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TABLE **DIGEST** TENNIS

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Vol. XVII

NOVEMBER, 1966

No. 1

Editorial

THIS is the first time I have written to you via the Editorial although my name has cropped up in other parts of the "Digest" from time to time. That I do so now is due to the resignation of Monty after three years in the chair. It is no easy job to follow people of the calibre of Jack Pattison, Eric Caird and Monty, but with the aid of John O'Sullivan and Peter Rix, I hope to manage to get your copy of the magazine into your hands with full pages—never an easy job.

Our task will be made much more simple if we have help from players in every division. If you have suggestions or moans to air, put them into letters or articles and let us have them. If you hear snippets of information concerning the doings of clubs in your division, let your divisional correspondent know. In this job every little helps.

It helps also in the distribution of the "Digest" if we know to whom it has to be delivered! This season there are more than 40 registration forms submitted without either name or address completed on the lower portion. How these members hope to get their copies is not clear, but doubtless we shall hear their complaints re non-delivery during the season.

Later in these pages you will find an article by George Yates regarding the official news-sheet, "TABLE TENNIS NEWS". From this you can learn about our game throughout the country and it is 10/- well spent. Without readers the paper cannot survive, nor can we know what goes on outside Liverpool, so get your orders in NOW.

A welcome to the League to new clubs C. F. Mott, Hilltop, Maghull B.L., Panto and St. Elizabeth's. May they all be embarking on a long and illustrious League career. At the same time everyone will deplore the demise of Oakhill, one of our longest serving clubs, who entered the League in 1932 under the name of Fairfield and have been one of our stalwarts ever since. This leaves us with only Bohemians and Liverpool YMCA as links with pre-war days.

Read Phillip Reid's article "Fault" in this issue, concerning the systematic avoidance of the service rule. This can only lead to a general tightening up of umpiring and "faulting" of foul services. So, examine your own service and eliminate any offences while there is yet time. Then, when umpiring, you can fault others with a clear conscience to the ultimate benefit of the game in general. You have been warned!

Finally, my tribute to Monty, who has served on the magazine for 16 years, and is now in his 25th successive season on the Committee, for his work over the past three years as Editor. He did a good job for which the League generally owe him hearty thanks. He will undoubtedly be missed, but no doubt he will still be doing many odd jobs for the magazine yet.

Selecting the Players !

ONCE again the Committee decided that the three best players available shall form our 1st Men's and 1st Ladies' teams, and that all other teams shall be, to some extent, experimental, in that a chance will be given to a number of players who might not be the best, but who are young enough to be helped by playing in a game or two, to produce future Liverpool team players.

Following this course, in the knowledge that we shall need another 1st team player next year, when Roy Jones goes to New Zealand, Trevor Owen was selected to play in the first match v. Mid-Cheshire, together with Roy Jones and Gordon Birch. Unfortunately, Trevor showed that he is still a long way from the player required, and managed to collect only one game from his three. The team won 8-2 with Roy and Gordon each winning three. Then the team went to Bolton, where they were once again overwhelmed, although this time we got two (from Gordon and Roy) and the signs are that we are catching Bolton slowly but surely.

Our "A" team of Eddie Clein (Bohs.) Ian Burrows (Linnets) and Roy Smith (Wav. Lab.) to the amazement of those Chester people present, beat Chester "A" by 8-1 with one set "void". Ian and Roy each won three together with the doubles, and Eddie won 1, lost 1, and had one declared void. The cause for surprise was the wide margin of the defeat of a very strong Chester side.

The girls won against Wirral 6-4, despite an "off" night by Maureen Coe, who lost two, both Mabel Francis and Joyce Randall winning two. For Wirral, Barbara Cain had a ball, winning her three sets. It's a pity that Maureen was off on that evening, for otherwise we would have had a memorable set between them.

There were exhaustive trials held for the Ladies "A", Youth and Junior teams. The first being at L.P.A.S. clubroom and the other two at the Colonsay clubroom. I cannot feel certain, for obvious reasons, that we have the best team in either event, but I AM certain that we have the best of those turning up! And no player should complain if excluded after ignoring the request to come along, especially in cases where we are left, to play for their club teams. However, the Ladies "A" got under way with a 4-6 defeat by Oldham in which Joyce Randall and Myra Lovelady each got two, and Margaret Collins went to three each time, yet lost. We hope for better things to come.

The Youth team of Peter Wass, Allan Dean, and David Watson, got going to put it across Wigan by 8 sets to 2, with Dean and Watson each gaining two, and Peter Wass three. We have hopes here of doing rather better than last season, but we'll have to wait and see. And the Juniors, with Phil Metcalf outstanding, lost 3-7 at Stockport. The remainder of the team was Janet Rumjahn (aged nearly 15), and two 12-year olds, in Michael Jones and Allan Metcalf. It is more than usually experimental, but with our present shortage of juniors, it is hopeless to field a junior side without experiment.

On November 4th, we have every team out at the same time, three at home and three away. We hope for wins both from the Wilmott Cup and Carter Cup, but the report of these games must wait for our next issue.

Finally, my thanks to the people who are acting as non-playing Captains for our teams: Peter Rumjahn, John O'Sullivan, Elizabeth Loughrey, and Allan Heagne. Doubly so to Brian Leeson, who takes on both the Youth and Junior sides.

THE PENALTY MUST BE IMPHED

AT the Annual General Meeting the clubs represented carried a rule amendment, proposed by the Committee, which instructed the Committee automatically to expel one team from any club conceding three walk-overs during the season (Rule 20).

