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**TABLE
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DIGEST**

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OF THE

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TABLE **DIGEST** TENNIS

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No. 3.

Editorial

For the second season in succession the Management Committee have had the unpleasant task of applying the provisions of Rule 20 to expel a club team from the League. This time, however, it is a multi-team club which is involved and much to their regret the Management Committee have had to expel the Ladies team from the club concerned. Unfortunately the team concerned have only recently joined the Women's Division, and have not been responsible for all three walk-overs. However, this point was made perfectly clear when this rule was proposed, and the Management Committee have acted in what they consider is in the best interests of all concerned. Whilst it is a matter of regret that it has once again been necessary to enforce this rule, perhaps, this time clubs will take notice that the Management Committee intend to enforce this rule to the ultimate benefit of all clubs.

The demand for 'Order of Merit' team play is beginning to be heard and whilst it all sounds very musical to some I feel it is time this matter was looked at in its proper perspective.

The system of scoring in use at present actively encourages team captains to place their teams in the order which will bring the most points, and it should not be any other way. Why, should clubs struggling for survival present their opponents with maximum points, when, by astute captaincy they can salvage precious points for themselves, and at the same time make things harder for those challenging for titles? For too long now the top clubs have had things all their own way, with often a guaranteed 10 points, merely because it is considered not the thing to alter the team order. That is so much rot Every team must act in their own interests and let their opponents look after themselves.

Whatever rules are passed to ensure some form of merit order you can be sure ways will be found to get round them and varied will be the opinions regarding each team's 'Order of Merit'. In my opinion the team captain is best qualified to decide his team order, depending on what tactics he wishes to adopt. So, let team captains continue to decide their own tactics and perhaps we will see an end to a lot of those 10-0 results and more open title battles.

How good is your Club Secretary? A recent dispute has brought into the open a fact which many know, but few will admit, that a good secretary is a club's most important asset. Sometimes they do slip up and everyone jumps on them, but next time it happens at your club just remember that without your secretary you would have no club, as any ex-Oakhill player will confirm.

A Toast to the Ladies !

Our Ladies team goes from strength to strength this season, for they have now played four, won three and drawn one. They have only two matches still to play, v. Manchester (at Crawfords, Feb. 23rd), and v. Stockport (Crawfords, March 22nd) and having beaten Manchester once, in the Rose Bowl, another win cannot be ruled out. All three girls, Judy Crafter, Barbara Cain and Mabel Francis are making an all-out effort to win the League for the first time in 20 years, and if they fail they will go down fighting . . . but there is no thought of failure in their heads. So I hope that the members of the League will roll up in large numbers to support them in their last two hurdles, just to let them know that the League does recognise that we have a Ladies team.

Their victory over Manchester in the Rose Bowl came after a stern battle, in which Judy and Mabel won two, and Barbara one. Barbara was going through a bad patch in which her attack went right off the boil, but she is back to normal now. Mabel won her set v. Mary Leigh, to break new ground for herself.

This is the first win over Manchester since 1952 . . . in the heyday of Andree Jones, Eileen Mansell and Bluey May . . . so our three representatives deserve a rather special bit of support in the next one to help in a repeat performance. We went out in the next round, however, to Doncaster (away) a team of "ranked" players, Leslie Proudlock, Cynthia Duncombe and Pat Dainty. We lost 9-0, but six sets went to three, and our girls were far behind the Yorkshire trio. Apart from John O'Sullivan, who captained the team, our girls found themselves with another supporter, Don Davies (Cadwa). How I wish we had a few more Don Davies's in the League!

Our youthful Ladies 'A' Team went to Burnley to win 7-3. Janet Rumjahn (3), Pam Fidler (2) and Jean Mackenzie (1) plus Jean and

Pam in the Doubles, were our winners. From three matches they have now earned 4 points, which is a vast improvement over 'A' Team performances in recent years. Their next match is on February 16th, v. Warrington at Bootle Police Stn. and the final game is v. Southport (away) on March 8th. And we hope for more points yet to come.

Out of the "Wilmott" and "Norman Cooke" Cups as well

Our Men's team went out of the "Wilmott" Cup to Bolton, which was not entirely unexpected. But at last the gap is closing. Gordon Birch beat Bryn Farnworth and B. Mitchell, both currently playing for the County, and Pete D'Arcy beat Farnworth also, to turn the customary 'whitewash' into a respectable 3-6 loss. Later, in the Norman Cooke trophy, against the same opponents, Judy Crafter was the sole winner in a 1-8 loss. I'm told that this was an even closer match, but that on this occasion the luck went against us. I'm not a great believer in 'luck' and prefer to think that the Bolton boys won this time on merit. Still, there is some writing on the wall now.

After an 8-2 win v. Hyde, the team suffered its worst hammering of the season against Stockport when they went down 0-10 to Derek Schofield, Brian Keene and Don Berry. There is no disgrace in losing to a trio such as this, although I am not alone in thinking the final score a travesty of justice. But there it is. There are now two matches left, on March 8th at Liverpool—Y.M. v. Preston and on the 22nd v. Lytham (away). We should win both of these, but this being the uncertain game it is, please don't take that as a forecast.

Editor's Note. *Jim's notes are unfortunately incomplete as he was taken bad whilst writing them and has since been admitted to hospital. I am sure that in wishing him a speedy recovery I speak for every member of the League.*

A new venue has been found for the 'Liverpool Closed' which will be held this year on April 16th to 19th, at New Heys Middle School, Greenhill Road, Liverpool 18. We believe conditions will be better than last year, particularly with regard to the amount of run back.

