

TABLE TENNIS DIGEST

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COMMENT

It has been obvious from the start of the season that very few clubs are complying with the new Service Rule. To move to higher levels than League games, there must have been many who noted the scant attention paid to the law at the Philharmonic by players who are internationally famous.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, when one of our members writes to us on this subject. Something must be done, one way or the other, and our correspondent's views are worthy of the closest consideration by everyone. The League Secretary tells us that there is a plan afoot for responsible persons to visit League matches, and to correct UMPIRES, who are not penalising offending players.

We offer no opinion as to the necessity for the present rule. If any League members feel that it needs modification they can always initiate a campaign through the official channels.

At the moment, however, the New Service is one of the Laws of the game, and therefore must be obeyed. The almost complete non-observance at present is a disgrace to the League, and to say that top-ranking players are also at fault is no excuse at all.

May we particularly appeal to the leading players of the the League to take a lead in this important matter, as by example they can probably accomplish more than anyone to bring about a stricter observance of this controversial rule.

A Peep Behind the Scenes

The 15th Merseyside Open is now a matter for the record books, but I wonder how many players stop to consider the amount of preparation and work involved for officials before, during, and after any tournament.

The first step is the sanction of the I.T.T.A. and fitting in the date to avoid clashing with other tournaments. Halls have to be booked for the preliminaries, and, in the case of the Philharmonic Hall, has to be done eight to ten months beforehand. Entry forms are sent out, and when returned the particulars entered and tabulated ready for the draw, after which the competitors are given a time for their first appearance at each session, which is entered on their ticket and posted to them.

The lighting has to be installed, the tables transported and erected, and the green surround placed in position. (The day after the championships conclude the same thing happens in reverse.) We are ready to start, and the referees have to keep to the schedule already arranged or there will be chaos.

I suppose we are the only league who transfers the final events to a hall some four miles from the venue of the preliminaries, but nobody, who has been to the Philharmonic Hall, doubts our wisdom in considering the comfort of both competitors and spectators, nor our ability to put it into effect.

THANK YOU

I wish to place on record my thanks for the excellent work put in by he following:—

Messrs. Harry Holland and Charles Miles, who refereed, ably assisted by Derek Holland at the table and Margaret Lindner on the microphone; Don Foulis as M.C. at the Phil., Sid Jackson and his father for installing the lighting (which they have done in every tournament for the past 25 years—a truly wonderful record, unsurpassed anywhere in the country).

George Williams as captain of umpires, and who helped at the Drill Hall on the Sunday before and after the tournament, paying particular attention to the new Jaques surround. Frank Moore and Fred Farrell each gave a Sunday morning, as did Ken Baldock, who was also responsible for

the transport and erection of the tables, and seeing to the wall charts being kept up-to-date—a most important item often overlooked in many tournaments.

Monty made the notice board erected outside the Drill Hall, did a spot of signwriting, and used his car to transport cakes, magazines, players, officials and Uncle Tom Cobley and all; Jack Hughes provided the musical programme at the Phil., and together with Des Loughrey provided transport for players and officials.

The selling of League magazines and badges at both balls was in the capable hands of Misses Lesley Glover, Joyce Kinley, Phyllis Hornby, and Catherine Citheroe, while Arthur Jones distributed 1,500 handbills in the Mossley Hill district.

OVERCAME NIGHTMARE

Umpires are very necessary in every tournament, and there were many volunteers, but special mention must be made of Ida Howley, Beryl Ward, Eileen Mansell, Mrs. Womphrey, Norman Huyton, Les Egerton, Gerry Gill, Alan Lawson, Jack Neill and Malcolm Williamson, of Runcorn.

Catering is something of a problem these days, but it becomes a nightmare when you are unaware of the number and capacity of the customers. Full marks, therefore, to Mrs. Stamp, ably assisted by Mrs. Jack Hughes, Mrs. Harry Holland, and Mrs. Coffey. Prices were reasonable, and there was a nice surplus for the League.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, you have the satisfaction of a job well done and the knowledge that the "Merseyside" maintained the high standard that has prevailed for so many years.

Last, but by no means least, thanks to all our members who supported us at the finals. My request to "fill the Phil." was very nearly achieved. Can we do it when the England v. Ireland match is staged there on Friday, February 9th, 1951?

Full particulars and pen pictures of both teams will be published in our next issue, by which time the cards will have been sent to your secretary for him to fill in your requirements for seats. I hope there will be a party from EVERY club.

PALACE OF "VARIETY"

Leach Works At His Sport-Living

By ERNEST EDWARDS ("Bee")

It has been my fortune to see inside Buckingham Palace; it has been my lot to watch B.B.C. productions, such as the "Palace of Varieties." It has been my pleasure to creep in, creep out, and hear cryptic arguments concerning crochets and quavers at the Philharmonic Hall, and I have seen the rich walls of the Concert Hall at St. George's Hall, wherein Joe Davis and Sidney Smith juggled with snooker balls.