Club Secretaries and Team Captains should keep this new rule well in mind. There is no point in coming to the Committee with an excuse, however well-founded, for the penalty is automatic. It is no defence to say that you contacted your opponents beforehand and conceded the match, for it is still a 10-0 walk-over, and the Committee are obliged to impose the penalty as stated. In this case the Committee have no discretionary powers.

However, such rules made at the A.G.M. and penalties imposed by the Committee are only a last resort in our efforts to cut out teams playing short or just not turning up.

The *real* remedy is in the hands of Club Secretaries and Team Captains. A little extra thought and effort from each of these people could reduce drastically the enormous number of such offences and improve the enjoyment of everyone of their season's table tennis.

THE LATE ARRIVAL PROBLEM

The other unsolved problem of players turning up late for matches has already reared its ugly head at a very early stage of the season. This is another matter which is permanently with us. Most people have other commitments outside table tennis, and we all (or nearly all) have to earn our livings, and sometimes table tennis must take second place even in the life of the most ardent fan. But, despite these, and other reasons before table tennis, there is neither reason nor excuse for players turning up late without giving prior notice (except in a very few very exceptional cases).

To wander into a match as so many do, at 8-15 or 8-45 (or later) with no excuse or apology given . . . but the attitude of "Well, I'm here now — when am I on? — I want to get away early!" is just plain bad manners and should be acknowledged as such by the opposing Captain. *The sets of these offenders should be claimed at 8 p.m. if no prior warning has been given.*

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“ FAULT ! ”

—By Phillip Reid

ARE we going to hear this cry this season? If the “East of England” at Skegness is anything to go on, I feel sure there could be some unpleasantness this season. The new service rule seems to have cleared the way for all kinds of weird and wonderful “aces”. Some games were won on the service, and precious little else!

I feel that the service should carry some advantage with it, but not to the extent as at present. Players were asking for a change of Umpire—something I don't recall seeing before. But at all events it seems to have made no difference, for I can't recall anyone being faulted for foul serving.

But umpiring carries enough problems without having to have others standing by in case players don't happen to like the one they've got! The serves which seem to cause the most concern are those where the player stoops down and the ball suddenly appears above the table. This service I think **MUST** be a fault, for the simple reason—the Umpire cannot possibly see the ball clearly at the exact moment it leaves the server's hand. Knotty Point No. 9 clears up this particular matter:

“It is the responsibility of the server to serve so that the correct-

ness of his service can be checked by the Umpire. If the server is serving so that the Umpire's view is obstructed, the Umpire shall warn him, and, on any subsequent occasion on which his view is obstructed, and he may have doubt about the correctness of the service, the Umpire shall call a fault”.

Even so, it seems that Umpires are not keen to fault players for this particular breach of the laws of the game. Or is it that this is not so well-known as some of the others? Whatever the reason, something is going to be done if the game is not to degenerate into “Ace” services and quick hits!

The advent of sandwich rubber seems to have produced much faster play for obvious reasons, and if we are going to have the game reduced to serves, loops and kills, with no rallies, who will come and watch? All right! Few enough watch now—we can hardly afford to have the numbers cut even further!

What then is the solution? A lot of people would like to know the answer to that one, but if you think *you* know a good way of wording the service rule, let the Editor know, for he would like to hear from you.

Off with the Old—On with the News

IN a constantly changing world little, if anything, remains quite the same for long and so, if not by evolution, the former news magazine **TABLE TENNIS** is superseded by **TABLE TENNIS NEWS**.

No longer in the make-up of a gloomy magazine with news—official and otherwise, be disseminated—but in the form of a tabloid newspaper. A radical change, indeed. In such guise the change could well be ill-received at first, but financial circumstances dictate the policy from now on. The financial stability of the **E.T.T.A.** was severely rocked by the European Championships, which were a far more costly promotion than one could anticipate, due to a woeful lack of spectator support.

Consequently, if a national news journal was to be published, it would have to be on a less glamorous line than of old, the more so with the **E.T.T.A.** promoting the venture.

As the newly appointed Editor I take this opportunity of bringing the new publication to your notice, for without your support its life span will be subject to the same limitations as its predecessor.

A full season's subscription for eight issues will cost 10/-, including postage to your address, so if you are of a mind to really push the boat out, then send off your subscription to the Editor, **Table Tennis Digest**, right away.

Example in Club spirit

TWO young men stood on the steps of the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, one afternoon and talked about joining a table tennis club. They thought of this and that without being able to reach a decision, until suddenly one of them exclaimed—"Why not form our own club?"

Those two young men, now somewhat bulkier, were Albert (Monty) Montgomery and Jack McCaig, and out of that conversation was born the Rafter's Table Tennis Club.

With an enthusiasm that has become almost the club's motto, the pair gathered round them others interested in the plan, and on Sept. 4th, 1945, Rafter's was formed with a membership of 16.

Of that 16,—Monty, Jack McCaig, Eric Caird, Ron McMullen, Bob McCaig, Molly McCaig, Peter McCaig, Dorothy and Marjorie Brewster, Alf Simpson, Cliff and Marty Swindells, Ted Jones and Harold Haskayne and the May twins, Pinky and Bluey—five are still members, the first four, and Pinky May (now Mrs. L. Rumjahn).

