brazilian tournament again this year, since everyone present at last year's tournament appeared to enjoy this form of competition. Five members of the Committee will be responsible for selecting the teams, and they will select **ONLY** from players nominated by clubs with a team in the division concerned. The five divisions eligible, and the person responsible for selecting each team are as follows :

- DIVISION 3A. J. C. McKim, 14 Greenhill Avenue, Liverpool 18.
 DIVISION 3B. A. E. Upton, 19 Cedar Grove, Waterloo, Liverpool 22.
 DIVISION 4A. J. Byrne, 100 Northway, Maghull, Lancs.
 DIVISION 4B. J. R. Green, 43-45 Lark Lane, Liverpool 17.
 WOMENS'. Miss J. A. Crafter, 17 Burford Road, Liverpool 16.
 (Teams from the 1st and 2nd divisions are not entitled to enter).

Teams will consist of three players : 1 under 20 years of age ; 1 between 20 and 40 years ; and the third over 40 (at 1st July, 1965). Each team will play 1 set of two games against each other team. The scores of both games will be counted, and that team which totals the highest number of points from all four sets (against each of the other teams) will be the winners.

The date and venue of the competition will be announced later but it will probably be held in the week following Easter.

We regret to have to record the resignation from the Committee of Jack Lambert, of English Electric. Because of pressure of other commitments Jack felt it impossible to carry out to his own satisfaction his duties as a Committee member, and I would like to place on record our appreciation of the services rendered by him to the League. Mr. J. Byrne, also of English Electric, has been co-opted to the Committee for the remainder of the season.

No response has been forthcoming to the appeal for helpers at the tournament. I trust that you will receive this copy of the " Digest " before the " Closed " Tournament, and if so it is not too late to volunteer your services, even now. Any assistance will be welcomed by the Referee and his staff.

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LET'S HAVE A LEAGUE HEADQUARTERS

— By Peter Rix

(Captain, Beauclair T.T.C.)

I REMEMBER that, during last season a certain correspondent wrote to the "Digest" on the subject of a League headquarters. This was taken up by other letters to the Editor, which were in complete agreement.

But this season it seems apparent that the subject has gone out of the limelight. Therefore I would like to reopen the issues at a time when, with the League Annual General Meeting just around the corner, club Secretaries, and other responsible individuals interested in the running of the League may well be thinking of what subjects to air at the "meeting" of the table tennis hierarchy in Liverpool.

As I see it there are many advantages to gain from having a building easily accessible from any part of the city where the League offices could be housed. Such a building should not be too difficult to obtain where, apart from offices, two (or more) rooms would suffice to house a couple of tables, enabling Cup semi-finals and finals to be played in a neutral atmosphere—to say nothing of Inter-City matches.

League offices are essential to an organisation of our size, and it is high time that those concerned with running our affairs should not have to clutter up their own homes in their efforts to ensure the undoubted pleasure of the majority. Without the unselfish work of these few there would be no competitive table tennis at all in the town. A sobering thought! These offices would be

most welcome for these people to administer the League, run the various Cup competitions, organise tournaments, hold Committee meetings, and so on.

It should be a place of meeting for the City teams where they could practice, and it could also be a place where players might be coached. Another big factor to be considered is that when Cup and City matches are played at present, they are held in the premises of clubs who have offered accommodation for this use, but who have found cause for regret after the event. In fact, a League building would be the complete solution of many problems.

In a recent "Digest" there was printed a letter of admiration from a southern E.T.T.A. official praising us for our excellent magazine. May I put it to you that not only is the "Digest" of high quality, but also the administration of the League. Those men and women responsible for the smooth running of our League deserve a big pat on their backs—and suitable surroundings in which to continue their good work.

Of course I am not blind to the reality of the problems of finance. But a project of this kind must surely be within our scope? It is therefore with much feeling that I ask my fellow members to give full consideration to the pros and cons of this innovation in preparation for the jousting at the A.G.M. where details, both financial and practical, might well be discussed.

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SINCE the last issue our sundry teams have continued their story of success with the Men's 1st team beating Blackpool (9-1) and Nelson (6-4) which puts them second to Bolton in the 1st division table, and the Ladies 1st team beating our "A" team 9-1 and earning a draw v. Stockport. The Ladies have now completed their programme and lost only to our ancient foe, Manchester. With two wins and two draws they should be comfortably placed, though I do think that had all three girls played to their normal form throughout both of the draws could have been comfortable wins! With regard to the men, they have now only one match to play, on March 18th at Liverpool YM against Manchester. Whatever the result, anyone going along will see a fighting team representing Liverpool in Roy Jones, Peter D'Arcy and Gordon Birch, and goodness knows these three together with Ron Jones have done enough this season to earn the full support of the League in this annual battle with our oldest table tennis rivals from Manchester. **What have our teams got to do to get support from their fellows?** This season has seen a tremendous revival in Liverpool against other Leagues, yet from what I hear, other Leagues of far fewer members turn out in greater strength to urge their representatives on. Just for once, come along on the 18th not only to watch what should be a very good game, but also to let the team know that their efforts are not un-noticed by the League!

The Youth team carry on with successive wins over Nelson, Barrow and St. Helens and to-date have played 8, won 7, lost 1, and with only one remaining game v. Salford (away) they also look like finishing in second place, and just where the Juniors will be with only two defeats from 7 matches, I cannot say exactly without the official tables but they must surely be high up. They also have only one game to play, against Macclesfield. I say this because I cannot say whether the match against Blackpool is likely to be played, for every time that we fix

a date, invariably it is cancelled by our opponents at the last minute, and it is getting very close to the end of the season. But we still hope to fulfil that fixture even at this late hour.

