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**TABLE
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DIGEST**

Official Magazine

OF THE

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

TABLE **DIGEST** TENNIS

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— Editorial Board —

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S. D. Cameron, R. Hebson

Vol. 18

MARCH, 1968

No. 4.

Editorial

Firstly my apologies for the late arrival of the February issue which was due to circumstances beyond our control.

Entry forms for the 'Closed' championships were delivered with the last issue and we are hoping for a record entry to christen our new venue. I have not myself seen the playing conditions at New Hey, but I understand they are far superior to last year's venue. We hope you will let us have your views on this venue for publication.

We are experimenting this season by printing the 'Closed' tournament rules in the "Digest" and you will find them on Page 7 of this issue. If this is considered successful it will probably be extended next season to include the entry form.

The service rule continues to be ignored by the majority of players and I have heard of a number of cases of ill-feeling as a result of umpires trying to enforce this rule. Can we hope that players and umpires at the 'Closed' will observe this rule correctly and avoid any unnecessary incidents.

The A.G.M. will soon be with us and now is the time to put into concrete form any ideas you may have to improve the league in any way. We have already received one suggestion which is well worth consideration in these days of ever increasing costs. One of the divisional writers has also aired his views in his article, and the "Digest" is available for anyone else who would like to put forward their views.

Two clubs, Liverpool Paraplegice and C. F. Mott, have at this late stage withdrawn their teams from the league. In the case of the Saraplegics this is very unfortunate as the Management Committee have tried to fit them in and I am sure their opponents have made every effort to assist them. Their opposite numbers in Southport are very successful members (don't I know it !) of the Southport & District League and I can see no reason why the Liverpool Paraplegics should not have been successful with us.

Since the commencement of the season we have lost no less than 10 teams. Some of these have been the result of clubs over-estimating the number of players they would have available. This is a matter of concern to all and we must try and make sure that it does not occur again.

The failure of clubs who win League Trophies to have them engraved is causing some concern, and in an effort to overcome this it has been decided that clubs who win a cup this year must return it at the Liverpool Closed. The cups will be engraved and will be returned at the A.G.M. So, don't forget, if you win a cup this season make sure you return it as requested, for this is in your own interests.

While Jim Green is recovering from his unfortunate disposition, I am trying to carry out his Match Secretary duties, one of which involves writing these notes for the "Digest". It is a pleasure to report first of all, however, that Jim is now out of hospital and making good progress.

Jim's notes in the February issue made much of the success of the Ladies' 1st team, and quite rightly so. Since then the team has defeated Manchester 6-4, and now everything depends on the match against Stockport at Crawfords on March 22nd. As long as Judy, Barbara and Mabel keep fit we ought to . . . but no, let's wait and simply wish the team Good Luck.

The Ladies 'A' team finished their season with a defeat, 7-3 at Southport, so their final record is two victories (Bury and Burnley) and three defeats (Oldham, Warrington and Southport). I hope, however, that Sam, Jean and Janet have learned a lot from this year's experience of inter-City matches and this perhaps will be evident next season.

The Men's 1st team recently gained a 6-4 win at home to Sreston. Gordon Birch was unable to play in this match and George Smith (YM), who replaced him almost at the last minute, played brilliantly to win his three singles and, with Peter D'Arcy, took the doubles. Arthur Taylor and Peter won one set each to complete the six. With one match at Lytham still to be played (March 22nd) the team's record now reads Won 3, Lost 3, Drawn 1.

The 'A' team has not had a successful season and with only one match left (at home to Preston 'A'

on March 29th) a win of no less than 8-2 must be achieved if relegation is to be avoided. Roy Smith has been the only really successful player, but so often a last minute reserve has had to be called out, it's been difficult to field a settled team. One win and six defeats is the present record, but maybe it will be two wins after March 29th. I hope so.

The Youth team, with one game at Salford still to play, has won three, drawn one and lost five. Richard Heath has produced the best results, beating thirteen opponents and losing only two, but it must be pointed out that he missed the hardest matches against Blackburn and Blackburn 'A'. Alan Dean has played in all the matches with a 50 per cent. average to date. While Ian Wensley has been the least successful of the team.

The Juniors, although their record has been rather disappointing, have gained in experience this season. Alan Williams has played in all matches and also on occasions acted as reserve for the Youth team, all in his first season in competitive Table Tennis. Michael Jones is now improving steadily, while John Barton, who also began playing only this season, should have much success ahead of him. With Peter Fleming, Ian Shaw and Harry Evans in addition, next season's results should be more pleasing. Only one match has still to be completed, against Chester on March 22nd. I must, incidentally, thank Gordon Birch, who has been coaching the Junior boys during the season nearly every Sunday afternoon. I hope the time and work he has put in with the boys will bear fruit in the near future.

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A New Name

Just after 10-30 p.m. on Wed., March 13th, at the English Electric, Roy Jones of YMCA put one of his renowned forehand smashes off the table, signalling scenes of tremendous enthusiasm from W'tree Labour supporters in the knowledge that their team had just achieved a winning margin of 6 sets to 2. What the feelings of Eddie Moran, the W'tree Labour captain, were at that moment, only he will know, but as he was Roy Jones' opponent, it must have been a great moment for him to win the all important set, and savour the pleasures of being captain of a team that had won the Readman Cup for the first time.

Not Easy

Although victory was theirs at 6-2 (final score 6-4) let nobody run away with the idea that this was anything but a closely fought contest. From the start after Wavertree had won the toss and elected to be the away side, it was obvious that the run of the ball and any carelessness would be paid for dearly, and so it proved. The opening set between Turtle and Rigby was to prove invaluable to W'tree Labour. After Turtle had easily taken the first 21-13, he had match point at 20-19 in the second, only to be denied and lose the game 23-25. The third was fairly even, until at 15-17 Turtle served a fault, opening a gap he was unable to plug, and Rigby took it at 21-16, and with it a vital 0-1 lead.