The club took its name from its first headquarters (it has had three others in its lifetime)—a raftered room over a garage in Roscoe St. and it's a curious coincidence that Eric Caird and Jack McCaig, who held the offices of Chairman and Secretary respectively, are once again holding those offices 21 years later.

It is probable that none of the original members dreamed when the club was founded just what an impact the new Rafter's was to make upon the Liverpool League. It began its life quietly enough, but with the recruitment of the Rumjahn family—Dr. Rumjahn, Peter, Ted and Ron the following season, it soon began to make its presence felt on the table tennis table.

Their rivalry with the former Balfour club was for many years one of the most zestful features of the League, and never was that keener than during the years 1954 to 1957, when the two clubs three times contested the final of the Readman Cup in successive seasons. Each time the teams finished level of sets and it was only by the odd game that the destiny of the Cup was settled—the first two occasions in favour of Balfour, and the third time in Rafter's favour.

The two clubs also set up a record by sharing the championship of the League in 1953-4 season after what was probably the most exciting finish the League has ever known. Rafter's needed to win the last match of the season by 7-3, against their rivals. They led 6-3 with Ron Rumjahn having to beat Bill Wong in the final set to clinch the issue. He failed, due to a fine recovery by Wong who, 17-20 down in the third, took the next three points and went on to win 26-24.

But while Rafter's has been notable on the table, they have been noted also for their fine club spirit. It was a spirit engendered by its original members, and it has permeated the club ever since. It would be foolish to pretend that during its 21 years of life there have not been differences of opinion, but the good of the club has always been put first so that in general the problems that have arisen have been amicably ironed out.

And that same club spirit has created a strong social side to the club, a fact which was manifest at the dinner held at the Park Hotel, Netherton, on October 1st, to celebrate the 21st anniversary, and was attended by 47 past and present members. From it went an autographed menu card to Mrs. Clint Casselman (formerly Bluey May) now in Canada. While the club maintains that spirit, it will continue to flourish.

Around the Divisions

DIVISION 1.

By JIM GREEN

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
L'pool YMCA	7	7	0	0	63
Wav. Labour	6	6	0	0	53
Bohemians	5	5	0	0	48
Linnets	6	4	2	0	43
Rafters	6	4	0	2	40
Beauclair	6	4	1	1	37
Bath St.	6	3	3	0	29
Wav. Lab. 'A'	6	1	4	1	20
L'pool YM 'A'	6	1	5	0	18
University	6	2	4	0	18
Bohs. 'A'	6	2	4	0	17
Cadwa	5	0	5	0	11
Linacre	5	0	5	0	8
Colonsay	6	0	6	0	5

Put a trifle on BOHS.!

Only five weeks matches have been played as I write, but even this short period has enabled the YMCA, Bohemians and Wavertree Labour to draw way out ahead, and there is no doubt in anyone's mind that any championship hopes are a matter which concerns only those three sides, and again, very few believe that Wavertree have more than an outside hope of coming top, even though their results against the other two may have a great bearing on the eventual championship positions. — Then comes a small band of three, Rafters, Linnets and Beauclair, to complete the "stronger" element of the division. Actually, I reckon that this will be Bohemians year by a shade, for they remain as strong as ever, while the YM team (despite the return of Dave Butterworth) seems to be flagging a little. These are very early days though, and both teams have all of their tougher games at the end of the season, so it depends entirely on the results from those really. The Labour team should again come third, and this season I forecast fourth place to Linnets, who have been improving steadily over the past few years.

There is only one other team seemingly out of the relegation zone. Bath Street, strongly reinforced by the return of Arthur Taylor, and with stout aid from John Ogsten, will not have last season's struggles again this time.

All of the other eight could finish up among the four sides to be relegated. Linacre and Colonsay don't

seem to have any chance of avoiding the drop even at this early stage. Linacre still follow their old custom of dropping out in turn each week to allow everyone to get equal number of matches, and in this sphere it is imperative to field your strongest available side every week if you want to survive. And Colonsay made the surprising decision to drop two of last year's promotion-gaining team (Brian Leeson and John Sanders) and to bring up Les French and Harry Nelson from the third division. Neither has won a set in the first five matches, so they may be regretting their choice, but in either case I can't see them leaving the relegation zone, especially with such a lee-way to make up as they have got. On paper, Bohemians 'A' have the best chance of pulling clear together with the YMCA 'A', for they should be capable of dealing fairly drastically with the other teams in the lower bracket, but you can (at the moment at any rate) perm any four from five to the 2nd division next year.

One hears a lot of speculation regarding the inclusion of Linacre, which seems to puzzle most of our players, for the general opinion is that Mossley Hill are so much the stronger side that they would have been some places higher in the table even now, but it seems to me to be useless to ponder so deeply when the decision has been made and matches started. Why worry when it can't be altered? The thing remaining now is whether one or two teams from each 2nd division should be promoted. I lean towards the present system, but those who want only one from each should put down a rule amendment for the A.G.M.

There have been fewer changes from club to club this year, and little done to affect relative strengths of our teams, apart from Bath Street, so matches are a shade more predictable this season. Individually only one result stands right out—Brian Carters win over Ron Rumjahn in the first week, which was a fine performance. The next few matches should give more shock results when teams of more equal strength are in action against each other, and these are always welcome.

DIVISION 2A.