You will see from the above dates that once again we are holding the tournament on four nights, Tuesday to Friday, with the Finals held on the Friday instead of Saturday. This arrangement appeared to be favoured by both competitors and the Final spectators last year.

It is hoped that entry forms for the tournament will be enclosed with this "Digest". Please return as soon as possible. We had a good entry last year, our aim must be to improve on it this year.

Unfortunately the Committee have had to enforce Rule 20 again this season, in this instance C. F. Mott Ladies team have been forced to withdraw after the club had conceded 3 walk-overs. It is unfortunate that these things have to happen, but the Committee must enforce the rules which you make.

Despite any action taken by the Committee, such as warnings, fines, etc., there does not appear to be any improvement in the situation with regard to teams playing short, and

there are still a fair number of walk-overs reported to the committee. Over the years we have had exchanges of opinion in the "Digest" on many subjects, but I cannot recall seeing in print any ideas for stopping this curse of playing short, with the exception of the point per set system of scoring which is now in force, and which did initially, I think, do some good.

With another A.C.M. in the very near future the time is ripe for giving some thought to possible rule changes. Surely there is someone in the League who has travelled a long distance on some cold and wet night, had only one or even no sets to play, who can come up with an acceptable idea which will help stamp this out. It may not require a rule change, deduction of points, increase in the number of players required to be registered for a team (this would require a rule change), are possible remedies. YOU are the people affected by the forfeiting of sets, so let us have your views.

I have just been informed that Jim Green has been admitted to hospital. Jim has had a particularly bad spell of health lately, and I am sure you will all join me in wishing him a very speedy return to good health.

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Some Umpiring Misapprehensions

—OR KNOTTY KNOTTY POINTS

By M. Francis

On being asked to supply an article for this "Digest"—I could only think of the one I intended to write last season, but never got around to doing so. But now my hand has been forced—so to speak. Here are a few scoring anomalies that I have come across during my recent years of playing and I am sure they will enlighten those who have never bothered to read the full rules of Table Tennis, or troubled to have an 'umpiring problem' cleared up.

The main one, where many a player must have been 'diddled' without realising it, is the rule whereby—a volleyed net serve is a let. If in serving, the ball touches the net and goes off the table, the point is given to the receiver. But if it is VOLLEYED by the receiver, the server does not get a point, it is a LET.

A player CAN strike twice at the ball, for if he misses it completely first time and then plays it successfully, this is within the law, provided of course the ball has not touched anything (and gone out of play) in between the two strokes.

The ball does NOT go out of play by going above the lights. The key factor is whether or not it touches anything in its flight.

A ball CAN be returned good by going AROUND the net as well as over it. This means, of course, the end of the net supports and not (as some would argue) by passing between

the support and net—if there was such a gap (as often there is). It is also a good return even if it touches the support in passing around—just like the 'plain nets' as we all know them.

In doubles, a question posed was—If the ball (going off) gets volleyed by the player who is not receiving it, who gets the point? For the purpose of most laws in doubles, the two players are as one, and so a volley by the partner of the receiver is a point AGAINST the volleying pair.

"A player shall lose a point if his free hand touches the playing surface while the ball is in play and if, before the ball in play shall have passed over the end lines or side lines not yet having touched the playing surface on his side of the table since being struck by his opponent it comes in contact with him or anything he wears or carries."

The above 'highlights' are just some of the disagreements that I have personally come across and hope they will help anyone else in doubt.

If interested in rule conversance the English Table Tennis Association issue a booklet 'The Laws of Table Tennis' (I.T.T.T.F. regs., etc.) price 2/6d. obtainable from F.T.T.A. — Room 323, 26/29 Park Crescent, London N.W.1. Help with any umpiring problems can be obtained from our own County Umpires' Secretary, Mr. A. Porter, 39 Forrester Road, Smithills, Bolton. (Tel. 43151).

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Room for Defenders ?

asks Philip Reid

In these days fast attacking play seems to be all the vogue. Sandwich rubber bats are clearly responsible in the main for this. With the bat comes faster shots, more intricate spins and tricky services, all of which favour the attacker. So defenders are out. Or are they? The day of the all 100% defender has gone I think at top level. If only because the expedite rule precludes this type of play. But defenders can take heart for there is still room for them. The last two world championships have seen one European player in the men's singles semi-finals. On each occasion it was Eberhardt Scholer, almost certainly the best defender in the world. In England, who will forget Ian Harrison's wonderful retrieving against Denis Neale in the 'English Closed' Final. Bryan Merrett seems as though he can carry on indefinitely pushing his way to victory for Gloucestershire. Derek Schofield, the Cheshire plumber can still return one shot too many for most attackers and is well worth his premier division place. Derek Munt, the Warwickshire player would never win first prize for bright play, but his value to Warwickshire has been inestimable as he has cut one player after another down to size. One needs to go no farther than Bolton to see George Livesey still ready to take any shots anyone is prepared to venture against him. The number of players in Lancashire likely to beat George could be counted on one hand.

So, although attacking players are in the vast majority, defenders are

still there, still obtaining good results. One advantage with the defender is he is likely to last much longer. Ian Harrison has seen players come and go but he is still there in the top six and no one is sure of beating him. Ebby Scholer and Derek Schofield could reasonably be expected to have seen their best days in table tennis but there is nothing to suggest either are declining in the least. Why do they outlast attackers? Because I think defenders rely less on quick reflexes, more on anticipation and footwork. Both these come with practice. Reflexes are just quick or they are not. Attackers are inclined to rely on their reflexes, which is natural enough, but once these slow down then, unless they are able to adjust their game, they are in trouble. So it seems to me that anyone who wants to defend should not necessarily be discouraged. Most youngsters will want to be attackers. It's more attractive to play and quicker to get results. And, to be fair, in the main they are more likely to be successful with an attacking game. But anyone who wants to defend and has the aptitude still has a future in the game. But I feel the ability to kill the loose ball is essential but I also think there must always be a place for defenders. They provide a contrast with attackers. Table Tennis without defenders is a game with only half the spectacle.