Eddie Moran in the second event of the evening, proved a little too good for Mehta (YM) winning 9 and 15 thereby opening up a 0-2 lead. I think it fair to say that the third set between Hurworth and Mandaluff really was the crux of the match, and the result put the Y.M. fairly on the rack. Mandaluff, after losing the first 21-13, really got dug in, and although a long lead had been whittled away by Hurworth, he finally arrived at match point at 20-18. This was where the carelessness I have mentioned, and a little luck swayed the whole match the W'tree Labour's way. Mandaluff served into the net, to be followed

immediately by an irretrievable net cord from Hurworth to get 20 all.

Plenty of patience from Hurworth brought him a 24-22 victory, and a lead for his team of 3-0. We then had a cracker of a match between Roy Jones and Roy Smith with the YMCA man winning 21-17, 18-21, 21-11.

Not His Night

With the score at 3-1 Wavertree made a good tactical move by nominating Owens to play Mandaluff, and again, although Ted had several periods of ascendancy, he was unable to press home the advantage. Owens, like Hurworth, showed considerable patience and made it 4-1, winning 21-14, 16-21, 21-13. George Smith accounted for Hurworth 16 & 12 to make it 4-2, but Owens proved too good for Mehta, winning in two straight, 19 & 12 to restore the three sets lead.

Cool Captain

At 2-5 down the Y.M. obviously had to try and stem the tide, and they reckoned Roy Jones was the man to stop the rot and put him on against the W'tree Labour captain Eddie Moran. Moran proved himself not only to be an astute captain, but also a very cool-headed player. He must have known, as we all do, the way in which Roy can dictate most games if he wishes, but he set out to stop Jones doing this, and very successfully too. Adroit use of the table, coupled to his own no mean game, tied his opponent up to such an extent that the Y.M. man was never able to break out. In winning 14 & 17 Moran made history for his club, an occasion he will no doubt cherish for many a long year.

The last two sets were rather academic with Smith beating Rigby 17-21, 21-17, 21-11 and Turtle defeating Smith 19 & 22.

Congratulations to the Labour Club in winning the Readman Cup for the first time. Thank you to both teams for good entertainment and sportsmanship, which started before the match commenced, with a handshake between the rival captains.

Letters to the Editor

24 Park Lane,
Liverpool 10.

Dear Sir,

I feel I must take Jim Green to task for the contents of his column in the February issue of the "Digest". Not, as he might think, for giving his own personal views in the notes, but because of an article which appeared in the November 1960 issue of the "Digest". From this article entitled 'The Team Captain', I quote the following extract. "We have heard complaints of reserves playing at No. 1. THAT IS THE RIGHT AND PROPER POSITION FOR A RESERVE. Quite obviously if he were good enough to win sets, even at No. 5 in his team, he would already be a regular member. If he is going to lose two, better to grant these to the opposing 1 & 2, than to weaken Nos. 4 & 5. By moving down his team-mates have a better opportunity of winning. So the filling of a score-card before the match virtually becomes a guessing competition, and the best guesser usually gives his team a flying start".

I was very surprised to find that the February notes and the above passage were written by the same person, particularly when I read that Rafter's are now classed as "a shining example to the rest of us—with reserves being brought in at the tail-end".

What caused this change in the thoughts of Chairman Mao-Tse-Green?

Does his philosophy now read—"Jim, he say, No. 1 right and proper position for reserve, providing reserves name Gunnion R."

Yours sincerely,

DAVE BERRY
(Beauclair T.T.C.).

Editor's Note. The above letter has been cleared by the Chinese Embassy who are quite agreeable to their leader's name being coupled with that of the redoubtable 'J.G.' and we are sending him a copy of 'Thoughts of Chairman Mao'.

44 Wavertree Green,
Liverpool 15.

Dear Sir,

Re Mr. Robert's letter in the last issue, I too often find Crawford's table too slow, Colonsays too fast, W'tree Labours too narrow and Rafter's too short. Come to think of it I have lost on most tables in the league. It can't be me—it must be the tables at fault in each case.

Yours sincerely,

E. CAMERON
(Crawfords T.T.C.).

3 Glenside,
Liverpool 18.

Dear Sir,

Now that the twin division system seems to be here to stay I would like to suggest that the idea be taken a stage further and the divisions regionalised. The recent increase in bus fares brings the cost of a journey from Mossley Hill to Bootle Y.M. up to 3/6d. return and I feel that this, coupled with the time taken in travelling and late arrival home after a match, may be depriving the league of many younger players that we can ill-afford if we are to maintain our strength in the future.

To illustrate my argument, in 4A we have Colonsay, Bath St. and Police. While in 4B we have Bootle Y.M., Orre., Bath St. and Police 'D'. Also in 4A we have Palmerston, W'tree Labour and Linnets 'F', while in 4B they have Linnets and Mossley Hill. A journey to Bootle Y.M. took me one hour, to Bath St. 75 minutes. Such journeys may well be justified in the 1st and 2nd divisions, but in my opinion they are ridiculous in the lower divisions.

Finally I would like to make a strong plea for PROMPT STARTS next season. Hardly one match I have played in this season has started before 7-45, and in some cases after 8 p.m.

Yours faithfully,

ERNEST W. STURGESS
(Lussac T.T.C.).