— By EDDIE CAMERON

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Eng. Electric	6	6	0	0	53
Waterloo Park	6	5	0	1	42
Colonsay 'A'	6	5	1	0	38
L'pool Jewish	6	3	3	0	32
Rafters 'A'	6	2	3	1	31
Linnet 'C'	6	2	2	2	30
Crawfords 'A'	5	2	3	0	28
Bohs. 'B'	6	2	3	0	27
Wav. Lab. 'B'	5	2	2	1	25
Lussac	6	0	4	2	21
LPAS 'A'	6	1	4	1	21
University 'A'	4	2	1	1	17
Pirates 'A'	6	1	5	0	17
Sefton Gen.	4	1	3	0	8

A Strange Looking Division

Division 2A takes on more of a new look than usual this season, with no fewer than six new teams, four promoted from Division 3 and two joining us from Division 1. These teams will now be enjoying the splendid spirit of the second division which is, to our mind, the ideal state of table tennis in Liverpool. Keen and competitive, but not the semi-professionalism of Division 1. The division which provides high quality table tennis for the majority who cannot afford the time to practise to the higher standards of the top division. Very often it is difficult to find two teams who really want to go up, and in fact it is possible that "one only promoted" would find favour within our division.

We were sorry to lose our old friends the faithful Linacre side, which has been a pillar of our division for so long, and whilst we wish them luck in their very unexpected venture into the 1st division there will be a welcome homecoming should they

find the higher sphere a little too tough. Pirates 'A' and Wav. Labour 'B' were expected to be forces to be reckoned with this year, but club problems have recast the sides, and neither looks like taking a short cut back. Nor can I think that the promoted teams will go further this season, and I give you the promotion forecast of English Electric and Waterloo Park.

Jack Lambert has certainly been in the transfer market, and Fred Pheysey leads a new-look quintet with a decided Anfield flavour with Ted Barnes and Bill Bintley. They are well supported by Bert Kewley (ex YMCA) and Cyril Bradshaw, whose nomadic wanderings brings him from Beauclair. On the other hand Waterloo Park rely on their old faithfuls, led by Allan Reid, with his younger brother bursting forth from the reserves and showing signs of equalling the brilliance of his brother. They provide the youthful exuberance to balance the experience of Spencer, Nelson and Yeoman. This team looks good enough for promotion, but not good enough to pip English Electric for the championship.

Picking the relegation candidates is a much more risky business. It could be said that we have no outstanding candidates, and that as usual we shall have a cat-and-dog fight on our hands. Under such circumstances it is extra important that all clubs fulfil their fixtures, for one single walk-over can seal the fate of a less fortunate neighbour. However, if I must select a pair I choose Bohemians 'B' and Lussac, and if by so choosing I give them an extra incentive to prove me wrong, I shall be delighted.

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DIVISION 2B.

—By JOHN O'SULLIVAN

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Linnets 'A'	5	5	0	0	42
Mossley Hill	5	5	0	0	41
Pirates	6	3	2	1	33
Palmerston	6	1	1	4	31
Linnets 'B'	5	2	1	2	31
L.P.A.S.	5	3	2	0	30
Trinity	5	3	1	1	29
L'pool YM 'B'	6	3	3	0	28
Crawfords	5	2	1	2	27
Beauclair 'A'	6	1	4	1	24
St. Edward's	5	0	3	2	19
L'pool Jew. 'A'	5	0	4	1	11
Wav. Lab. 'C'	6	0	6	0	4

After the circular letters and lobbying of players in the days just before the A.G.M. I thought that I would start writing the notes this year by talking about the change-over from 5 to 4-a-side, but this was not to be.

I'd like to start the season by extending a welcome to the new arrivals who have come to join us. From the 3rd division Beauclair 'A' and Palmerston, although Barry Alexander who is having a whale of a time against the ladies must be in some doubt about how welcome he really is? And L.P.A.S. and Pirates have popped in to see us for what they hope, no doubt, will be merely a brief visit. But there are many teams who will do their best to prolong their stay. Regarding these it is of some interest to note that when Pirates, who finished 4th from bottom of division 1 last year, met Palmerston, who were runners-up in 3B, the result was a 5-all draw.

We always seem to get one team trying to establish themselves as the giants. Last year University romped away from everyone, and this time Linnets 'A' have a seven point lead at the top, but they have a match extra played over Mossley Hill, so things may yet level out a little.

It is only fair to say that Linnets 'A' have seemingly had tougher matches to play than have Mossley Hill, but time alone can tell. There seems little doubt that these will prove to be the two stronger sides of the season, although Trinity, strengthened by the inclusion of John Higham (ex-Oakhill) will no doubt make their challenge. Having been held to a draw by Linnets lower team, however, it seems to diminish Trinity's hopes.

Liverpool YM 'B' never seem to

break any records, but end in the lower half of the table, yet they have one or two very good wins each year. This time it was a 6-4 win over the Police with D. Piper beating Reg Gray, which is never an easy job. At No. 5 they had A. Merali, who, for our division is one of the steadiest players I've yet seen, and I do not think he will be on the losing end often, for his ability to return what seems to be a winner borders on the uncanny.