The last team, the Ladies "A" have now lost four of their quota of five matches, with one to go, away to Crewe. From the results angle it has been an unsuccessful year, but bearing in mind the policy of new players being 'blooded' this cannot truthfully be said, for one or two have shown that they will improve with every match they play, and it is unlikely that we could have fielded an "A" team of three players to have won any of the four to-date. This season the Ladies division was split into two, leaving all too few games in either division, and with both of the Liverpool teams in the 1st division. I don't know what other Leagues feel about this, but from our own point of view I rate it as a wasted season for our girls, for both teams have only four other Leagues to play, and that doesn't make for much real interest.

All of our matches seem to have been enjoyable from any angle, whether won or lost, but there has been one notable exception . . . that day on which Brian Leeson drove two teams (Youth and Juniors) and another non-playing Captain to Barrow. This is always an all-day effort, but there was little pleasure for either team (apart from winning in both) for the normal courtesies by the home League were entirely absent causing a deep depression over Barrow. The spread of this attitude will certainly kill inter-city table tennis, but we hope that this was an isolated incident.

In the last issue of the season, in April, I hope to give final League placings of all teams. I hope to report a large attendance at the YMCA on the 18th, also, but whatever happens nothing will shake my belief that we owe a tremendous amount to every player representing the League this year for demonstrating that there's life in our League yet!

Around the Divisions

DIVISION 1.

By JIM GREEN

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Liverpool YM	21	20	1	0	188
Wav. Labour	20	17	1	2	158
Bohemians	18	17	0	1	150
Rafters	21	17	2	2	149
Linnets	21	12	8	1	115
L'pool YM 'A'	18	10	8	0	99
Wav. Lab. 'A'	18	7	10	1	85
Beauclair	19	6	12	1	74
Cadwa	20	5	14	1	74
Bath Street	20	6	12	2	73
Pirates	21	6	13	2	69
L.P.A.S.	21	3	18	0	58
Wav. Lab. 'B'	18	4	11	3	52
Pirates 'A'	21	1	20	0	44

SINCE the last "Digest" little has happened to raise an eyebrow with regard to the top of the table, and in fact the 7 leading teams are in the same positions and with proportionally the same points advantage over each other. In fact competition seemed dead from the walk-over conceded by Wavertree to the YMCA. Bohemians from then on felt that there was nothing to be gained by battling for the top, with the extra lead gained by YM, and obviously have made up their minds to second place again, but they will be going out for the Readman Cup to make some amends.

Reports have it that ill-feeling flared up again in the very recent clash between the Labour team and YMCA "A" at Wavertree with sets claimed and hot words during what can only have been an unpleasant evening for all concerned. Whether true or not (and I've no doubt that there's a lot of truth in the reports) on behalf of the entire division I'm saying that its time that the entire incident was allowed a decent burial. There is nothing to gain from constant niggling.

Things have hotted up considerably at the bottom of the table though. Pirates, with only one point from four matches have dropped like a stone, and now are in great danger of accompanying their "A" team to division 2, while Bath Street, aided vastly by another 10-0 walk-over (from Wavertree "B") and a new signing named J. Ogston, who seems an invaluable find, have collected 29 points in the same period and are now four points above Pirates

with a game in hand. In fact, five points now cover Beauclair, Cadwa, Bath Street and Pirates, with the first-named three all with matches in hand. So now the Pirates will have to achieve something like a miracle to get clear. Still, in this game nothing is certain excepting that all of them will be playing like mad for every single point. Even so, I can't see the Police, Wavertree "B" or Pirates "A" getting away.

Liverpool YMCA "A" are going to be worn to shadows by April 15th. They've about 10 matches to fit into that period, with the 'Closed' intervening, unless some of these *have* been played and the cards not sent in. Better them than me!

Bill Crafter (Cadwa) has had a better season by far than any to date and has had some notable wins, the most recent being over Ron Rumjahn, at 19 in the third. And Ogston of Bath Street has collected five wins from his 6 sets played to date. Gordon Birch still retains his 100— in League and Cup games, and from every angle this must be the best season he has ever had. Cadwa had a really good win over Wavertree Labour 'A' 6-4, but were helped by two sets conceded by the non-arrival of Bill Clayton, and Fraser Farquharson took two for the losers with victories over A. Mercer and the hard-to-beat Heyes. Beauclair earned a draw from Rafters with a double from Bobby Owen over Ron Rumjahn and Ferguson, both two straight, and in the same match Frank Murphy must have been particularly pleased with his victory over Peter Rumjahn, for Frank came from Rafters 'A' team to Beauclair only this year. Incidentally, I wonder when last a brother and sister last played in opposing teams in this division? For Myra Lovelady deputised for Peter Short in the Rafters side. And finally, Gordon Exell took two from Liverpool YM the hard way with wins over Ron and Roy Jones, in what must be the best of many great shows put up by him this year. I didn't see the match unfortunately but I'm told that all three players brought down the house with some tremendous play, and that there were so few sloppy shots that you could have counted them on one hand.