Net Cords

By T. T. Ball

Shame on our Editor! After agreeing to reveal my name at the head of the column, he now prints two articles apparently written by nobody, worse still, one of these describes me as a sort of male "Eskimo Nell".

:: :: :: ::

One of the hazards of scoring not mentioned by Mabel Francis is the character who yells "Hard luck" as the ball touches the table at his end. The same bloke is also very quick to apologise as his shot hits the side of the table.

:: :: :: ::

Ken "The Fink" Armson points out that having stated my approval of the order of merit, I played a reserve at No. 2. Well, it was after my brilliant tactical move that succeeded in losing us this vital match that I became a confirmed "order of merit" man—occasionally!!

:: :: :: ::

The 'cold war' at the top is beginning to warm up!! The secretary of Wavertree Labour entered the bar at English Electric, and was immediately attacked by a huge alsatian dog. The latest bulletin states that the dog should recover from its dose of alcoholic poisoning!! To add insult to 'injury' the bar was not even open at the time!!

:: :: :: ::

I notice that Eddie Clein was referred to as the "Ironman" of English Electric. Well then, if Tommy Smith is the 'Anfield Iron' does that make Eddie the 'Electric Iron'?

:: :: :: ::

I liked the letter from C. Roberts, although I'm not too sure whether I liked the bit where he compared this column with Crawfords table!

:: :: :: ::

I don't think that there is any truth in the rumour that the Police are thinking of providing oxygen masks half-way up to their new room!

:: :: :: ::

Definition of an optimist: Somebody who goes to watch a YMCA v. English Electric match, and takes his kit in order to practice after the match.

:: :: :: ::

Finally, a special word for Gordon Birch who has devoted his Sunday afternoons to coaching juniors at the English Electric. Youngsters from a number of clubs have attended and the League as a whole must benefit in the future.

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International Players — Where do they come from ?

By Philip Reid

John Molyneux bemoans the fact that it is so long since Liverpool produced a nationally ranked player. He should not, however, feel that this means there is anything wrong with Liverpool table tennis as many other large cities can produce comparable records, or non-records.

Liverpool's only recent international player, has of course been Ralph Gunnion and he did not get capped until he moved to Warwickshire to play. Since moving there he has become very popular and when not required for senior duty he captains the Warwickshire County Junior team. So there is nothing wrong with his enthusiasm. However, back to the question: Where do internationals come from? In the main—London. Obviously there are so many players there that regular practice amongst the best ones is taken for granted and they are bound to improve. The list from London is pretty extensive if not actually exclusive—Chester Barnes (London), Stuart Gibbs (London), Brian Wright (London), Connie Warren (London). Birmingham, England's second largest city, seems to produce virtually no international players at all. Manchester have had Mike Symonds in recent years but no one else. Bristol—nobody (since Aubrey Simmons). Gloucestershire have been remarkably successful in having Ian Harrison and Bryan Merrett and two other players close to international class in Roy Morley and Dennis Holland. Out of the Home Counties Yorkshire's record looks most impressive with current England No. 1 Denis Neale (Middlesborough) and new international Alan Hydes (Barnsley). Neale is, I think, so talented that he would have been capped easily enough whichever County he had played for. At trials his potential would have stood out a mile. Hydes was fortunate in that he has so great a player as Neale to play and this must have speeded Alan's game up. Many Counties would dearly love to have an international player of their own and it is quite obvious that with such a player the standard in that County would improve. But how to get one?

We in Leicestershire have never had an international player of any sort—junior or senior. But there are fond hopes we shall be able to do something about this within the next two years. It is clearly easier to help a junior than a senior in that a very good senior will find hardly anyone within that county who can extend him. If there are many—and it is a county outside the Premier Division—then it is obvious he is not very near international class. With a junior it is different. All the county men's team would beat him—otherwise he would be in the county 1st team. By regular practice against them—or some of them—his game will improve by leaps and bounds. Going to Open tournaments is one of the best ways of improving. And there are also the coaches in the county who will be pleased to advise and help.

If a junior does well at the Area trials, there are National trials. A good performance there and an international cap could be just around the corner. Having achieved that the aim must be more Open tournaments, more play against the top players. It will take a lot of effort and will mean sacrifices. But international caps are only for those so dedicated. Eventually an invitation to attend the Senior trials will follow if the results justify it. Good results in County matches and some good tournament results are a 'must'. The selectors are not likely to let any prospect slip away, but having been invited some good performances at the Senior trials are of course essential. Good play will probably be rewarded with a place in the International squad. Then all that remains is to keep hard at it and wait for the letter which begins—"You have been selected to play against etc." Hard work? Of course it is. But work it will have to be. And the end product is worth it for the dedicated.

We think we have the players who can get there, and I imagine Liverpool's must be just as strong as ours, probably better. So . . . let's hope for the day when we see something

like this—WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL — ENGLAND v. CHINA: England 5, China 0. England's twin threat of Bill Smith (Liverpool) and Johnny Jones (Leics.) have done it again, and assisted by

Jimmy Johnson at No. 3, the team have carried England to the World Championship title." A pipe-dream? Yes, I'm afraid so. But . . . an international cap? That shouldn't be impossible. But it will be hard work.

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

CLOSED LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS 1968

New Heys Comprehensive School, Greenhill Rd., Liverpool 1

On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, April 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th

Finals: Friday, April 19th, 1968 (7.30 p.m.)

Closing date for entries: April 5th, 1968

Hon. Tournament Secretary and Referee: Mr. B. A. Leeson

Directions: 86/87 buses to Heath Road. Walk along Heath Rd., then turn right into Greenhill Rd.

Spectators: 1/- to each session EXCEPT Friday (2/-)

Competitors admitted free to any session on production of Competitors ticket.