It's not often that I have had cause to draw attention to any performance by Allan Dean (Linnets 'B') for his results were fairly predictable last season, but as far as I can find out he is as yet unbeaten this term, and that his standard has improved is amply demonstrated by his double win over Rick Brown and John Higham of Trinity. On this form he will have a good scalp to collect. And a certain Phil Metcalfe has been warning me of the doom that awaits me when I meet his young brother Allan. Across the table, of course! For it appears that this young man, who is only 12 years old and stands four foot nowt, is a bit of a corker. However, by a glance at the score-cards it seems that it should have been R. Conley (Crawfords) who should have been warned, for he succumbed to young Allan in two, at 15 a game! Please don't think that I'm belittling Conley, for in the same match he beat A. Moon by 11 and 12. I'm only warning our division that Wavertree have let another Metcalf loose amongst us, for if he is (as he promises to be) as good as his brother, he has merely collected the first of many scalps from our players.

Another greatly improved player is John Kenwright (Mossley Hill) who seems much better this season, as does Keith Fitzsimmons (Linnets 'A'), as yet unbeaten. We have a number of strong players spread through the division, and a lot of interest centres about these, for we all wait to see just who beats who in some most intriguing battles.

I've noticed some players still playing matches in shoes. I would love to be present when these arrive at one of our clubs, who have placed a notice in the Digest in which they state that they will not allow shoes on their floor. It looks as though sets will be getting claimed under Rule 8! Not before time, I'm afraid.

DIVISION 3A.

—By JACK LAMBERT

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Beauclair 'B'	6	5	1	0	41
Crawfords 'B'	5	5	0	0	38
Stanley House	5	3	2	0	35
Eng. Elec. 'B'	5	5	0	0	35
Bath St. 'A'	5	3	1	1	32
St. Mary's	6	2	2	2	31
L'pool YM 'C'	4	2	1	1	27
W'loo Park 'A'	6	1	3	2	25
Vagabonds	5	1	3	1	19
Colonsay 'C'	5	2	3	0	18
L'pool Jew. 'B'	6	1	4	1	16
Waterloo	5	0	5	0	13
L.Y.C.A.	5	0	5	0	10

My first impression of our division is that there is a much higher standard of play, with 'easy' games few and far between, but too few matches have been played as yet for any firm opinions to be formed. Time will tell, but a general rise in standard will be welcomed by everybody.

Newcomers Waterloo, who lost a few key players during the close season, had a tough start, going down 6-4 to each of Liverpool Jewish and to the powerful Crawfords 'B' side. Fourteen sets went to the third game, and Orford picked up 3 valuable points for Waterloo, with Mabel Francis and Porter of Crawfords each getting doubles.

St. Mary's, with a now familiar team sheet, also showed a steady

improvement with a 7-3 win over LYCA (for whom Carter got 2), a draw with Waterloo Park 'A' (Bob Rohrer 2) and a 4-6 defeat by Beauclair 'B' (John Ball and Tommy Jones 2 each). C. Whittaker got 5 of his 6 sets and Tony Delamere collected 4. But this side improves a little each year, most satisfactory.

There was a real local derby at Waterloo Park where their 'A' team went down 4-6 to Bath Street 'A', Cyril Smith making his only appearance in this Bath Street side to date, collecting a double in the process. Seven games went to the third and doubles went to Bridger (Waterloo) and Birmingham (Bath Street).

Stanley House opened up with a crushing 26-4 from their first three matches, but among those four on the debit side was an early-season shocker when Martin of Vagabonds beat the redoubtable Allan Lyn 21-12, 17-21, 21-17. A great win over one of the most consistent and sporting players of our division.

Tip for the top? None at the moment, so wide open does the division appear. All I will say is that provided the teams generally carry on and prove to be as strong as they seem at present, whoever does eventually win the championship will more than have earned any awards, and promotion.

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DIVISION 3B.

—By ALLAN CRAWSHAW

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Coll. of Tech.	6	3	1	2	37
Bath St. 'B'	6	5	1	0	37
Colonsay 'B'	6	3	2	1	36
Eng. Elec. 'A'	5	5	0	0	36
Eng. Elec. 'C'	6	3	1	2	34
University 'B'	6	3	2	1	33
Trinity 'A'	5	2	1	2	30
Wyde Y.C.	5	3	2	0	28
Linnet 'D'	6	3	2	1	28
Orrell	7	1	5	1	27
Crawfords 'C'	6	1	4	1	26
Bootle Y.M.	6	1	4	1	19
L.P.A.S. 'B'	5	1	4	0	16
Bohs. 'C'	5	0	5	0	13

This appears to be a well-balanced division, which could produce a tight struggle at both ends of the League table. The strongest teams, at this early stage, seem to be the English Electric teams and Colonsay 'B'. Both of those clubs have had an infusion of new players at or near the top, with a corresponding improvement in the standard of all their teams. A visit to English Electric has always been a pleasant experience, with their excellent playing facilities, bar, female players and supporters, etc. In contrast to the recent past, it looks as if we will have to fight desperately hard for our points there from now on, although I hope, not to the total neglect of the ancillary pleasures.

However, none of these three teams seem exceptional enough to

run away with the title and there are many strong and consistent players in teams like Trinity 'A', Orrell, Wyde Y.C., College of Technology, Bath Street 'B' and Bootle YMCA who will take a lot of match points from them. For example, Trinity 'A' drew against English Electric 'C' and then lost 4-6 to College of Technology, who, in turn, drew with Colonsay 'B'. If you were to jump to a premature conclusion from these results about the relative merits of English Electric 'C' and Colonsay 'B' you would be wrong, since the result in the match between the two was a win 7-3 for English Electric. Bootle YM, relegated last season, have made a fair start which has included a creditable draw with English Electric 'C'.