DIVISION 2A. By DAVID COHEN

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Bohemians 'A'	19	18	0	1	166
Waterloo Park	21	15	3	3	146
Colonsay	19	16	3	0	139
Linacre	19	16	2	1	135
L.P.A.S. 'A'	19	6	10	3	91
English Elec.	19	6	9	4	88
Crawfords 'A'	18	7	9	2	84
Sefton	18	8	8	2	78
L'pool Jewish	19	5	11	3	74
Linnets 'C'	19	4	11	4	73
Oakhill 'A'	19	3	14	2	56
Bath St. 'A'	20	3	15	2	56
Rafters 'A'	17	2	13	2	47

I WON'T devote much space to the league table for the top end is reasonably clear cut. Bohemians 'A' are going to go up, with W'loo Park, Colonsay and Linacre all still fighting it out between themselves to go up with them. W'loo Park and Colonsay both suffered set-backs to their hopes in going down to Bohemians by 8-2 and 10-0 respectively, while Linacre forced a draw, and much now depends on the final score of the match later this month between Linacre and Colonsay, with Waterloo as more than interested onlookers.

On behalf of everyone in the division (and his many friends in others) I offer the most sincere condolences to Bridson of Crawfords who is out of the game until next year because of a broken leg. Altho' I could have wished for a better topic than this, this should satisfy Tony Thatcher who complains Igood humouredly, but rigorously) that as far as I am concerned Crawfords just don't seem to exist. Happy now, Tony?

Bill Davies of Sefton tells me that their club has at last been caught up by the curse that seems to get every club at some time or another—

the difficulty of fielding a regular team each week. They have been helped out to a great extent by Eric Young who transferred from W'tree Labour, but unfortunately, one player doesn't make a team.

Hearty congratulations to Bill Leeming of lowly Linnets 'C' for he beat Allan Williams of Bohs. in one of Bohemians rarely dropped sets. I see by the scores that it was a very evenly matched set which went to three games, and was a merited victory for Leeming. Another of the promotion-seeking sides had all their work cut out, when W'll Park met lowly Rafters. Although at that stage Rafters had only 41 points and despite the fact that they eventually lost 2-8, they made eight of the sets go to three, all hard fought. Colonsay also won 8-2 over the Rafters side, Rohrer and McMullen taking one each from John Sanders and Brian Leeson respectively.

Oakhill 'A' earned 8 points from their match with Linnets 'C', so there is plenty of effort being made all round to get away from the tail end, as evidenced from the Rafters 6-4 win over some team called Jewish!

At about this time one is inclined to weigh up 'form' of the likely promotion contenders' chances of holding their ends up if they reach division 1, and somehow, there seems little doubt that Bohemians will keep well clear of the relegation zone, for theirs is a more than usually powerful side for this division of ours, and is stronger than that which was relegated last year. Of the other three, Waterloo Park did several seasons in division 1 a few years back, and I feel that any one of the three teams battling it out to go up with Bohs. will give a good account of themselves. An unusual position, but very comforting.

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DIVISION 2B. By JOHN O'SULLIVAN

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
University	22	17	1	4	168
Oakhill	21	16	2	3	148
Mossley Hill	19	13	3	2	130
Crawfords	21	12	6	3	121
Linnets 'A'	19	13	4	2	119
Trinity	21	10	7	4	117
St. Edward's	20	9	7	4	102
Wav. Lab. 'C'	20	9	9	2	100
L'pool YM 'B'	21	8	11	2	93
Pirates 'B'	21	7	11	3	92
Linnets 'B'	21	6	12	3	90
L'pool Jew. 'A'	20	3	15	2	70
Eng. Elec. 'A'	21	2	18	1	47
Bootle YM	21	1	20	0	43

WITH about five weeks of the season still to go there is no doubt about the ultimate winners of this division. University are simply romping away with the championship, and there is little or nothing that any other team can do about it, as I cannot see them being in any danger of being caught by anyone. When looking through their match cards one becomes accustomed to seeing wins of 10-0, and 9-1, with the occasional 8-2, so when you come across one showing them to have been beaten 4-6 your eyeballs tend to pop somewhat with the shock! This did happen against Linnets 'A' and even though Dick Heath wasn't playing, it was still a great win for Linnets, and this has been the only time that anyone has had the upper hand of the University. But you cannot take any chances with this Linnets side, for they've drawn with Oakhill, and beaten Mossley Hill and Crawfords in addition to the University, and had they not been bedevilled by night school (Peter Wass) and shift work (Keith Fitzsimmons) I fancy that they might have been nearer the top. Heath still goes marching on unbeaten, and I can't see anybody in this division even denting him.

Oakhill have been having a series of draws but have suffered very few defeats. Bill Harris has been a tower of strength and to beat him one would need 100% concentration and far more than the average amount of

luck. At the same time Mossley Hill went off the boil for a spell, and had a run of losses against teams against whom they had comfortable wins in the first half. Bob Hudson had a spell off form and although he is back to normal now it made a mess of his average. Derek Mahon, having changed his bat has hit a winning streak, and this could point to better times to come for him and the side.

I remember that in some earlier notes I said that St. Edward's always start off like a bomb and then fade as time went on. Well, just to prove me wrong, this season they seem to be coming back stronger than ever, with Fred Lawson and Basil Townsend having some grand wins. It's a great pity that they have difficulty in fielding their full team every week. And in the last "Digest" I said that unless Maurice Derbyshire were to change his name he would be lucky to get a mention in this column, but after his game against Jones of Liverpool YM in which he won the first game 33-31 and the third 22-20, I reckon that after all the training he must have put in for a marathon like effort that he's just about earned any mention he might get.