So here's to defenders. A rarer breed than in the past but vital to the game if it is to survive as a spectacle none the less.

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Letters to the Editor

5 Mona St.,
Bootle 20.

Dear Sir,

I feel I must comment on the remarks made about St. Elizabeth's (Div. 3B) in the January issue. I would like to make it clear however that I am not making a personal attack on the divisional correspondent who can only write as he sees fit to, but I feel the circumstances concerning our club have not been put in the proper perspective.

We lost our clubroom a week before the season was due to start and with the threat of expulsion from the League if we conceded three walk-overs hanging over our heads we had to search for new premises and at the same time try to re-arrange our home fixtures. We ourselves were in a position to claim a walk-over from the Police, but as we needed the co-operation of the other clubs to fulfil our fixtures we did not do so. Playing in different clubrooms has had its effect on the form of our team with the exception of one member, Geoff Edmunds.

The response from other clubs to let us play at their quarters has, in the majority of cases, been practically nil. I would have thought they would be glad of the extra cash it would bring in.

We are now fixed up at Trinity but may not be able to continue there next season, and I have also heard that another club in our division is in danger of losing their playing quarters for next season.

Would it be possible therefore in the future for other clubs who may find themselves in the same position as we did, to play at four or five clubs to fulfil their fixtures while trying to find new quarters.

A comment on that excellent new feature "Net Cords". Playing at Crawfords recently for the first time and I hope the last, not only having to contend with poor lighting, a football match in the gym next door and an uneven floor, the table was just about on its last legs as well as being the slowest I have ever played on. However, this is not to detract from the play of the Crawford team, Daly and Roper particularly in inflicting a double against Geoff Edmunds.

Playing at Linnets last week one of our players had his van stolen and has not up to the time of writing had it returned.

Yours sincerely,

C. ROBERTS
(Secretary, St. Elizabeth's).

READMAN CUP SEMI-FINAL. Liverpool YMCA 5, English Elec. 5

This match had a sensational start, a sensational finish and in between some very mediocre table tennis. Peter Turtle provided the opening shocks when he beat Gordon Birch 24-22 in the third, which turned out to be not only his own best win but also his most important ever for the Y.M. Turtle played extremely well and assisted by some great shots, good returns and good luck, which we all hope for on these big occasions but very rarely get, always looked a likely winner. With the score at 5-2 R. McPherson played N. Mehta in a set which I for one assumed would clinch the match for the Y.M. However McPherson, undismayed by the position gave one of his best displays of the season and put English Elec. back in the match. Fred Pheysey disposed of George Smith in two straight and the stage

was set for a Mandaluff—Clein epic. Mandaluff won the first in the record time of 12 minutes. The expedite rule was introduced in the second game at 6-2 for Mandaluff and Klein won this easily. In the third neither player managed a big lead, but Eddie won the game amidst scenes of joy from his team-mates. Klein proved that not only is the expedite rule a golden nugget for players like himself, it can also provide tense and exciting Table Tennis. Eight sets went to three and three of those were decided at deuce, all of which ended in the Y.M.'s favour.

Our thanks go to the official from Wavertree Lab., Mr. Stan Smith, who agreed to keep the club open to allow this set to be played. Thanks also to Jim Bowden (Y.M.) who acted as counter, and Jack Lambert (Eng. Elec.) as Time-keeper.

Net Cords

By John Molyneux.

I read Jim Green's letter with interest. I realise now that the selectors don't use a hat, there wouldn't be enough room for all the names they produce!

:: :: :: ::

Can anybody tell me why a City this size can produce only one Nationally ranked player in the last ten years or more? And he is based in Birmingham.

:: :: :: ::

At least Jim Green and I agree on one thing, it would be a good thing if teams played in a strict order of merit. At least then the match would not be decided by the guessing game between the captains before play starts.

:: :: :: ::

I see our gallant editor is on his shining white steed again, demanding a change in the service rule. Does he have information concerning players concealing an accomplice on the lights, to impart spin on balls thrown to them?

:: :: :: ::

In that article, Ken mentions scores. Well, this actually happened. Two players were making a Clein—Mandaluff epic look like a wild hitting affair and pushed endlessly for one point. At the end of the point the umpire said, and I quote, "I'm sorry I've forgotten the score, I think we had better start again." He meant it too!

:: :: :: ::

Remember the 1st division match full of foul serves? Well, all five players in one of the teams concerned assured me that he is the one player with the legal service. I'm saying nowt!

:: :: :: ::

A well-known club has decided to design its own badge. How about a pint of beer superseded by a cup of tea?

:: :: :: ::

I hear C. F. Mott's Women's team invented a new game called "Guess the match night." However, the Management Committee got to hear about it and renamed it "Please leave the League."

:: :: :: ::

It is reported that a riot of sportsmanship broke out in the Bath St.—Eng. Elec. match recently. With all the talk being about soccer violence, I think John Ogston could be excused a quiet chuckle to himself.

:: :: :: ::

I see Beauclair have signed Frankie Vaughan and Tom Jones. Of course it's not unusual as they must be so tired of not being in the top ten of the 1st division. Ouch!!