I would like to add my plea to the many frequently made, for a prompt start to matches. Many of us regard a match night as an evening out. As a chance to meet our team-mates and opponents for a sporting and social evening—perhaps the only night in the week when we do see our team-mates. The evening includes, if possible, a pint and a chat in the local pub afterwards. In most cases, with a prompt start the match can be over soon after 10 p.m., and allow this pleasant and relaxing end to the evening. With a late start and the match dragging on, visions of a foaming pint begin to mist our eyes who have delayed the start or the progress of the match.

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DIVISION 4A.

—By HARRY REYNOLDS

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Beauclair 'C'	5	4	1	0	39
Palmerston 'A'	6	4	2	0	39
Knotty Ash	5	5	0	0	38
Maghull	6	4	2	0	33
Panto	5	4	1	0	33
Colonsay 'D'	5	3	2	0	30
Eng. Elec. 'D'	6	3	2	1	30
University 'C'	5	2	3	0	24
Knotty Ash 'B'	4	2	1	1	20
St. Patrick's	5	1	3	1	19
Coll. of Tech. 'A'	5	0	5	0	18
Linnet 'F'	5	1	4	0	14
C. F. Mott 'A'	4	1	2	1	13
Rafters 'B'	5	0	5	0	8

In this, the first issue of the "Digest" of the season, I would like to say a "Welcome" to another season of table tennis. I'd like to say this, but by the time you read this the season will be about two months old, so I won't bother.

Judging by the score-cards I have seen to date there does not appear to be one outstanding team in the division, and indeed our teams seem to be dividing into two halves, with English Electric 'D', Panto, Maghull, Palmerston 'A', Colonsay and Knotty Ash forming the higher group, and all fairly evenly matched. This situation indicates that for once it will be no "one-horse race" for the top of the table, and if, as seems possible, these sides are capable of upsetting each other from time to time, we might, for once, find that the leadership is in some real doubts until the last matches.

If this is correct, it will be a very

welcome change, for usually these matters are fairly clear after a few games.

The lower portion of the table also could turn out to be more than interesting. The sides not included in my list above, have a look of being somewhere about even in potential, apart from University 'C', who as yet have played no matches—or rather, have played matches too late for the cards to have reached me as I write. If last season's form is anything to go by they may possibly be away out in front, but as we all know, the University teams change year by year, so it is purely guess-work.

Rafters 'B' have a promising 13 year old in Michael Jones, now in his first season. In his first match (v. Linnets 'F') he won both his sets in good style, but although he has some good strokes, his footwork is extremely slow, and he will need to get more mobile to fulfil his promise. Time is on his side, though, and he will learn a lot long before he reaches the age when most people first take up the game! He came down to earth in his second match, losing both. Never mind, Mike—you can't win 'em all!

To date I have only one complaint, directed at a member of Palmerston 'A' . . . that shirt which you wear for table tennis may be the last word on Blackpool beach, but it's hardly the thing for table tennis (see League Rule 8).

Lastly, don't forget to post in your score-cards. Good hunting, and enjoy yourselves.

DIVISION 4B.

—By JIM BYRNE

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Hilltop	6	5	0	1	49
St. Elizabeth's	6	6	0	0	47
Linnet 'E'	6	4	1	1	40
Cadwa 'A'	6	3	1	2	37
Bohs. 'D'	5	3	1	1	32
St. Edwds 'A'	6	2	2	2	31
C. F. Mott	5	2	2	1	29
Edge Hill	6	3	2	1	28
Mossley Hill 'A'	5	1	2	2	22
Knotty Ash 'A'	6	1	5	0	16
Bath St. 'C'	6	0	3	3	16
Stan. House 'A'	4	0	4	0	10
Eng. Elec. 'E'	3	0	2	1	9
Linnet 'G'	6	0	5	1	7

First of all let me extend a welcome to the new clubs C. F. Mott, Hilltop and St. Elizabeth's, and we hope that they will enjoy a happy season with us as a start of long careers in the League.

I would like to explain that these articles are compiled from the personal observation of the writers, and from score-cards received of those matches played to date. If some good performance by you or your team has been overlooked, it may be because there is a "forgotten" card somewhere, for already score-cards are not coming in on time.

There are but three weeks cards in hand as I write, so little can be said or prophesied, but from even this slender evidence it seems that Linnets 'E', Hilltop, St. Elizabeth's and Bohemians 'D' have the edge to some extent. One of the more intriguing battles at the start was the battle of the 'Jones Boys'—Glynn for Cadwa 'A' and Ken for Bohemians 'B'—both players with a lot of experience from the higher divisions, and won by Glynn 21-14, 17-21, 22-20. It must have been quite a scrap.

As far as I can find there are only four players as yet unbeaten in the entire division: Lock and McGarragh of Hilltop, Ian Higson of Linnets 'E' and Geoff Baker of Bohemians 'B', this latter another experienced player, so 100— records cannot be easy to retain in our division. There are several players who have only lost once, but the fact that there are relatively few of them indicates a lot of close and bitter battles before the end of the season. That is as it should be for nobody enjoys a one-horse race.

There are those players who win very few, and tend to get down-

hearted as a result. This is the wrong approach, especially as your opponents might well have been very experienced players, difficult for a newcomer to the sport to beat immediately upon entering. I have in mind one player in particular, who has played 6 and won 0. But 4 of his opponents have come from among the list of those who have lost none or at most lost one, and his two remaining foes were 2nd division players formerly. There is no cause for despondency in such a case, for every dog has his day, and you don't have a run of opponents like this very often.