Liverpool Jewish seldom seem to get into the news, but their 9-1 win over English Electric should be recorded, for it was one of their very few wins of the season, and at the same time one feels that it was hard luck on the Electric, who are finding points just as hard to come by.

Although Jim Bowden and Bert Kewley don't manage to play in every match, the side is winning enough to keep well clear of the bottom of the table, but had these two played every week they might have been a little higher up.

There is quite a difference in standard between this division and the 1st, and I hope that whichever of our teams go up this year, they will be able to hold their own next season. I feel that they will put up a sufficiently good show to stay up myself, and hope that they have a good run in the top division.

DIVISION 3A. By JACK LAMBERT

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Colonsay 'A'	21	17	2	2	157
University 'A'	22	17	3	2	157
Bohs. 'B'	21	14	3	4	147
Stanley House	20	13	4	3	125
Crawfords 'B'	20	11	6	3	113
Wav. Lab. 'D'	18	9	7	2	97
Beauclair 'B'	22	6	12	4	95
Eng. Elec. 'B'	21	8	11	2	93
Pirates 'C'	18	9	7	2	91
Oakhill 'B'	22	4	15	3	80
Vagabonds	20	7	12	1	79
St. Mary's Coll.	21	5	11	5	77
L'pool Jew. 'B'	21	3	13	5	68
L.V.C.A.	19	1	7	1	51

PLENTY of exciting and interesting games in our last session. Our two pacemakers fought out a 5-5 draw with Les French and Harry Nelson for Colonsay, and John Dalton of Bohemians each winning his two sets. Both teams have also drawn with Crawfords, who are having an excellent season and in these two matches Mabel Francis, Stan Harvey and George Benson each earned a double, while Lampkin, Stirzaker and Murgatroyd were the big winners for their respective sides.

The game between our two other top teams finished in an excellent 7-3 win for Stanley House, with Alan Lyn and Ghiaghana their mainstays. Lyn is playing top class stuff again this year.

Colonsay and Stanley House meet in the final of the Hyde Cup and this trophy *must* now stay with our division this season, for both earned close, but well-merited 6-4 wins in their semi-finals.

It is a real pleasure for me to have to report on the above matches as the competition at the top has rarely been more interesting, and I unreservedly withdraw my previous statements about runaway champions.

Scores of 5-5 and 6-4 are numerous. St. Mary's held Stanley House to a draw, both Eddy and Delamere missing double wins at deuce in the third. Vagabonds, who are being ably guided through their first season by Doug Ridgway (ex-Rafters) won 6-4 against Crawfords, thanks to Storey and Hill, and Harvey won his usual two. Jim Charnock won two for Oakhill in their draw with Pirates and Barbara Topping and Ray Tyler notched a couple each

for Pirates. Alf Siddall (Wavertree) and Tom Gordon (English Electric) each won two sets for their respective sides in 7-3 losses to Bohemians and Vagabonds, and despite another Charnock double, Oakhill went down 4-6 to Liverpool Jewish who were inspired by that excellent stylist Davies. Incidentally, we all hope that "Captain" Taylor's broken ankle is mending. He was a casualty whilst playing for the first team.

DIVISION 3B. By BERT ARRIS

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Beauclair 'A'	20	18	1	1	153
Palmerston	20	20	0	0	147
Lussac	20	13	5	2	131
Colonsay 'B'	21	11	8	2	125
Orrell	20	11	4	5	122
British Rail	20	9	7	4	116
University 'B'	22	10	10	2	101
L.P.A.S. 'B'	21	6	13	2	93
Bath St. 'B'	20	9	10	1	90
Linnets 'D'	20	7	11	2	88
Bohs. 'C'	18	6	9	3	81
Coll. of Tech.	21	4	13	4	81
Pirates 'D'	19	3	16	0	48
Eng. Elec. 'C'	20	0	20	0	34

IT looks almost certain at the time of writing that despite a determined effort by Lussac that Beauclair "A" and Palmerston are going to occupy the first two places in the division. However, with five matches still to be played nothing can be called certain and the position is not yet cut and dried.

Colonsay have found this top trio just that little bit too good for them, but the introduction of Harry Nelson into the side has made them, in turn, too strong for those teams lower in the table.

The team most difficult to sum up is University "B". It is rare indeed when they are playing at their own premises to find all five members of the team in the playing arena at the same time, and even those present appear to have little or no interest in the game in progress (with the exception of that player playing). One must assume that being students they have other things on their minds. Nevertheless, against Palmerston, their No. 1 (C. Monahan) produced the best result of the current matches, beating Bob Mason in straight sets, 18 and 18.

Inconsistency has cost British Rails any say in the final placings, only Doug Christie and Dave Berry maintaining early season promise. Whilst Bath Street, after a disastrous start to affairs, have gone from strength to strength, the inclusion of Cyril Smith being in no small measure responsible for this. He gave yours truly the worst defeat I have ever suffered in the Liverpool League and *he's old enough to be my Dad!*

All things being equal we will be losing both Pirates "D" and English Electric "C" at the season's end, for only a miracle can save either from relegation. The Electric side had relegation in mind before a set of the current season had been played, or so I am told. And, in fact, did not want to play in this division from the outset.

Hoping to see you all at the "Closed"; till then, good table tennis and keep smiling.