:: :: :: ::

Who has the oldest bat in the League? Bill Clayton (Bath St.) had one so ancient the British Museum accepted it as a star exhibit in their fossils section. Mind you, his "new" one is so noisy he can't hear himself talk.

:: :: :: ::

Tom Gordon requires some facts and figures concerning the pyramid league. Well, the fact is that there are at least three 1st Division sides who wouldn't have been there but for the present system, namely Mossley Hill, Wavertree Labour 'A' and dare I mention it, ENGLISH ELECTRIC. As for the figures he'd better try the Women's League.

:: :: :: ::

Finally, congratulations to the following members of the League who swept the board at the recent L.B.A. tournament. Under 21—Paul Morgan (Wav. Lab.), Under 18—Phil Metcalf (St. Margaret's), Under 16—John Barton (Wav. Lab.).

Around the Divisions

DIVISION 1.

By Jim Green

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
W'tree Labour	14	11	2	1	105
L'pool YMCA	13	11	0	2	101
English Electric	14	10	1	3	97
L'pool YM 'A'	13	8	3	2	78
Bath St.	14	6	3	5	76
W'tree Lab. 'A'	13	7	6	0	69
Rafters	12	6	4	2	60
Mossley Hill	11	3	4	4	55
W'loo Park	14	1	10	3	43
Linnets	12	1	10	1	40
Beauclair	13	2	11	0	37
Linnets 'A'	13	0	12	1	19

English Electric are falling behind in the battle for the championship, as can be plainly seen from the tables, yet on the face of it, it would seem completely impossible that such could possibly be so, for in no less than FIVE of their eleven first-half games, Gordon Birch featured in the No. 4 spot. Now, since Gordon is the current League champion, and is the only male player from Liverpool for many years to get a Lancs. County badge, it strains credulity to believe that the team has had three better players available on no less than FIVE occasions.

Don't get me wrong . . . I'm not knocking either Gordon, his team or his Captain, for the entire division, with one solitary exception, plays the same "tactical game" of yo-yo, either looking for easy sets (by lining up your 1 and 2 against their 4 and 5) or in the attempt to try to *find* their wandering 1 and 2 with yours (who you think the stronger). So the ultimate result of any match is decided before play starts, the best "guesser" gaining the ultimate advantage, but the *players* are those who suffer. But you must conform to survive!

You don't believe me? Well, take it alphabetically, Bath St.; can anyone name the four players who caused Arthur Taylor to drop on merit to No. 5 (twice) and John Ogston to No. 4 (four times)? Beauclair, everyone has had a go in every position, as have those of Linnets and Linnets 'A' (except F. Thomas). The Y.M., only George Smith has had a regular spot, the rest playing up and down as the

whim of their captain dictates, their 'A' team likewise. Mossley Hill shoot Kenwright and Millward up and down like a pair of express lifts, simply to ensure (if possible) a minimum of 4 sets per match. Waterloo Park have played every player in the top two positions from time to time, even poor Bob Rohrer, whose tally of 3 wins in 20 sets hardly seems to fit him for the honour! The disease has spread to Wavertree Lab. where no player of the 1st team, and only one of the 'A' are currently in a position to "qualify" for red figures at the end of the season. Where are RAFTERS? They are the shining example to the rest of us . . . having played all season in the same order, win or lose . . . with reserves being brought in at the tailend.

I'm not a member of Rafters, in fact I've probably had more narks with them than anyone else (being a narky sort) but I lifts me tifter to them for straight dealing.

There is a simple answer to this, of course. Rank players in order of merit, and play in ranking order. Since everyone has differing views on merits, the Committee can accept a club's list (except in flagrant cases, such as Gordon Birch at No. 4), BUT no player to move up or down more than one place, and this *only* after he has played on two occasions in his currently ranked position. When playing against any side, one would then know within limits, who you will meet. Then, at least, we might feel fairly confident that the better team would win, instead of the best guesser!

Don't forget one thing, whatever system is adopted at any time, it is those who do not conform who get clobbered.

I shall now be moaned at for giving my personal views in this column. That is not so. I have been fortunate enough to have had visits from a large number of 1st division players during my illness (for which I am very grateful), and the majority of them, especially the better players, feel the same way. In fact they are fed up with having to meet inferior players, then watching the best of the opposition wasting *their* evening in turn!

DIVISION 2A By Ken Armson

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
CADWA	14	14	0	0	125
L'pool Jewish	16	6	6	4	90
W'tree Lab. 'B'	13	8	2	3	86
Linacre	13	9	3	1	80
Colonsay 'A'	14	5	5	4	79
Crawfords 'A'	12	9	2	1	78
Rafters 'A'	15	6	7	2	77
Stanley House	14	6	4	4	75
Eng. Elec. 'A'	12	7	5	0	63
University 'A'	13	4	8	1	51
Lussac	15	2	10	3	49
LPAS 'A'	15	3	11	1	44
Linnets 'C'	15	0	15	0	9

Cadwa have already assured themselves of 1st Division table tennis again next season, but having done so well in the League they were surprisingly beaten in the Cup, for which they were firm favourites.

The promotion battle is by no means ended as a terrific struggle is going on for that precious runner-up slot, and Cadwa could have some say in this as they have still to play most of the contenders. The two most fancied teams are Crawfords 'A' and Wavertree Lab. 'B', only a few points separate these two. I have spoken to players from both sides in the last week and they are each convinced that promotion will be theirs. They met at the Labour Club last week and once again Crawfords 'A' were winners 6-4. However, the Labour Club were, as in the previous encounter, playing with a reserve, and although their captain is a confessed 'Order of Merit' man, he put his reserve in at No. 2 but all to no avail. One of Crawford's strongest points has been their ability to field an unchanged side. The Labour Club on the other hand have very rarely managed to do so. At the time of writing the Labour Club have got the upper hand having brought their fixtures up-to-date and got the points in. Crawford's on the other hand have a match outstanding against Linacre, with the prospect of another postponement due to Cup commitments. Coincidentally, their opponents in the semi-final will be

Linacre, but the result of this match cannot be taken as a guide to anyone's promotion prospects.