All this came to my meandering mind when I watched the famous players take to the table at the Philharmonic Hall—wonderful setting for really wonderful players.

My mind cast back to 1896 when I tried to play this game at the Pitman Restaurant, Birmingham, with Hannen Swaffer and others renowned in the journalistic world. And having suffered football professionals for 50 years, quaking, squealing their way through their tasks, I marvelled at the manner of these table tennis men who showed the essence of sportsmanship.

PICASSO PICTURE.

Johnny Leach, looking fit for a Picasso picture of "An Athlete," made me marvel at his eye, his limbs—it is one of my vows that a women's leg can never be so attractive as a perfectly-formed athlete's leg—his sense of timing, cutting, spinning; never an alibi, always the thorough gentleman.

His French rival Haguenauer, was a giant by comparison—long of limb, a reach that carried him over and across the table without effort. Here was the supreme contrast, which was not my first view of them as a television set had brought them to my Hive months before, when they battled in London.

And how came these men by this security of touch, this finesse for position, this slam, this cut and thrust? It could only be by means of the thirst for practice.

The truth is that Johnny Leach bends and beds down to his task. He is for all time the genius who is com-

petent, but must ever continue to practice his art. It did not surprise me to find he is a daily trainee at the football ground of Crystal Palace. I would that he would put some of his inherent skill into the footballer's make-up, for they have a habit of knowing it all, sometimes before they have served their apprenticeship.

In similar vein, yet so vastly different in physical attributes, is the amazing Aubrey Simons, of Bristol. Here was a bespectacled, thickly-set, not cumberstone, but flat-footed player of eagle eye and commanding smash, who at times rubbed his hand on the table "to get the feel of it," just as I for a lifetime (finding myself stuck for a word) rolled my fingers over the keys of the typewriter. Idiosyncratic "crazy"?—yes, maybe, but it "feels" encouraging to the mind's eye.

Simon the Cellarer we have sung about; Simon the Slasher has yet to be framed in song.

HID VEXATION.

The famous French players grunted their disapproval of their failing shots—not so their Simons-Leach dominators; they hid their vexation and kept a tight hold on their innermost thoughts when they faltered by some chancey-stroke or some infamous lure to "Have a Go" (and not get the Coleahan reward).

So the night of gladness sped on and near 2,000 young folk (plus we older generation) looked on with marvelling eyes that this game could be so scientifically revealed for us in a hall that glistened with beauty of structure while two players glistened with master-strokes, such as a Moira Lympny would have revelled in at the piano.

A great night for those who love to see sport at highest rank, sportsmanship of like standard—and to all my old friends Barty, whom I have known since I first landed in Liverpool in 1903; Bill Stamp, the Rumjahns and their kind, I beg to say "Thank you" for having me at the Philharmonic Hall to see table tennis stride towards the pinnacle of success.

First Division.

Balfour Lead By One Point

By G. Williams.

Balfour still lead Division 1, being one point ahead of Ratters and 15th Crosby Scouts, and having a match in hand.

Homecroft have suffered two defeats since I last wrote, one against Balfour, after a very close match, and the other to Birkenhead Y.M.C.A. In the latter match they were without Roy Jones and Bob Edwards, the former being engaged with Liverpool "B" team against Chester.

This raises the old argument as to whether a club should be allowed to postpone a match when they have players selected to represent the city, particularly when playing a match which may have considerable bearing upon the league championship.

As a parting gesture before joining the R.A.F., Bernard Hand broke Peter Rumiahn's 100 per cent. record, and thereby paved the way for 15th Crosby's 6-4 win over Ratters. The following week, however, with Joe Watts also missing, Crosby suffered their biggest defeat for a long time, being beaten 9-1 by Ratters "A." Their only win was recorded by G. Stanton, who defeated D. Holland in three games.

FIRST VICTORY

African Oil secured their first points when they beat Anfield, who forfeited two sets owing to one of their players not turning up. The following week Anfield showed their fighting spirit by drawing with Birkenhead Y.M.C.A. after being 4-1 down at the half-way stage. The main credit for this goes to Stan Ladd, who played extremely well to beat Ken Davenport in two straight sets.

Balfour beat their "A" team comfortably, the only success for the "A" team being obtained by their reserve player, Norman Huxton, who beat Dennis Caldwell and Eileen Mansell after two hard-fought sets.

Outstanding feature of Oakhill's draw with Ratters "A" was the persistent manner in which Ted Rumjahn faulted players for foul serving, more particularly his own team. This is the spirit needed to instil into all players that the rules must be obeyed.