DIVISION 4A. By TOM GORDON

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Wat. Pk. 'A'	22	19	1	2	185
Goodlass Wall	21	16	4	1	154
L'pool YM 'C'	19	15	1	3	150
Trinity 'A'	21	15	3	3	150
Crawfords 'C'	21	15	4	2	146
University 'C'	23	12	9	2	124
Orrell 'A'	21	11	8	2	116
Palmerston 'A'	21	7	12	2	91
St. Patrick's	21	7	12	2	85
Eng. Elec. 'D'	20	2	15	3	60
Knotty Ash	21	4	16	1	58
Linnets 'F'	20	4	15	1	57
Vagabonds 'A'	22	3	17	2	50
Coll. of Tech. 'A'	21	3	18	0	44

EARLY in the season Liverpool YM were giving Waterloo Park a close fight for the top spot. Since then, however, their fire seems to have cooled and the Waterloo squad seem to be running away with the championship. When the teams met for the second time I expected Park to win handsomely, but although they won it was only to the tune of 6-4. I feel that their rise of playing their weakest man at no. 1 was not entirely successful. Bravo,

Mr. Brown, for beating M. Abbott! Not a common occurrence this season. Having written that I must mention that Bill Spencer of Lowly Linnets has also beaten M. Abbott recently—this is a really splendid effort, wresting a solitary point from the Waterloo club.

Although the first place seems to be sewn up, there is plenty of doubt about the second position. Personally I feel that the YMCA will just about scrape it, but Goodlass Wall, Trinity "A" and Crawfords "C" are all playing well enough to prove me wrong. The decisive games should be YM v. Goodlass Wall and Trinity. The former game was due to be played on 10th February, but I cannot say whether it was, for I haven't had the card.

At the other end of the scale I have an ironic story to unfold. On 31st January College of Technology won their second game of the season, beating Vagabonds 7-3. This win raised the College from the lowest rung and firmly placed Vagabonds there. Two weeks later, Vagabonds gained a 10-0 walk-over from Palmerston, which sank the College to the bottom again. Despite this untimely loss of 10 points Palmerston are managing to keep well clear of the bottom. P. McIntosh seems to be playing consistently well, his most notable victory being in straight sets against W. Cornthwaite of Trinity.

University "C" are having their fair share of success this season. So far they have notched up four 'double' wins and they are sure to improve on this. Against the top five, however, they have had a bad time. Their best effort was to draw against Trinity, although they were undoubtedly assisted in this by the absence of Cornthwaite. The University anchor man seems to be R. S. Wood who has been a regular winner.

After the last "Digest" I was severely reprimanded by Val Ball of English Electric for suggesting that Liverpool YM had 'probably beaten' her team 10-0. In fact the match was postponed. I apologise, Val—but you had better gain at least one point from this game, or else . . .

DIVISION 4B. By MAX RATOFF

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Wyde	18	16	1	1	146
Colonsay 'C'	20	15	4	1	146
Waterloo	18	16	1	1	134
Mossley Hill 'A'	18	13	3	2	119
Edge Hill	18	12	6	0	113
St. Edward's 'A'	20	10	10	0	103
Linnets 'E'	18	9	7	2	98
Pirates 'E'	16	9	5	2	93
Bohs. 'D'	19	4	11	4	68
Stanley Hse. 'A'	17	4	11	2	66
Eng. Elec. 'E'	18	4	14	0	58
Rafters 'B'	16	2	12	2	49
Oakhill 'C'	18	2	15	1	47
Linnets 'G'	20	1	17	2	30

THERE is still quite a lot of doubt about which of our teams will earn promotion at the end of the season, for there are three "runners" well placed as we turn into the home stretch, in Wyde YC, Colonsay and Waterloo, with Mossley Hill as an outside chance. Wyde, with 146 points from 18 matches must have the best chance of finishing champions, for Colonsay, although having the same points have played two matches more, and I fancy that Waterloo (1134) should edge them out of second place, for they also have two games in hand. However, from what I've heard they are experiencing "clubroom" troubles and this might well unsettle them and cause the loss of just the few sets sufficient to cause Colonsay in. Whatever the outcome, nobody can deny that these are our three outstanding sides, and a close finish does add spice to the season. I can only hope that Waterloo can settle their clubroom difficulties for good and all soon.

Mossley Hill who led earlier on, have faded considerably, and there is only a very slender hope that they will earn a higher division for next season. And the results for Edge Hill this year have shown a vast increase over the performances of last season, and with some confidence can it be predicted that they will be going well for the top next time.

Linnets "G" seem firmly established at the nether end, but too much cannot be asked from the eighth team of any club, and there is no doubt that the players concerned will have learned a lot from their games. I doubt if we shall see many of these players in Linnets "G" next year, for somehow they seem to turn up in higher teams after a

summer of hard practice and of coaching. "Father" cracks the dog-whip quite a bit! But sometimes, with inevitable "cry-offs" and consequent depletion of playing strength, one wonders at the wisdom of so many teams? Oakhill seem doomed to be the other tail-enders, but looking at both of these two teams one cannot doubt the enthusiasm of their members. For, from the comments such as "J.W. is fab" written on Oakhill's cards, they are far from dismayed.

Despite my comments of last month there are a number of teams who seem to want to rival Stanley House's record for the number of individual walk-overs is appalling.

Rafters "B" are still not quite caught up with outstanding matches but have done a lot in that direction and when on level terms may be one or two places higher up. But I doubt them rising more than two spots. Again I rather fancy we'll see them much higher next year.