Regulations.

1. This tournament is restricted to registered members of this league.
2. The Tournament Sub-Committee may restrict or reject entries. Any entry posted after the closing date or without the correct fee is liable to be rejected.
3. Events 6 and 7 are open only to players under 17 on July 1st, 1967. Event 10 is open to players aged 40 or over on that date. Birth certificates must be produced if demanded by the Hon. Tournament Secretary.
4. Events 8 and 9 are open to players who have played in Events 1 and 3 and have been eliminated in their first round played.
5. Competitors ticket stating time of attendance will be sent to each competitor. Players should be **ready to play** at the time so stated and will be scratched IF ABSENT WHEN CALLED.
6. No player may substitute another to play in his stead.
7. The tournament shall be conducted under the Laws of Table Tennis as adopted by the I.T.T.F. The tournament will be run on the knock-out principle, the best of three games to be played in each tie.
8. Each tie shall be umpired. The decision of the umpire on a question of fact and the Hon. Referee on a question of law shall be final.
The decision of the Management Committee shall be final on any question not provided for in these Regulations or any dispute as to their interpretation.
9. A losing player is required to umpire the next set on the same table.
10. The Hon Referee may impose a time limit on players adopting time wasting tactics.
11. NO PART OF A TRACK SUIT SHALL BE WORN DURING PLAY.

Service. ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE NEW SERVICE LAW.
(See Page 15 in your Handbook).

Dress. SEE LEAGUE RULE No. 19—Match Regulation 8.

Time for a Change ?

asks K. Armson (Wav. Lab.).

The Twin-stream system is now well settled and generally accepted by most members as being a good system. However one glaring fault is now apparent and we would do well to consider this and make whatever changes may be necessary to eradicate it.

I refer to the system of promotion and relegation to and from the First Division. Four up and four down is too many as each season most of those promoted are again relegated as they are not strong enough to gain a foothold in the 1st division. Similarly, one up and one down under the present set-up would not be acceptable as the promotion issue would be settled before the season was very old.

The obvious answer to this problem is to re-arrange the structure slightly and have one 1st, one 2nd, two 3rd, two 4th and one or two 5th as required. Promotion and relegation to be, 5th to 4th, four up and four down. 4th to 3rd—as at present. 3rd to 2nd—4 up and 4 down. 2nd to 1st—two up and two down.

The 5th division would be used to filter teams into the higher divisions and the 2nd division would filter them out into the 1st. Good teams would still be able to rise quickly to reach their ability level and the one 2nd division would ensure that only the best teams had a chance to go for the 1st division, and once there they would have a better chance to hold their own.

The present system has made a farce of our premier division and has belittled 1st division status, as due

to the 4 up and 4 down system we are over-run with players who can call themselves ex-1st division! We also have the ridiculous position of teams hoping they will not be promoted as they know what will be in store for them the next season. To acquire 1st division status should be a target worth aiming for and the opportunity should go only to those teams who by their ability have won the right to do so. This has not been happening the last few seasons and it has been a fairly simple matter to forecast the relegation candidates from the 1st division.

This alteration would not interfere with the main principle of the twin-stream system and may even make the divisions a bit more equal in strength. The actual introduction would be difficult as it would involve 50% of the 2nd division becoming part of the 3rd and the same with the 3rd and 4th divisions. We could, however, adopt the method used by the football league when they altered their divisions. This would defer the introduction for one season and would give teams the opportunity of playing off for their divisional status.

To those who I know will say, leave it alone, it's pretty satisfactory, I ask this question—can anything be that good that it cannot be improved?

I am hoping that my own club committee will agree to put this forward as a proposal for the A.G.M. if we can be assured of sufficient support from other clubs.

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Around the Divisions

DIVISION 1.

By Jim Green

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
W'tree Labour	17	14	2	1	135
English Elec.	17	13	1	3	119
L'pool YMCA	15	13	0	2	116
W'tree Lab. 'A'	17	10	7	0	95
Bath St.	17	8	4	5	92
L'pool Y.M. 'A'	15	9	4	2	88
Rafters	16	6	8	2	76
Waterloo Park	20	3	14	3	69
Mossley Hill	15	3	7	5	67
Beauclair	18	6	12	0	63
Linnets	17	3	13	1	61
Linnets 'A'	17	0	15	2	29

There is still a great element of doubt with regard to the championship, for Wavertree Labour are piling on the pressure on the Y.M. for the top of the table position. That the Readman Cup Final is to be contested by the same two teams seems one of those inevitabilities . . . the two strongest sides to meet in the final.

English Electric have given up the race, and will be content (?) with third place. Peter D'Arcy is having his worst season for some years, and the poor form displayed by Rod McPherson throughout has been another contributory cause for their failure to dog the heels of the top two.

Be that as it may, they are far too much behind now to afford any danger to the two leaders. I say the "two" leaders because there is so little between them that it is any man's choice for the ultimate winner. Both have to meet the same teams excepting that the Y.M. have still to play English Electric and their own 'A' team and the Labour club have yet to play their own 'A' team. Then, with the two teams meeting in the last match of the season it looks as though the last game of all will settle the matter.

Since so many people have asked me, I suppose I'd better give a forecast, although I don't really want to. I think it will be as close a thing as we have yet seen, with L'pool Y.M. just ahead!! Okay!! Okay!! So my name is mud in Picton Road! So I've lost every friend I ever had in Liverpool 15! But the Labour club are now engaged

in the title fight for the first time ever, and are desperately eager to win, while it is an old story to the battle-scarred veterans of the YMCA.

It is a different story at the other end of the table where the two Linnets teams, Waterloo Park and Beauclair are engaged in a battle to escape relegation.