Do not assume from all this that these two clubs have it all cut and dried, far from it, for they are being hard pressed by a number of clubs all waiting to step in if these two slip up. One of these, Linacre, have done well in the Cup and their successes in this sphere may well spur them on to step into that second place. All the teams involved in this struggle have to play each other so we will have to wait a good while longer before we know who will be accompanying Cadwa.

Liverpool Jewish after a very bright start have now fallen away. They have gathered only 80 pts. from 15 matches, and although shown as third theirs is a false position and they will probably finish up at 7th or 8th.

Should it be Crawfords 'A' who win promotion then we shall have created some sort of record as it will mean that both promoted teams will have a woman player as one of their main props. Much good, however, promotion will do the Crawfords 'A' team, as next season the team in Div. 1 would become their 1st team and that in 2B their 'A' team. That would surely give rise to some anxious moments when they came to do their ranking for next season.

What of the bottom clubs? Relegation for Linnets 'C' is as certain as promotion is for Cadwa, but this is mainly due to the very trying period through which their club has been passing. Their companions will probably be the Police, but their position may improve as they have had some good results, having drawn with Liverpool Jewish and beaten Lussac 8-2, so it looks like a battle at the bottom as well as the top. However, who ever is the loser in this battle should still avoid relegation as we are already one team short and with the prospect of a further vacancy even Linnets 'C' may avoid the drop.

DIVISION 2B By Jerry O'Keefe

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
I,'pool YM 'B'	15	14	0	1	115
Trinity	17	11	2	4	112
Colonsay	14	11	2	1	102
Crawfords	16	8	4	4	92
L.P.A.S.	15	9	4	2	91
Eng. Elec. 'B'	15	8	5	2	83
Beauclair 'A'	15	9	5	1	80
St. Edward's	15	3	10	2	60
Sparta	14	3	9	2	59
University	13	4	8	1	57
L,'pool Jewish 'A'	13	4	7	3	52
Linnets 'B'	16	3	11	2	50
Colonsay 'B'	14	1	11	2	39
Palmerston	14	1	11	2	38

My remarks in the last issue regarding the rarity of teams playing short were a little premature, I'm afraid. The latest batch of cards shows a big increase in "walkovers." May be this is due to the wintry weather which seems to deter the less enthusiastic players. This unfortunate state of affairs seems to worsen, I have noticed, when Liverpool or Everton have a midweek match. In one case recently, a visiting player rang up during the day to say he would be unavoidably late in arriving. The home secretary, thinking that it was no doubt some urgent business or family matter which would detain him, said it would of course be perfectly alright for the player to arrive late. When the player concerned eventually arrived at about twenty to ten, it transpired that he had merely 'been to the match.'

Generally the League positions have remained fairly static. Colonsay 'B' however must be due for a rise, they have a much stronger team now than they had in the earlier part

of the season. In fact, only one of that earlier team remains.

A quick run through the cards shows a good win for Crawfords over English Electric by 8 sets to 2, J. Hodges and George Moon getting English Electric's two sets. No less than eight of the sets went to three.

Liverpool Y.M. and Colonsay had a close game with the decision going to the Y.M. 6-4. Bailey and Brown got doubles for the Y.M. and Les Franch two for Colonsay. Three of the sets were decided at deuce in the third game.

Sparta did well to take three games from English Elec. on the latter's table. Terry Holloway in particular did well to beat J. Hodges in a three game set. Trinity had a very good spell just before and after Christmas with 10-0 wins over Palmerston and Linnets 'B' and a very good 6-4 victory over a full strength Colonsay side. In this game Brain Leeson helped Colonsay considerably with a double over A. Southall and A. Abbott, both in straight games. The set against Southall included a 30-28 game. Is this a record?

Regarding the match between St. Edward's and English Electric which, you remember, was abandoned after 6 sets due to a fire. Apparently there is no rule to cover this eventuality and the Committee have to decide each case individually. In this instance, not unanimously I understand, they have come to the rather strange decision that only the outstanding four sets must be played, with the same players involved. Perhaps the same ball must be used and a new moon must be shining, as on the night of the interrupted match.

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DIVISION 3A By Eddie Cameron

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Bath St. 'A'	14	13	0	1	109
Vagabonds	16	9	1	6	103
Sefton	16	9	4	3	102
Crawfords 'B'	17	10	4	3	101
L'pool YM 'C'	15	8	3	4	89
W'loo Park 'A'	15	8	3	4	88
CADWA 'A'	16	5	3	8	86
Maghull	14	5	3	6	77
Colonsay 'C'	16	4	8	4	64
Knotty Ash	15	4	9	2	64
L'pool Jewish 'B'	16	2	9	5	60
Beauchair 'B'	17	2	14	1	50
L.Y.C.A.	17	2	12	3	49
C. F. Mott	12	1	9	2	38

The monopoly in the Hyde Cup is complete, our Division provide all four semi-finalists with pride of place going to Waterloo Park who eliminated our prospective champions Bath St. All four teams are in with a real chance and I doubt if any of the remaining matches will finish with a margin in excess of 6-4.

Add two more of our top teams to the semi-finalists and we have six teams all capable of winning promotion from our sister division 3B, or so the opinion and talk goes. This leads to much speculation on what happens in the selection of the teams to compose the respective equal divisions. I have investigated this and can now give you an exclusive report of my findings.