I hope to find a number of players from this division appearing in the "Closed" at the end of the month. There's one thing about the Restricted singles—you won't get clobbered by some 1st division wallah, and everyone has a chance at least, so may be someone from this division might yet win that event! I hope so anyway. See you there.

WOMEN'S DIVISION

By JUDY CRAFTER

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Crawfords	16	15	1	0	137
Rafters	15	13	1	1	130
Cadwa	16	13	2	1	125
Bibbys	15	2	3	0	107
Sandown	17	10	6	1	106
Linnets	17	10	7	0	95
Bibbys 'A'	16	5	10	1	68
Rafters 'A'	16	3	11	2	54
Pirates	13	3	8	2	46
Linnets 'A'	14	3	11	0	28
Goodlass Wall	17	2	15	0	20
Linnets 'B'	15	0	15	0	12

Note—Lussac (Resigned)

—Record expunged.

IT seems no time since I was writing my last notes for the magazine and I was horrified to learn that another lot were wanted quite so soon, for so many matches in the

division are easily predictable. Yet when you come down to it, there are a good few isolated incidents you can pick out. Such as the performances of the young Lyn Gordon from Bibby's who has shaken a number of players this year and has beaten several well-known girls. Recently she has added Elizabeth Loughrey to her list of victims as well as Lily Wynne, of Sandown, and her record this year has been so imposing that I reckon we shall all have our work cut out against her in a year or two. Another girl who should do well in another year or two is Jenny Morris of Linnets who has a year still to go as a Junior, and I'll be surprised if the youngest of all, Janet Rumjahn, doesn't live up to the family tradition. In fact there are a greater number of young players in the division now than for a long time. Linnet's Eileen Harrison, another girl with a couple of years Junior play still to come, had a good win for their "B" team, beating Pat Hewitson (Cadwa) the sole point for her team. It is a pity that there are not two divisions as there was some time ago so that these (and others) would not get match practice more of their own (present) standard.

Pirates seem to have difficulty at times in fielding a team but I hope that they will manage to complete their fixtures all right, for they can put out a fairly strong side when at full strength, and can give the best a hard fight. Maureen King has had

a tough time for she has never had the strongest team out with her and it must be a little disheartening, but she has given a good account of herself in nearly every match. Cadwa have had some close results with a draw v. Rafter's and a 4-6 loss to Bibby's. Eileen Mansell was absent for Rafter's but deputy Elizabeth Loughrey won 1 of her two sets, also the doubles, so did her side proud. Another of the close matches was Sandown's 6-4 win over Linnets who had Anne Marsden in for Angela Parker. Linnets' Marie Lupton won her two, and together with Isla Russell the usual doubles. They've still to be defeated as a pair. Bibby's had another 6-4 win over Sandown, with Reggie Royle and Barbara Cain getting two sets each plus the doubles.

I wish that we could get a few more ladies' teams into the League and it might help towards the formation of another division if those who played tennis matches at clubs with the necessary facilities, suggested that these clubs entered teams next season. There must be a lot of such clubs who would enjoy playing throughout the winter as a table tennis team who have possibly not heard of League play. So if the girls were to spread the gospel this summer we may yet re-build the strength of women's play. It is worth a try anyway.

See you all at the "Closed" I hope.

Match of the Month

By JOHN O'SULLIVAN

COLONSAY "A"

V. PALMERSTON

A GAIN I decided upon a cup match as a basis for this article, mainly because it was a clash between divisions, as well as of clubs. And again I was delighted to find that on my arrival there were already 24 people present . . . 14 spectators in addition to the teams, one of the onlookers being the illustrious "Dunbar" alias Jack Pattison, to whom obeisance was dutifully made before seating myself.

A couple of the Palmerston players were once members of my own club and I had a fair idea of their capabilities. At least I thought I had, but after watching Dave Winnall in

action against Ron Evans (Colonsay) I decided that either he had completely altered his game or that he had experienced an off-night! The Dave that I remembered had a pretty powerful attack on either wing, fore-hand and back-hand coming alike to him, with his fore-hand, being left-handed, was a killer. But on this occasion such fore-hands as did go on to the table were lacking in power and when he did attempt a kill he invariably netted the shot. I think that credit for this should go to Evans, though, whose chopping was most consistent, managing to impart plenty of backspin, which

gave Winnall more than a little trouble. I don't remember seeing Evans hit one powerful shot in the entire set, but he was accurate enough in defence to take the set in the 3rd.

Alexander the Great (Barry of that ilk) had a very useful win over Arthur Lamkin of Colonsay. Having lost the opening game 26-28 he was 20-17 down in the second when he rallied to win 24-22 and won the 3rd with little difficulty 21-14.

Now if you have seen Barry Alexander play table tennis you will realise that his style is difficult to describe in words, but I think it fair to put it that he resembles a cross between Pavlova and a Centurian tank! He jumps like Pavlova and lands like a tank! He hits on both wings like a policeman on traffic duty, and if his shots hit the table his opponent has little chance, for he has no idea where they are going, or indeed whence they came, and C. Humphries did well to beat

him 21-10, again in the 3rd. I was making the tea while Winnall beat Humphries 23-21, 23-21, but the score suggests that this might have gone the other way quite readily.

I was a little disappointed with the set between Les French and Palmerston's Bob Mason, to which I had looked forward, for after all, these were the two No. 1's. French seems to be one of the politest players I have seen and he had little fire in his game this time, and Mason works hard to keep playing with a wicked backhand, which though erratic, it proved too much for French.