As always we have a number of the weaker sex amongst our numbers. Audrey Gee (who with husband Tom has earned eight of Bohs. 18 points), Misses Marian Little, Sheila Mitton, Leslie Jones of Linnets and Miss Adams of Bath Street, who with Miss Stella Luft (Mossley Hill) provides us with some glamour, combined with quite a lot of table tennis ability. As yet I've seen only Miss Adams in action, but the signs are there to show that she can attain the standard of their better known ladies 'ere long.

WOMENS DIVISION.

—By JUDY CRAFTER

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Cadwa	6	6	0	0	57
Rafters	5	4	0	1	41
Crawfords ..	5	4	0	1	41
Palmerston ..	4	3	1	0	30
Bath St.	5	3	2	0	27
Rafters 'A' ..	5	1	2	2	22
Bibbys	6	2	3	1	21
Orrell	4	1	1	2	20
Colonsay	5	1	4	0	19
Bohemians ..	6	1	3	2	17
Sandown	3	1	1	1	14
Linnet	5	1	4	0	12
Linnet 'A' ..	5	0	5	0	7

A Full Division at last!

We start the season with a full complement of teams, and most sincerely do we hope that there will be none falling out before the close. On paper, the quality of the players indicates a stronger division with more close competition. The more fierce the competition, the greater the enjoyment gained, so this has the look of a good season to come. It is

safe to forecast that neither League nor Cup will be earned easily this year.

Another reason for rejoicing is the return of a team of long standing and with an illustrious playing record, in Bohemians. They have been out for two years, and although there are few of the former players still with them, I'm sure that before long Audrey Gee will have her side back up near the top. Another welcome return is that of Bath Street, another long-serving side, with two former stalwarts in Barbara Taylor and Joyce Newell still with them. The Orrell ladies, after six seasons with the men, come back just as we have hoped to see them do for a long time. All help to strengthen the division. A welcome also to new teams from Colonsay and Palmerston. The former all new girls, and the latter composed of players from several clubs which will test the strength of any team we've got.

A special word to the many young girls at Colonsay—10 or 12 of them. We're all delighted to see you here. We hope that your careers will be

long and happy ones, for we are in need of as many young players as we can get in our sport. The best of luck to you all.

Incidentally, the advent of these young Colonsay girls is due to the enthusiasm of their secretary, Les French, who got these girls interested in the game at school, and who has coached and encouraged them. If a few more men who are in a position to emulate this example did so we would soon re-build the women's game in Liverpool.

The first match of the season brought the defeat of Reg Royle (A Bibby's) by Marion Stone (Linnets 'A'). Marion, better known to us under her maiden name of Lewis, can be proud of this win, for Reg is an ex-Liverpool champion, and for some time has been one of the main-stays of the Wirral team. Marion was up on holiday from Brighton, and it is a pity that she isn't available weekly. She would add a little more competition yet!

There have been a few very close results even at this early date. The game between Palmerston and Crawfords, when Crawfords just managed to pull it off 6-4 was a really tough one, between two very powerful teams. Four of the sets went to three, and that in which Joyce Randall beat Barbara Topping 22-20 in the third might easily have just gone the other way. Palmerston's four sets were gained by two each from Barbara Cain and Joyce Ran-

dall, with Maureen King and Angela Parker both getting nil. For Crawfords, Mabel Francis (1), Margaret Collins (2) and Barbara Topping (1) took an equal share of the singles, and by winning both doubles won the match.

Bohemians 6-4 victory over Colonsay was an even more hard-fought match, for no less than 6 of the sets went to 3, and both doubles were decided on a 'deuce' in the 3rd. Not a match for any spectator with a weak heart!

Yet a third match brought together ancient rivals when Orrell faced Sandown. 6 of the 8 players concerned had last met in a match six seasons ago, and by the look of the card they had yet another of their always-close battles. The final 5-all result was a fair one, even though Orrell won all three sets which went into a third game. It would be difficult to select any one girl from a match such as this, and the result emphasises that the re-entry of Orrell amongst the Women decidedly strengthens the League.

I only hope that the season continues in this vein, and that our newest entrants don't get disheartened if they don't get much success, for, as is so often repeated the new teams of this season will be the stronger sides before long. If they keep playing full out, and practising as much as possible, they will all improve and may yet 'shake' the more established players.

Letter to the Editor

25 Haveragl St.,
Runcorn,
Cheshire.

Dear Sir,

Last season Mossley Hill finished third in Division 2B and as a result missed promotion. With Oakhill unfortunately having to resign from the League, my next thought was, who would take their place in Division 1?

The question then was, which of the two second divisions was considered stronger by the Management Committee. Their decision was that Division 2A was stronger, as Linacre, who finished third in Division 2A, were promoted.

I personally consider Division 2B to be the stronger second division, my reason being that Crawfords

first team finished only 6th in our division, but their 2nd team finished fifth in Division 2A. A similar example was that Linnets 'B' finished lower in 2B than their 'C' team in Division 2A.

These examples show clearly that Mossley Hill (3rd in Division 2B) were done an injustice by not being promoted.

Yours faithfully,

J. KENWRIGHT.
(Mossley Hill T.T.C.).

The Fixture Secretary replies:—

The Management Committee did not consider which team was the stronger. It simply compared the records, and Linacre's being superior, they were promoted.