It all started way back in the summer when most of us are very busy playing on the beaches, or may be enduring tiring pleasure drives in the sun, at this time two of our officials, the organising secretary and the fixture secretary, are relaxing in the lounge of one of their homes dreaming up mischief. They know which teams will make up the two third divisions because the League rules dictate promotion and relegation so they bring out their crystal ball and gazing into it intently, discover the exact strength of each team involved. This tells them that Sefton will bring back their stars, that Bath St. will strengthen their club from top to bottom, that Waterloo Park will need to find places in their 'A' team for two of their promotion boys, that Crawfords will regroup and so on and so on.

Then having established all this **THEY DELIBERATELY PLACE THE BEST SEVEN TEAMS IN DIVISION 3A.**

If you wish to take legal proceedings against the two officials concerned you are at liberty to subpoena me.

The battle in the League goes on: Vagabonds moving through their testing period with distinction including victories over Sefton and the Y.M. and bringing off a draw at Bath St., the first time Bath St. had conceded more than three. Below Vagabonds the cut throat continues and it may be as well now to consider the chances of Waterloo Park, after all they went one better than Vagabonds by beating Bath St. in the Cup. Coveney and Co. were really smarting under that drubbing from Waterloo and in the following League match took part revenge by beating Waterloo Park 8-2.

Waterloo have Bill Spencer at No. 1 and Stan Yeoman at No. 3 from last season's successful Division 2A team, but their strength is well spread with Delamere at No. 2, and Butchart and Olsen at 4 and 5. Butchart will be remembered from his R.A.F.A. days and as they have proved this team can, on its day, account for the best in the division. Somehow I feel they will fall short when the final reckoning is made, but it will not be for want of trying.

At the bottom L.Y.C.A. and C.F. Mott appear to be trying to outdo each other in the margin of their defeats, but those are harsh words, both are sporting teams fighting difficult odds and enjoying their table tennis. They are not up to the level of the leading teams but Coulson and Garside, their respective captains, are determined to make their opponents know they have a fight on their hands. It is always easy to maintain enthusiasm in winning teams but a much more difficult proposition to keep the flag flying in repeated defeats, all Leagues must have a bottom two teams and with L.Y.C.A. and C.F. Mott as precarious outposts of the League operating under difficult circumstances it is greatly to the credit of both clubs that they battle on so cheerfully and valiantly.

DIVISION 3B

By Colin Stock

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Bath St. 'B'	15	14	1	0	108
Eng. Elec. 'C'	16	10	5	1	92
Orrell	15	11	3	1	91
Trinity 'A'	14	10	3	1	90
Crawfords 'C'	15	7	5	3	85
W'tree Lab. 'C'	15	8	5	2	81
Panto	15	6	5	4	76
Coll. of Tech.	13	4	9	0	65
Beauclair 'C'	15	4	8	3	64
Hilltop	13	5	6	1	60
St. Elizabeth's	14	2	12	0	47
LPAS 'B'	14	1	11	2	44
University 'B'	12	1	10	1	34

Note—Linnet's Record expunged.

Well, who goes up with Bath St. ? Trinity crash 7-3 to Hilltop ; Orrell are again defeated by Bath St. by the same score. Wavertree Labour and English Electric hang on, still in striking distance. That about sums up the position at the top of the table, so let's have a look at some of the lower teams.

College of Technology may feel insulted to be called a lower team, for they still have an outside chance of promotion. K. C. Chan has been their most successful player with 17 from 24 sets played to his credit. F. Anderson has enjoyed success 12 out of 14 attempts, while Liddell, Ron Spencer and Lathom have all had their share of success.

Crawfords recently defeated St. Elizabeth's by 10-0, a fine performance when you consider that Geoff Edmunds was in the St. Elizabeth's line-up. T. Daly and J. Roper were Edmund's victors, both winning in the third. The only other St. Elizabeth player to show any resistance was West, who lost in the third to C. Porter.

Hilltop can once again thank Bobby Chew for two fine victories in the match with Trinity, when he accounted for Hulme and Abbott, both in straight sets. D. McGarragh, making his first appearance of the season for Hilltop, also scored a double. To complete Trinity's night of woe R. Bailey suffered a rare double defeat and Hankin, Abbott and Law could manage only one apiece.

Beauclair seem to save their better performances for the top teams. They have twice taken 4 sets from Bath St. this season, and were narrowly defeated 6-4 by English

Elec. Their best performance was in the recent match with Orrell, when the score finished 5 all, even though Beauclair forfeited two sets due to the non-arrival of one player. Orrell's other sets were won by Gordon Kirk (2) and Tony Morris, all in three games. Ken Hartley and Ken Sarr got doubles for Beauclair, with the fifth set ending in my favour, but only after a hard struggle with Gerry Brint.

With such players as Ron Cowler and Billy Cornthwaite in their side Panto have a side packed with experience, but their ace lies in the form of the colourful Alf Hayes, who has won all but four of his sets to date, including a fine win over T. Hanlon of Crawfords, the first defeat Hanlon has suffered this season. There is no truth in the rumour, however, that Alf insists on wearing the same outfit for each match as he wore when signing for Panto, while sunbathing on New Brighton beach.

I have just heard on the grapevine that Trinity have defeated Bath St. by 7-3, although as yet I have no details of the match.