Linnets 'A' are now doomed with no earthly possible chance of escape. With the two Bohs. teams having dropped out it means only one of the other three will go down.

With Frank Thomas and Gordon Excell back in action Linnets should escape with very little difficulty for they have slightly the easier programme to complete the season. I rather fancy that Beauclair will live to fight another day. But both of these forecasts could easily be wrong Table Tennis being the uncertain game it is.

Credit should be given to the Labour team for a 6-4 victory over English Electric when both Pete Hurworth and Eddie Moran beat D'Arcy. Eddie Moran and Tony Rigby beating Rod McPherson and Roy Smith and Rigby both beating Fred Pheysey.

Full marks also to Arthur Taylor (Bath St.) who beat Pete D'Arcy 21-9, 25-23, and to Linnets who beat Rafters 6-4 away. John Kenwright (Mossley Hill) had a double win over Ted Mandaluff and George Smith in a 7-3 loss to the Y.M. Eric Youd won the third set with a win over Harry Johnston. Waterloo Park got a valuable 10 points by means of two drawn matches at Bath St. and Rafters. So whoever goes down eventually can say they have gone down fighting.

We hope to see you all at the Liverpool 'Closed' although I am afraid the chances are I shall not be there myself. May I take this opportunity of thanking the multitude of people who have sent letters and cards to me and also those who have 'phoned my home during my illness. I hope to acknowledge these many kind thoughts personally, but at the present the doctor forbids too much writing.

DIVISION 2A. By Ken Armson

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Cadwa	17	10	0	0	150
Linacre	17	13	3	1	109
W'tree Lab. 'B'	17	10	4	3	105
Crawfords 'A'	17	11	4	2	104
Stanley House	17	7	6	4	91
Eng. Elec. 'A'	16	10	5	1	90
Colonsay 'A'	17	4	9	4	81
L'pool Jewish	16	4	7	5	77
Rafters 'A'	17	6	9	2	72
Lussac	18	1	14	3	44
L.P.A.S. 'A'	17	2	14	1	40
University 'A'	14	2	11	3	38
Linnets 'C' (Record expunged)					

It looks as if my remarks regarding Linacre are going to be correct for they not only beat Crawfords in the semi-final, but also in their first league clash 6-4. Besides this good win they have also been winning all their matches this year by big margins, their only defeat being at the hands of the Labour club. The Labour club as well as being hand-capped by insufficient reserve strength, have also been dropping quite a few other soft sets and unless they improve their winning scores they will lose this fight to Linacre, who have already overtaken them.

The position of the clubs behind these two is still unchanged. At least four more are in with a chance and in the unlikely event of both Linacre and the Labour slipping up any one of them could take over.

Linacre, like Crawfords 'A' have used the same players most of the time and have also varied their order slightly from time to time and this is now showing dividends in their big wins. They have suffered only two defeats, both to the Labour club who have themselves been beaten only twice, each time by Crawfords 'A' who in turn suffered their only defeat at the hands of Linacre. Sort that one out!! They have all, of course, been defeated by Cadwa.

Of the runners-up in this struggle Stanley House appear to be one of the strongest. They have either been narrowly defeated or drawn with the stronger contenders and have earned the respect of all their opponents, especially A. Lyn and H. Brown currently at Nos. 1 & 2 and turning in good performances.

English Electric who are well placed in the table with a very slim chance of promotion and no fears of relegation have used this as a chance to blood their youngest player, Harry Evans, in the higher sphere. Only his lack of big match temperament has prevented Harry from gaining the regular place in the junior team which his ability deserves and this is certainly the best way of not only getting him used to more important matches, but also giving him experience in a higher standard of play. Other clubs similarly placed and with young players available would do well to copy this as it is the best way of bringing a player on quickly and giving him a chance to show he has got what it takes to get to the top. All those Nos. 4's and 5's who treasure their averages had best watch out as I have a feeling Harry may bring a few of those averages down.

Rafters 'A' who are the last of the good teams in the division are another team who with no promotion or relegation worries can enjoy their game and cannot be taken lightly by any of their opponents. Like Cadwa and Crawfords they have a woman player as one of their main props. They have made use of two women players, Joyce Reynolds and Eileen Mansell, and both of these have given a good account of themselves and no one can afford to underestimate either of them.

We have lost our wooden spoonists Linnets 'C' who have been withdrawn from the league due to internal club problems. However, all credit to the Linnets club who have taken this drastic step rather than allow offenders of the club rules to get off scot free. This means that we will not now have any teams relegated, but will have instead at least three teams promoted from the 3rd divisions.

Lussac, Police and University now have a little league of their own down there and it looks as if University will be the losers as they have been doing very badly and have no chance of overtaking the Police, who in spite of their lowly position have had some extremely good results including a 6-4 win over English Electric in a 4 a-side match.

DIVISION 2B By Jerry O'Keeffe

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
L'pool Y.M. 'B'	21	20	0	1	163
Colonsay	20	17	2	1	151
Trinity	20	14	2	4	132
L.P.A.S.	21	12	6	3	125
Crawfords	21	10	7	4	110
Eng. Elec. 'B'	19	10	7	2	105
University	20	10	9	1	105
Beauclair 'A'	20	9	10	1	93
Sparta	21	6	13	2	90
L'pool Jew. 'A'	20	8	10	2	85
St. Edwards	20	3	14	3	71
Linnets 'B'	21	4	15	2	71
Colonsay 'B'	19	2	15	2	57
Palmerston	19	1	16	2	52

With the season drawing to a close it is possible to risk a forecast of the final league positions at the top and bottom of the table. At the top I would predict, 1st YMCA, 2nd Colonsay and 3rd English Elec. While at the bottom, Palmerston, Liverpool Jewish and St. Edwards will be fighting to avoid the wooden spoon. Since writing this I have had another look at the latest batch of score cards and see that Trinity have been doing very well lately and may upset that forecast of the top three and also Linnets 'B' may be involved in the bottom of the table struggle.