E. Cameron.

10 Castlefield Close,
Liverpool 12.
12th October, 1966.

Dear Sir,

In recent years, with the advent of the sandwich bat, our game has changed considerably. Most of the top-class players in the world play a fast, close-to-the-table game with the accent on very fast movement and even faster reactions.

Of course, there are many fine players who still use the rubber-covered bat, or in some cases just the plain old-fashioned wood, but good as these players are, there is no doubt that at the highest level the sandwich bat has a definite advantage. A large proportion of the local table-tennis players have accepted this, changed their bats, and tried to change their style to fit in with the new equipment. Unfortunately, this is more difficult than it might seem, particularly for those who have been playing for a number of years. The people most suited to learn the new style of play are quite naturally the juniors. It is many years now since Liverpool made any real impact on the table-tennis scene and I would like to suggest a way of altering this in a few years time.

If we accept that the modern use of the sandwich bat is essential to reach the top then we must also accept that our players must be young. The average person's speed of thought and reaction are at a peak during their late teens. For anyone to become a top-class player requires a few years experience, so it seems to me that the ideal age for people to begin playing is about 14, or even earlier, but certainly not later. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, most players start their careers at about 16, or 17, and often much later than this. There are relatively few who start earlier and most of these receive very little instruction, acquiring bad habits which are difficult to remove later. The outcome of all this is that there are only a few boys and girls who receive any coaching between those vital years between 13 and 15. If 100 youngsters were all coached at this age only a handful would have

the necessary talents to make really good players and fewer still would become top-class. When all is considered it is not surprising that there is a shortage of top-class young players. The same reasoning applies throughout the country. In China and Japan there are literally millions of youngsters playing, to my mind the main reason why these countries dominate the table-tennis scene. If we, in this country, are to regain some prestige, we must 'discover' those young players who have the talent.

It seems obvious to me that the only way to do this effectively is to start them playing while they are still at school. There are very few schools which have any facilities at present and even fewer where any coaching is done. There are many difficulties in getting the game started but I can assure you that there is no lack of interest, in fact, it is overwhelming. The two main obstacles are (i) the acquisition of a table, and (ii) arranging for someone to do the coaching.

I am a teacher at Holly Lodge High School for Girls and three years ago I decided to introduce the game there. We constructed our own table for a few pounds and gained permission to play once per week after school. To begin with only older girls were allowed to play. The following year we acquired another two rather makeshift tables and permission to play twice each week. The membership then increased from 10 to about 30.

Last year the School Guild bought for the School a new Jacques table and for the first time 13 year olds were allowed to play. When trials were held for entry to the club about 80 girls of 13-14 were keen to join, although only about 20 could be accommodated. A similar response was gained again this year from the 13 year olds. Now, only girls who are 13 are allowed to enter the club as new members to keep up the continuity as the girls grow older.

Last year we had our third school championships and were very pleased when Gordon Birch, Pete D'Arcy, Judy Crafter and Maureen Coe came along to the finals to watch and give

some exhibition games. The school also played some matches against other schools, e.g. Queen Mary, Calder and New Heys. The games were held at Holly Lodge. As a result of their matches against us, Queen Mary have now acquired their own new table and if anyone is interested in doing some coaching there I'm sure that they would be very welcome.

Now, if you have read this far you might think that I am going to start a campaign to stop players from enjoying their table tennis, and to jump on them at every excuse—this is very far from the case. But, I DO THINK that if some poor unsuspecting player is expected to umpire, and if for some legitimate reason he is called upon to warn players, he should NOT be subjected to dirty looks and/or abuse, not yet even the classic phrase, "We're not playing for the Town Hall, you know".

It is important, also, to note that if an umpire is to be the sole judge of whether or not a point is valid, he should be conversant with the rules, and this, I regret to say, is not so.

But can I ask that Club secretaries and others interested to ensure that in the case of new players coming into the League, they are instructed in the service rule, and in others likely to upset any set. To make sure that rules are not ignored and are well-known would make it far easier to umpire for all of us.

If other schools in the city adopted the game there would be no shortage of talent, and in a few years Liverpool could be well and truly on the table-tennis map once again.

About ten of the girls who joined the school club in September last year, at the age of 13, have joined my own club, Colonsay, to play in the Women's Division of the League this year. The top lady players will have to watch out in a year or two!

I would like to suggest that the Liverpool and District Table-Tennis League approach the Liverpool Education Committee with the object of introducing table-tennis into the schools on a large scale.

The League could play its part by providing the necessary coaching, either directly or indirectly, in the essentials of the game. In return it would have a constant supply of young, talented players. The schools could play matches against each other and possibly form a league.

As you probably know, education in Liverpool is in the process of re-organisation by the introduction of comprehensive schools, and it seems to me that this is the ideal time to contact the authorities. Table-tennis could be introduced into school games, along with the many other changes which are being made. One idea is for the league to hold some sort of scheme for games teachers to learn how to coach table-tennis.

I am not suggesting that it would be easy to create such a situation in schools, but I can see no real objection to the ideas. Table-tennis is good for young people, both mentally and physically, teaching them to move and think quickly, which, in itself, helps them to understand that special feeling of being part of a team. Another advantage is that it is one sport which does not depend on the weather or the time of year.

There are quite a few teachers playing in the league at the moment and I would like to appeal to them to seriously consider the possibilities.

I would be very interested to know if anyone has any views on this subject. My address is in the handbook. How about it, Management Committee?

Yours faithfully,

LES FRENCH,

Colonsay T.T.C.