DIVISION 4A

By Alan Wych

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Eng. Elec. 'D'	12	12	0	0	103
W'tree Lab. 'D'	13	9	3	1	83
University 'C'	12	9	2	1	78
LPAS 'C'	12	7	5	0	68
Palmerston 'A'	11	7	4	0	62
Bath St. 'D'	15	4	9	2	61
Essemmay	14	6	8	0	59
Colonsay 'D'	10	6	3	1	54
Knotty Ash 'B'	13	2	8	3	49
Rafters 'B'	12	2	9	1	46
St. Patrick's 'A'	13	3	9	1	40
Coll. of Tech. 'A'	12	1	9	2	39

Many thanks to Ken Armson for writing these notes last time whilst I was on holiday. It was very interesting to read the comments of someone who does not play in the division and who will see things as an outsider.

Before launching on the task of commenting on the latest games, may I take this opportunity of reminding teams to make an effort to arrive for matches on time. Matches are supposed to begin at 7-45 at the latest. In the case of St. Margaret's, and University, to

mention another, the premises have to be closed by a certain time. If teams are unsure of the way to an opponent's premises, they should allow for this, and set out earlier.

The only shock result in the batch of score-cards I have just received is the win by St. Lattrick's (away) against Wavertree Labour 'D', the score 6-4. R. Fletcher and M. Manley starred for the victors, winning both their sets. For the losers, A. Metcalf and P. Fleming won all the sets. M. Manley has been turning in some consistently good performances for St. Pat's. This player won their only set in a 9-1 defeat by English Electric 'D', and also won two in a bottom of the table battle with College of Tech. 'A'. This match was won by St. Pat's by 6 sets to 4. For the College E. Jenion and W. Marlow won two each.

While home from University for the Christmas vacation G. Latham served Bath St. very well. Playing at No. 1 he won their two sets in an 8-2 defeat at the hands of English Electric. He also did well in their 7-3 defeat by St. Margaret's. Bath St. 'D' have always been well served, of course, by R. Georgeson. He won two in the same match at St. Margaret's, and two in the win against Rafter's 'B' by 6 sets to 4.

A draw is always worth a few words, and there has been one since the last edition of the "Digest". It was between College of Tech. 'A' and Knotty Ash 'B'. G. Birch and P. Cairns won two each for the College, whose other set was won by E. Jenion. For the Diddy-landers, P. Normanton (2), Pownall, Rowlandson and A. Rawlinson won the five.

What a fine young side Colonsay 'D' are. They are a credit to Les French and Brian Lecson. We went to Bootle and we were well beaten 9-1. This young team also had a good win against Police 'C' by 6-4. Pam Fidler and Chris Lavelle won two each, whilst Alan Williams and Ian Shaw chipped in with one each. M. Lupton and E. Ferguson got a double each for the Police.

M. Jones continues to impress in the Rafter's 'B' team. He won his two against the English Elec. 'D'. Incidentally, unless something very drastic happens, the men from the

East Lanes. Road will be going up for the winners medals at the end of the season. Their regular team is too strong for this division and should do well in the higher sphere.

DIVISION 4B By Jack Lambert

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Mossley Hill 'A'	15	14	0	1	124
Bootle YM	14	12	1	1	113
Bath St. 'C'	13	9	3	1	77
Stanley House A	12	8	4	0	74
Pirates	11	8	3	0	71
St. Edward's 'A'	13	6	6	1	69
Knotty Ash 'A'	12	8	4	0	63
Eng. Elec. 'E'	15	4	9	2	63
Orrell 'A'	15	4	9	2	55
LPAS 'D'	13	2	11	0	42
Palatine	12	2	9	1	41
Lussac 'A'	14	1	11	2	31
Vagabonds 'A'	9	1	8	0	17

Newcomers Palatine hit the headlines by holding the strong Mossley Hill side to 4-6. O'Brien's 16-21, 21-15, 21-19 defeat of Godby being one of the season's best performances.

Two bottom of the table clashes provided exciting games, Vagabonds beating Orrell 6-4. Storzaker winning two and Orrell fielding a line up with four of the fair sex in it. While

Cheetham won two of his side's 5 sets against English Elec., Sylvia Craig stole the honours. At 5-4 down she won the final set and a drink from D. Money, to the delight of her team mates and their first draw. Evans won two for Electric, who also scored his sides only two sets against Pirates, who lost to Orrell 6-4, who no doubt welcomed the win and points but regretted that only Walsh played two sets—which he won.

Burke of Lussac and Wade of Palatine scored their side's solo wins against Stanley House and Orrell respectively, the latter two being more than pleased with their 9 points.

Bath St. keep plodding away nicely and despite the individual stars of Pirates look a good bet for third place with an astute captain in Letch and a solid No. 1 in Marsh. They meet English Elec. 'D' in the semi-final which should be a very interesting game. The other semi, of course, brings together our top

two—Mossley Hill and Bootle YMCA. The carrier pigeon tells me that Bootle crashed 8-2 to Mossley Hill recently. I have no details to hand, but I prefer to assess the game, which should provide the eventual winners, on their previous 5-5 draw, which should make a very open game.

St. Edward's have had a tough but creditable month, while they have not won they have taken nine points from the top three, thanks to the good form of Hughes mainly.

Lowe and Wright of Knotty Ash won two sets each against the Police in the same game, which Knotty Ash won 7-3, Catterson beat Davies 26-24, 24-22. Catterson as usual is winning sets regularly and Davies is now hitting his top form.