George Morgan scored Linnets only success in their 9-1 defeat by Y.M. He gained a good two straight win, 21-13, 21-8, over Don Piper. He didn't have any luck against Colonsay however who beat Linnets 10-0.

B. S. Alexander of Palmerston had a good night against Y.M. when he won both his team's sets in a 8-2 defeat. Again Colonsay defeated the same team 10-0, but this was due to Palmerston conceding a walk-over. W. Holmes of Sparta was the player who prevented another 10-0 win by the Y.M. who again had to be satisfied with a 9-1 victory. The Y.M. registered a very fine 10-0 win over Crawfords, even Mike Truman could not register a win for Crawfords here.

Whilst clearing out a drawer at home recently I found a copy of the March 1960 issue of the "Digest". It was rather interesting to compare names, etc., with the latest issue.

There were of course six straight divisions in those days, followed by the North, South, East and Central Regions. St. Edwards O.B. and

Crawfords were leading the race in the East Region, while the Police were around mid-table in Div. 4. Liverpool Y.M. 'B' were heading for promotion from Div. 4 to Div. 3, although I suppose the members of the present team were more interested in the 11-plus in those days. Beauclair 'A' were holding their own in the South region along with English Electric 'B'. None of the other inmates of 2B seem to have been in existence then. I cannot find any mention of Palmerton, Sparta, Liverpool Jewish, Colonsay or Trinity.

There was a letter from a victim of the dreaded sandwich bat, which ended with the remark that "as table tennis equipment sandwich bats would make good fire-lighters." How many times, I wonder, has he had cause to regret those remarks now that the sandwich bat is so well entrenched!?

What a lot of clubs have gone out of existence since then. For example, Balfour, Victoria Park, Bohemians, Oakhill, Anfield, Litherland, Lucem, Waterloo Dock, Fairlawn, Harold House, Warbreck Moor, Florence Oxtan and quite a few others.

I wonder how long the Table Tennis "Digest" has been running. It would certainly be interesting for players to browse through earlier editions. Is there a library of old editions somewhere?

Editor's Note. The "Digest" was first printed in 1950-51 and there are quite a number of players who have kept all the issues. One member, Jim Green, has had his made up into volumes.

DIVISION 3A. By Eddie Cameron

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Bath St. 'A'	20	18	1	1	153
Crawfords 'B'	21	12	7	3	129
Vagabonds	19	11	1	7	126
Sefton General	19	12	4	3	124
W'loo Pk. 'A'	20	12	3	5	125
Maghull	20	10	4	6	119
Cadwa 'A'	21	8	5	8	113
L'pool Y.M. 'C'	19	10	4	5	112
Knotty Ash	19	4	11	4	80
Colonsay 'C'	20	4	12	4	71
L'pool Jew. 'B'	19	2	12	5	67
Beauclair 'B'	21	3	17	1	64
L.Y.C.A.	21	2	15	4	56
C. F. Mott	17	1	14	2	41

In the last issue we finished off talking about our two bottom clubs L.Y.C.A. and C. F. Mott, today we see a contrast in the fortunes of these clubs. Whilst C. F. Mott are dithering between withdrawal or fighting on with somewhat lessened enthusiasm we find L.Y.C.A. proudly pointing to an excellent draw with Knotty Ash and displaying unbounding enthusiasm. Ron Hughes, captain of the 1st team has built a good reserve outfit with an enthusiastic following for his team. In fact they are so enthusiastic that they turned up in force at Crawfords on the night before the match for a full scale practice (or was it that they forgot the match night?). Ron himself is a veteran and with the aggressive Dave Coulson and the tenacious Norman Carter form the backbone of the team. Tony Jones and Ed Hughes form the regular team but the most exciting part of the story is the promising progress of reserve strength which includes the Holden brothers, K. Quinn and *Dave Wilson*.

How good does a team need to be to be a good team in this year's Division 3A? Cadwa must often ask this question. Just look at their league position, nothing startling is it? Yet Cadwa are almost as good as the best in the league. Ken Westhead leads the attack and with R. Craddock forms a formidable spearhead. D. Davies is an improving No. 3, whilst G. Richardson and N. Wright bring up the rear in what appears to be a strong well balanced side. No fewer than eight of Cadwa's matches have ended in a draw with a further five ending 6-4, all of which points to an ability to hold their own, but lack of ability to press home the advantage. Could this be due to bad luck in team placings failing to give style advantage which can mean so much in transforming a good team performance into a resounding victory!

How else can one account for two of the most remarkable results which we have recorded since our last issue, first Sefton became heroes in inflicting a sound thrashing to the champions elect Bath St. Their 8-2 victory was well deserved when on the night, man for man, Sefton were the superior team. Then came the crunch for Sefton, in the semi-final

of OUR cup (we wonder why 3B were allowed to enter the Hyde Cup) they were at the other end of an 8-2, this time the L'pool Y.M. were the victors, and as in Sefton's night of triumph the Y.M. were man for man the better team on the night. Waterloo Park 'A' were the other successful semi-finalists eliminating the much fancied Vagabonds, and so we have two of our less likely promotion candidates fighting it out for the cup. Unless promotion is gained by teams dropping out we will have the possibility of the cup holders winning it again for the second season. I doubt if that has been recorded previously in our present set-up.