Colonsay eventually came out winners at 6-4 and although I don't rate this as one of the best matches I've seen, it kept interest alive in that it did have the element of uncertainty, and nobody seemed to want to leave before the end, which is a most surprising thing to say about any table tennis match these days.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Most of which I have to write is repetition but must be repeated if we are to persevere with the four man team. Why four instead of five—there must be an advantage somewhere as most of the country play less than five. This includes our own ladies (4) and representatives (3) teams, so why are we one of the odd Leagues out?

Let us name the disadvantages—big clubs would have to find more nights or lose players—the latter would turn into an advantage as players would turn to other clubs instead of the strength of the League being centred in a few clubs. I don't consider the lack of room or doubles a valid excuse as there should be enough room for doubles in any table tennis room.

The advantages — each player would have three games instead of two, a 50% increase in games and a 100% increase in doubles with the added match practice should improve our individual table tennis all round.

Three games in a night—far less hanging around — this could mean playing to the card and not to the Captain's tactical call, as you may find a player having to play three on the run.

Four is a nice number for a car, but more important, four is a better number for esprit-de-corps. If you let your three pals down, not only do your opponents miss a game as at present but your team-mate does as well, not to mention your side losing three games, apart from the incentive to turn up, there is also the fact—with a 20% decrease in team strength absenteeism should decrease accordingly.

Will Club Committees please give the matter some thought as my club will be contacting all Secretaries regarding this and straight divisions.

Yours faithfully,

JACK LAMBERT
(English Electric T.T.C.).

3, Glenside,
Liverpool 18.

Dear Sir,

I have played table tennis in Liverpool for many years but never before this season have I felt moved to write to you complaining about the conduct of players. So far this season I have played in 31 League and Cup matches in this League and the L.B.H. League and only in 1 of these games were all ten players present when the first game went on, and in no single case have all ten been present when the last game was started! In fact several times the only people present during the 10th set have been the two players and the umpire.

In the majority of cases the first words spoken by the two Captains on the arrival of the visitors have been "do you mind if our number so-and-so goes on early—he wants to get away"? The limit was surely reached just before Christmas when, on being offered the use of the table for a practice before the match the visiting Captain thanked the home Captain very much but said he would rather start the match right away as the *whole team wanted to get away early!*

Although ours is not a team game in the true sense of the word, surely a little team spirit would improve not only our enjoyment of the game, but also probably our performance.

Obviously there are occasions when for personal reasons a player may have to arrive late or to leave early, but I feel it is a bad thing for the game and the League when players, some of them very experienced and should be setting a better example, make a regular thing of arriving late and going early. Pull your socks up, lads! Surely you can spare three hours per week of your valuable time to making every fixture a match between two *teams*, not just ten games of table tennis between selfish people who have no interest in anything but their own averages.

Yours faithfully,

ERNEST W. STURGESS

(Lussac T.T.C., Div. 3B).

34 Mirfield Street,
Fairfield,
Liverpool 6

Dear Sir,

Continuing the current controversial topic of "individual thrashings" why is it that when one reads or hears of a game where 'A' beat 'B' by 21-0 or 21-1 it is automatically assumed that 'A' *inflicted* this defeat? 9 times out of 10 this is *not* the case. The fault lies with the Team or Team Captain (even the Sec.) who includes in a team (usually for only 2 or 3 matches as a reserve) a player who is far too weak for the strength and playing ability of the opposition and should know this. It is not just so humiliating for the losing one but also for the person who is at the other end of the table, unable to get a game.

My worst experience of this was during season '62-'63 against L'pool Pirates (and the defunct Balfour Club). I had to stand at one end of the table whilst my 'opponent' (name withheld) served 4 out of 5 services 'off'—(and once the whole (5). He could barely return a simple service and the only 2 points he 'earned' were a net on a return of service and an edge. I didn't do a thing and so 'won' 21-1, 21-1. He couldn't play and was, to my mind, to be just a name on the score card to fill an otherwise empty space. His "team-mates" treated it as a BIG joke, which it wasn't by the way. Then, my only 21-0 victory to date (same season, but Ladies' division) was purely an accident. What is one to do when all you do is put the ball back, don't *try* to win and end up doing so by a fantastic margin? For the record I have lost games by the scores 2, 3 and 5 myself.

After reading Jack Lambert's letter and in conjunction with the above—here again is all the more reason for having 2 Women's Divs. The Newcomers, and there are many this season, are not getting a chance. Several of which I've seen, have a good idea about the game, but need a season or two in a *division* of their own, present ability to build up more strength and confidence. There are in fact enough women playing in this League to form two *full* divisions, so it makes you wonder sometimes if the interest is really there. Some

women are probably playing in the Mixed divisions because their own club have not enough players for a Ladies' team. This being so, is partly understandable, for if they were interested enough would they not be playing in the Women's division for another club? Perhaps they've overlooked to consider this. For example out of Crawfords Ladies 3 (i.e. 50%) are members of another Club.

I think the answer (or part of it) must be to form 2 divisions next season, however small, before the remaining division dwindles any more.

Yours hopefully,

MABEL FRANCIS
(Crawfords T.T.C.).

Dear Sir,

In reply to Jack Lambert (January issue) when he urges a return to straight divisions. If examined carefully, his arguments are particularly valueless.