DIVISION 5 By Kevin Baker

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Odyssey	9	8	0	1	73
Sandforth	9	8	1	0	72
W'loo Park 'B'	10	6	1	3	68
I,YCA 'A'	11	7	4	0	59
Maghull 'A'	12	2	8	2	59
Knotty Ash 'C'	12	4	8	0	51
Sandforth 'A'	11	4	5	2	50
Mossley Hill 'B'	8	3	5	0	33
C.F. Mott 'A'	9	3	6	0	28
L'pool Para.	9	0	9	0	7

There is going to be a mini-battle between Sandforth and Odyssey for Championship and Cup recognition. For the League I rather fancy Sandforth on the strength that they hold the same team every match whilst Odyssey change their line-up now and then. In the Cup I give the advantage to Odyssey unless Lou Cohen (Sandforth) can prove me wrong.

In the Sandforth v. Odyssey League match the latter won 6-4, taking one from Ken Jones, three from Audrey Gee and her husband Tom and one each from Cliff Barton and myself. K. Wright of Odyssey played at No. 4 in that match instead of his usual No. 2, but I suppose that's tactics—it certainly paid off! But in the Cup let's not eliminate Waterloo Park 'B' before they have even played Odyssey.

At the other end of the table it's a certain wooden spoon for Liverpool Para., they just can't win, but as long as they don't get disheartened they may win one yet. Further up Mossley Hill 'B' don't seem to be

doing all that well which seems a pity, quite good players in this team, particularly Miss S. Luft. This girl has a good attacking game, but in this League it won't count for everything. She must learn to wait for her chance, then smash the ball the way she did against G. Baker (Sandforth 'A') many times, but losing in the end to this very steady defender.

On Monday, 19th February W'loo Park 'B' battle for a final place in the Stamp Cup against Odyssey at the Bohs. Stadium. Neither team has the home advantage as this is a neutral venue, so as long as W'loo Park don't take to the bar they have a chance!

The following evening Sandforth do battle with the Mossley Hill crowd and the best of British to the latter.

WOMEN'S DIVISION

By Mabel Francis

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Crawfords	13	12	0	1	117
Palmerston	11	10	1	0	86
CADWA	12	9	2	1	78
Rafters	11	7	3	1	71
Crawfords 'A'	9	5	3	1	56
Colonsay	11	4	7	0	54
Bibbys	11	3	8	0	40
Linnets	11	3	7	1	38
Bath St.	9	3	5	1	32
Linnets 'A'	9	1	8	0	15
Colonsay 'A'	10	0	10	0	10

Crawfords have slightly increased their lead over Palmerston and look like keeping it. The bottom two teams seem settled too, but there has been much shuffling around the middle, only Bibby's keeping the same place. CADWA and Rafters have each jumped one position, pushing Colonsay down to 6th place—the biggest drop—but this team is still in fighting form. In my last notes I omitted to mention the remainder of this Colonsay team, they are Jean Lancaster and Christine Lavelle (who has also played for the Ladies 'A' team).

Bath St. do not have the regular services of Barbara Taylor, hence their more lowly position than was anticipated.

Unfortunately C. F. Mott Ladies' team have been requested to withdraw from the League and their records expunged (Rule 20)—their

entry into the League being rather brief.

The return match between Palmerston and Cadwa was a repeat of the score 7-3, again in favour of the former, but this time Barbara Cain overcame Judy Crafter. The Bartholomew Cup semi-final between them will be something to watch. For a reminder—this is to be held at Crawfords on Monday, 11th March.

Rafters are regaining a bit more ground and Crawfords 'A' are doing well. This team really does enjoy its table tennis. Lil Wynne has also been a priceless reserve for their 1st team.

Bibby's have lost the loyal services

of Reg Jones (Royle), a player of high standard over the years, who has retired for the moment for family reasons. They have signed on Lynne Gordon who did play for them successfully a couple of years ago, being an acquisition for Wirral also.

A stalwart of the old Oakhill club, then Crawfords, Muriel Pickthall, has had to "unhappily" give up her regular game of table tennis, due to an eye operation. This is the lady who took up the game at 61 years of age and when asked why she didn't enter the Veteran's event (at the Closed) said she would do so if they made it for the over seventies!

Some Ambitions

- | | |
|--|--|
| Stan Harvey (Crawfords) | To see matches start at 7.30. |
| Jack Lambert (English Electric) | Not to stick a postage stamp on a score card. |
| Les French (Colonsay) | To provide Liverpool Ladies' teams entirely from his own club. |
| Dave Cohen (Liverpool Jewish) | To post a score card on time. |
| Don Cameron (ditto) | To see sponge bats banned. |
| 3A Team Captains | To avoid being embarrassed by Sefton requesting permission for Alfie Biggs to come late (after playing in Business House matches). |
| Ken Armson (Editor) | To receive all his copy on time. |
| Tom Gordon (English Electric) | To see an end of twin stream leagues. |
| 800 Other Players | To retain twin league streams. |
| Ted Mandaluff (L'pool Y.M.) | To play a 4 hour set. |
| Eddie Clein (English Electric) | To play a 4½ hour set. |
| Eddie Cameron (Fixture Sec.) | To see doubles introduced in league matches. |
| P. Coughlin (Mossley Hill) | To take over the secretary's job from John O'Sullivan. |
| K. Fitzsimmons (Linnets) | To find something in the "Digest" worth making an effort to write in about. |
| Selection Committee | To select a Men's team which receives unanimous approval. |
| Pete D'Arcy (English Electric) | To play a team playing in 'Order of Merit.' |
| Brian Leeson (Tournament Sec.) | To have to turn down offers of assistance at tournaments. |
| C. Roberts (St. Elizabeth's) | To play in silence at Crawfords on a decent table. |
| J. Molyneux (T.T. Ball) | To play dressed like an eskimo! |
| Judy Crafter and Mabel Francis | To beat all the men. |
| The Men | To beat Judy and Mabel. |