But to keep to the theme, several players in the division are convinced that luck rather than ability will determine the placings in the top half of the division. Many believe that the variation of styles is the only deciding factor between so many of our divisions players and the teams whose styles give maximum advantage gather the most sets. *If this can be considered true then one could imagine team captains sitting up the night before the matches sorting out team placings and yet this is not so.* Most matches are played with unchanged team placings and my personal opinion is that we have contrived to assemble a lot of evenly matched teams where form on the night decides the issue. It is an interesting point and if you have any views write and let me know for the next issue. I am running short of 'fill-in' anyway as you will gather having read through all this drivel.

DIVISION 3B By Colin Stock

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Bath St. 'B'	19	17	1	1	131
Trinity 'A'	18	14	3	1	125
Orrell	20	13	5	2	117
Eng. Elec. 'C'	19	12	6	1	111
Crawfords 'C'	19	9	5	5	109
W'tree Lab. 'C'	19	10	7	2	101
Panto	20	9	7	4	101
Hilltop!	20	7	10	3	92
Coll. of Tech.	19	6	13	0	84
Beauclair 'C'	19	10	5	4	76
St. Elizabeth's	20	4	16	0	73
University 'B'	21	3	14	4	72
L.P.A.S. 'B'	17	1	12	4	58

I read with interest Eddie Cameron's exclusive report (Feb. issue) in which he claims that Div. 3A has six teams capable of winning promotion from our division. I thought that perhaps this statement would not be too well received by some of our higher teams, so I thought it my duty to look into findings: **THERE ARE SIX TEAMS IN DIVISION 3A CAPABLE OF WINNING PROMOTION FROM 3B.**

And now the divisional notes for poor (or lucky?) Division 3B.

Trinity have now established themselves as clear favourites to join Bath St. in the 2nd division. In the last few weeks they have accounted for most of their close rivals. Firstly they defeated Wavertree Labour 8-2, with Temple, Abbott and Bailey all scoring doubles. The next week English Electric suffered, losing 7-3. In this match Abbott again scored a double, as did Hankin, but Trinity's star performance came from M. Hulm, who unexpectedly defeated Ken Black in the third game. Next to suffer were none other than Bath St. who were also defeated 7-3 in a match when Temple, who I understand is only occasionally available, was again brought in to strengthen the Trinity side. Orrell have also been recent Trinity victims, crashing for the second time this season to them 8-2.

As it seems likely that more than two teams will be promoted from this division the main contenders for the third place—Eng. Elec., Orrell, Crawfords and W'tree Lab.—cannot afford to relax. Unfortunately for W'tree Labour they still have to face Eng. Elec., Bath St. and Orrell in their closing fixtures, whilst Eng. Elec. as well as playing the Labour Club, still have to play Bath St. and Orrell apart from their last fixture of the season with W'tree Labour, have a comparatively easy run-in and, at the time of writing, have the best chance of finishing in third place. Over the last few weeks, however, their playing record has not been very impressive, and apart from losing to Trinity, they have been held to a draw twice—to such lowly placed teams as Beauclair and Police.

If Orrell do slip up the team I would tip to finish in third place would be Crawfords. Apart from a home fixture with Trinity they have the easiest programme of all, and have been in good form lately with 7-3 wins over Hilltop, Coll. of Tech. and W'tree Labour to their credit. Their 1, 2 and 3, Daly, Hamlon and Roper, have all been playing well and in recent matches these three players have usually managed to win about 5 sets between them.

As Linnets 'D' have withdrawn it is probable that only one team will be relegated from this division.

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DIVISION 4A.

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Eng. Elec. 'D'	16	14	0	2	129
W'tree L. b. 'D'	18	13	4	1	118
L.P.A.S. 'C'	17	12	4	1	112
University 'C'	18	7	11	1	103
Colonsay D.	16	10	5	1	91
Palmerston 'A'	16	10	6	0	88
Bath St. 'D'	19	5	12	3	73
Essemmay	16	7	9	0	69
Knotty Ash 'B'	16	3	9	4	64
Rafters 'B'	17	3	11	3	64
Coll. of Tech. 'A'	17	1	14	2	51
St. Patrick's	15	3	11	1	43

(Report not to hand)

DIVISION 4B. By Jack Lambert

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Mossley Hill 'A'	18	17	0	1	149
Bootle Y.M.	17	15	1	1	137
Bath St. 'C'	17	12	4	1	108
Knotty Ash 'A'	17	12	5	0	99
Stan. House 'A'	16	10	5	1	94
Pirates	15	10	5	0	92
St. Edwards 'A'	16	8	6	2	88
Eng. Elec. 'E'	18	4	12	2	72
Orrell 'A'	19	4	12	3	64
L.P.A.S. 'D'	18	3	15	0	59
Palatine	16	2	12	2	54
Lussac 'A'	19	3	13	3	50
Vagabonds 'A'	11	1	9	1	24

As I predicted our two top teams, Bootle Y.M. and Mossley Hill, had a close fight in the Forrest Cup semi-final the lead changing four times with Bootle pulling back a 5-3 deficit for a draw. See Stop Press for replay score. In the other semi-final a much stronger Bath St. team than a couple of weeks ago, had a solid win and will no doubt give more than a good account of themselves in the final. So much depends on the 'luck' of the order these days that I think there is something radically wrong with our system in both cup and league.

Mossley Hill made themselves league favourites with their 8-2 win over Bootle, Coughlin retaining his 100% record and Ball of Y.M. winning his two.

Bath St., third favourites, could have done with their new signing Spencer when they played Knotty Ash who gained a magnificent 6-4 away win, thanks mainly to Wright.