"The Committee can promote at their discretion, etc." Certainly, they HAVE this power, but it is obvious that this must be used with great care, and then *only* if vacancies exist already in higher divisions. For who can say that the top team of the 4th division is stronger than the 3rd team of the 3rd division, or even than the teams between? That 4th division team may lose several players during the close season. Does anyone know exactly, in July, who is going to play *for certain* for any club or team? So the use of the powers entrusted to the Committee must be used only in a glaring case.

Again, when a new club joins the League, nobody knows . . . nobody can possibly know, how strong their teams are, so at least one season must pass before judgment can be passed. So these discretionary powers are valueless in their cases.

The illustration given of his six girls, who started two seasons ago, and who lost interest because they got hammered might be interesting, but is a somewhat stupid argument in favour of "straight divisions" for they formed a Women's team, and there was only one Women's division, so whether the divisions were straight, pyramid, square, sideways,

or in any other form, the same result would have been obtained — they would have played in the only division, and you cannot form one division any other way than it stands. The girls would still have got hammered! So why drag that up?

The present twin-stream (not pyramid) arrangement of divisions does get the teams sorted into strong, medium and weak far more quickly than the straight variety. There can be no two opinions on that. But since it has been in force for only two years the process has only just been started. In a further couple of years the process will have had time to sort them out still further with divisions becoming more equal. And the longer it goes on, the quicker will be the sifting out. But there will inevitably be teams in the lowest divisions who are far stronger than their opponents. When Wyde Y.C., Waterloo and Goodlass Walls came in this year did anyone know their strength in relation to teams already in membership? When Waterloo Park 'A' dropped out of the League a short while ago they were very weak, yet the same players now top their division. Who could know in advance? In fact it is new teams entirely who are filling all the high places of both 4th divisions, and if Jack Lambert knew that these were so much stronger than 4th division standard, nobody else did. So, how does one legislate against that? It's impossible.

Instead of bleating about the arrangements of the divisions, why not wait until next season when his teams will be among others of their own standard, for from what I have heard, the majority of clubs prefer the present set-up, knowing as they do that it will sort out the teams into relative strengths, both upwards and downwards far more quickly and efficiently than would any return to straight divisions, with widespread frustration at the inordinate delay in reaching the higher divisions.

In 8 years we have had several changes in arrangement of divisions. Now that we have a system which works, and does its job efficiently, let us leave well alone and not start all over again.

Yours faithfully,

J. R. GREEN
(Sinnets).

The Four-a-Side Team

I HAVE a letter from Jack Lambert, a copy of which has apparently been sent to every Club Secretary, urging their support for a change to the four-a-side system, and a change of League structure. Everyone is asked to study these matters before the A.G.M., so I feel that the other side of the case might be studied at the same time.

First of all, the question of the suitability of clubrooms should be taken into account. There are a number of clubrooms currently used, which, although big enough for singles play, are definitely not wide enough to allow for doubles, especially among the players of the first and some second division teams, who do play the game at a faster speed. In the Lancashire League it is laid down that the unrestricted playing area must be no less than 30 feet by 18 feet. HOW MANY OF OUR CLUBROOMS would be judged too small on this basis? And where do the clubs concerned find adequate accomodation. Is the idea of deliberately disband these clubs?

Next, even Jack himself says that clubs would have to find more match nights or lose players! But he then makes the ingenious suggestion that this would be a good thing!! Players would be forced to leave their present club (where it seems they are quite happy) and to join somewhere else, to "spread the strength" of the League.

Well, in a long career I have heard of some forms of enrolling players, but this is the first time that I have ever seen it in print that it would be a good idea to bust up a club so that the players can be grabbed by other clubs! It really is quite some thought.

Has it not yet dawned on Jack and his fellow-thinkers that you will NEVER get the majority of people to stay on after they have played, whether they play twice or three times. Just as soon as they are through, they want to leave, and you're not going to stop them leaving before the end of a match by bribing them with an extra game! The vast majority don't seem interested in any sets but their own.

My own club has eleven teams at present. Under the 4 man team system, to accommodate the same players we would need around 14 teams. Luckily, with two tables, we could manage, but there are many clubs who couldn't. And, while it is easy for Jack to look with complete equanimity on players leaving one club to go to another, may I remind him, and others, that clubs need members to keep going in many cases. They are not spoon-fed, as are works clubs, etc., where everything is laid on for them, irrespective of size of membership.

Briefly, on the subject of the "straight divisions". I know that when the entire team strength of any club is down at the bottom of the (respective) tables, it is difficult to approve the existing system, whatever it may be, but really the present set up has proved more efficient than was the case under the "straight" one. There has ALWAYS been inequality in the divisions, one-horse races for divisional championships, etc., and NO system will alter it, especially in the higher divisions.

That the Committee can 'jump' a team if desired depends entirely on whether or not there is a vacancy higher up. Also, no team should be put originally into any division than the lowest, for no-one can assess their strength until they have actually played in the League.

In addition, while I am really sorry that his "C" team is truly disheartened because they are at the bottom, surely it is obvious that some team MUST be bottom, and I cannot envisage that any team is going to hang out the flag because they are bottom.

I humbly suggest that it is better to leave the League structure as it is and let the sifting process carry on for another few seasons, getting the stronger sides up and the weaker down far more quickly than any "straight division" process. ONLY such a "sifting" will sort them out efficiently.

JAMES R. GREEN,
(Hon. Sec. Linnets and Aigburth).