Williams (2) of Palatine failed to stop English Electric reversing the early season result 7-3, thanks to four good wins from Hewitt and

Evans. Orrell (C. Wake 2) and Lussac (S. Craig 2) gained excellent draws over Stanley House (Bickerstaff 2) and St. Edwards (Woods 2).

The battle for the wooden spoon found Lussac (Sturgess 2) and Vagabonds (P. Doyle 2) sharing 5 sets apiece also Palatine (Wade and O'Brien 2) and Orrell (Illidge and Stevenson 2).

Pirates with Fred Bamford in the team had a 7-3 win over St. Edwards, Kenyon adding his two to Bamford's.

So far this season Bootle Y.M. have played the same five players in cup and league. Can they keep it up and emulate Linacre's feats of a couple of years ago.

DIVISION 5 By Kevin Baker

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Odyssey	11	10	0	1	88
W'loo Park 'B'	13	8	2	3	87
Sandforth	9	8	1	0	69
L.Y.C.A. 'A'	13	8	5	0	69
Maghull 'A'	13	1	9	3	55
Sandforth 'A'	12	5	5	2	55
Knotty Ash 'C'	12	2	10	0	34
C. F. Mott 'A'	12	2	9	1	33
Mossley Hill 'B'	8	2	6	0	27
L'pool Para. (Record expunged)					

With the semi-finals of the Stamp Cup having just been played and things fairly quiet in the division I am reporting on these two matches.

Both results went as expected with Odyssey and Sandforth passing through to the first Stamp Cup Final. No date has been set aside for this final and we will have to wait for the Fixture Secretary to fix the date.

The first semi-final was between Odyssey and Waterloo Park 'B' and it was not long before Odyssey built up their lead. However, D. Bridge (W'loo Park) took the third set 21-12 in the third game after a dour struggle with S. Porter at No. 5. Any hopes this victory may have given Waterloo of a revival and perhaps a shock result were soon squashed as Odyssey continued on their way to their expected victory. Although Odyssey won 9-1 Waterloo fought hard and never gave up trying and I feel sure that this team will need watching next season.

The second semi-final also finished at the same score, 9-1, this time in favour of Sandforth. This was a disappointing match and only the

efforts of Mossley Hill to try and get on equal terms with Sandforth brought any interest into it. Their fight was in vain, for like Odyssey, Sandforth steam-rolled their way to victory with no unexpected upsets, but some near ones. With a little more experience Mossley Hill might have made a close thing of it for the score line did not really do them justice.

Both these teams now have a chance of the double and the Final should be a very close thing, with the odds slightly in Odyssey's favour.

WOMEN'S DIVISION.

By Mabel Francis

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
Crawfords	17	15	0	2	146
Palmerston	16	14	1	1	122
Cadwa	16	12	3	1	107
Rafters	16	10	5	1	100
Colonsay	14	5	9	0	67
Crawfords 'A'	11	5	5	1	59
Bath St.	14	5	8	1	56
Bibbys	14	4	10	0	55
Linnets	13	3	9	1	40
Linnets 'A'	14	3	11	0	32
Colonsay 'A'	13	0	13	0	17

Palmerston have again given away walk-over points, but even so would still have been at least 12 points behind Crawfords, the clear leaders.

Bibby's received a boost from Bath St. in the form of a 10-0 walk-over. This was due to the last bad snowfall, but the score stands (at present). The first encounter between them ended 7-3 in Bath St's favour.

Colonsay had their first team change, M. Brown in place of P. Fidler, and was sacrificed at No. 1 in their return match against Palmerston. Here again, J. McKenzie saved a swamping by being their sole winner, beating Isla Russell in the third, being one of the few teams not to suffer a 10-0 loss.

In the derby match between the two Linnets teams the 'A' team managed to take 3 points off the 1st, and showed an improvement all round, especially Marion Little's win over Carol Flood in a close 3 game set. Crawfords 'A' put a stop to their 1st team's run of six consecutive wins and took 2 points off them with Millie Harris beating Muriel Cox and Joyce Barton beating

Marie Lupton. Lil Wynne must have wondered which team she really was playing for losing her two easily.

One of the longest Ladies matches that must have been played was the return between Palmerston and Crawfords as I am sure not many have ended at 11.35 p.m. Yet only 6 sets went to three. The result being a draw. M. Francis suffered her first defeat, and not doing things by halves lost her two. Mary Robinson (Palmerston's secret weapon) also failed to notch a win in either the singles or doubles. As they are now the two finalists for the Bartholomew Cup their third meeting should produce enough sparks to keep warm by.

BARTHOLOMEW CUP SEMI-FINALS

C.A.D.W.A. 2, Palmerston 8

This instead of being a 'fiery match' in place turned out to be more of a 'damp squib.'

The first set was tensely exciting (as the first set tends to be) being between P. Lawrenson (Cadwa) and Mary Robinson. Pauline defended well but just not well enough and succumbed 17 in the third. The second set between Judy Crafter and Barbara Cain (Palmerston) on paper, should have lit the room up but Barbara gave no quarter whatever brilliance a lethargic Judy showed she snuffed out. By the end of the 5th set Cadwa were in dire need of a blood transfusion being 5-0 down. This was very temporarily given in the sixth set when Judy won against Maureen King, very easily considering her previous play. The doubles were shared with Lee and Crafter getting Cadwa's second set. Joyce Randall won both her sets in two straight and Betty Black provided the entertainment!

Crawfords 10, Linnets 0

This went as was expected, the set between Carol Walsh and Marie Lupton being one of the only two sets that got extended to three games, the other one being the doubles between Flood and Walsh and Wynne and Francis.