Look!

Modern Table Tennis

by JACK CARRINGTON

Trainer of the 1949 World
Champion, Johnny Leach.

This book contains all that the aspiring championship player wishes to know. The author, himself a player of international repute, has set out simply and carefully, a complete course of scientific table tennis instruction. It will start the beginner on the right lines and the experienced player will improve his game immensely. Fully illustrated with diagrams and action photographs.

Price 6s. net.

You can get this book from your local bookshop. If it is not in stock give the title, author, price and publisher to your bookseller, who will be glad to get a copy for you.

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AIGBURTH FACE UPHILL BATTLE

By K. Baldock.

I mentioned my own sleepless nights last month, but I think Mrs. Sturgeon, of Aigburth, is having her share. It appears that the loss of players has severely cut into a good average team and that their last year positions of fifth will be doubled by the season's end.

To lose the first eight matches and only obtain ten sets from all of them, is too much to pull up in the second half of the season. However, if I know Aigburth, they will not be down-hearted, but still play for the love of the game. So far they have called on ten players, with only two ever-resents, and their best performance—5-7—was at Oakhill a fortnight ago.

Though it seems obvious that this year's Second Division is too strong for them, no doubt a contributory reason is having to make a change in the team every week, together with the lack of serious practice.

TEAM OF FUTURE

Bootle Y.M.C.A., the team of the future, have a record which would be useful to the pools fan if they were a football team. It consists of four wins from teams lower in the division, two draws with teams level with them, and two defeats by teams above them. This consistency is no doubt due to only six players having been called upon so far, with three of them being regulars. Of these three, Harris and Cadwallader, are likely to be representing Liverpool next year if they progress as they have been doing. This Bootle team reminds me of Wallasey Juniors a few years ago, with Pierce, Edwards, and R. Jones.

Just one point, Bootle. It has been noticed that, although a curtain separates the tables, the habit of players practising on the other tables during a match is very distracting to your visitors. No doubt you are used to the background noise, but your visitors are not.

Vaughan and Young Beaten

You probably noticed that we were the only division to show all teams with at least one point in the league tables published in the last issue. This appeared to indicate an evenly matched division, but since then we have had a slowly widening gap as the clubs resolve themselves into two main groups.

The bottom group of four do not seem to be able to make any headway but the season is young yet and as a consolation to the teams involved it will be recalled that neither of the two bottom clubs in our division at Christmas last year, were pegged down to their unenviable positions at the season's end.

At the other end of the scale the top team remained throughout. It is doubtful, however, if our clubs will agree to Bohemians emulating last season's championship, but then again it is doubtful if many of us will be able to do much about it.

CUP LUCK.

We had a spot more luck in the Readman Cup, with three byes, and we confidently expect five representatives to go into the hal with the big names. Unfortunately, Wallasey and Livex met, thus eliminating one of our stars.

This month's team for introduction is my own, Victoria Park. Originally a church club, we suffered a somewhat unusual and decidedly calamitous reverse of fortunes two seasons ago, when the church was sold and we were deprived of our headquarters.

However, Dame Fortune did not frown on us for long and we soon acquired our present comfortable rooms.

Of the players, aggressive Albert Perks, ex Holme Hey, and two former A.T.M. stars, solid Stan Harvey and adaptable Alan Cowin, are the real backbone of the team. I am one but modesty forbids saying more (what more is there to say?). My brother Don, is the other and in spite of everything our committee have allowed us to play (war years apart) continuously since 1934 (Editors note :- These two are the committee.) we are both proud and amazed at that.

Bouquet of the month is awarded to Victoria Park's No. 2, for breaking Hoylake's H. D. Vaughan's 100% league record, and to J. Money penny, of Balfour, who smashed the record of the Bohemians' Don Young.

Fourth Division.

Leaders Come And Go

By J. Griffiths.

So keen is the fight in Division 4 that in three successive weeks we have had three different leaders—Balfour "B," who lost 6-4 at Dunlop and handed over to Cheshire Lines, who, in turn, gave way to St. Michael's when the latter defeated them, and followed it up by trouncing Aigburth "A" by 10-0.

Edwardions and Aigburth "A," on the other hand, are still looking for their first point.

RECORD GOES

Only two players in the division can now claim 100 per cent. records—G. Gower (St. Michael's) with twelve wins and E. Davies (Dunlop) with ten. When J. Seddon (Waterloo Dock) was beaten in his second set against Cheshire Lines it was the first time in three seasons he had lost both sets in one match.

The match of the month was expected to be the meeting of St. Michael's and Cheshire Lines, but the Railwaymen had a bad match and went down 8-2, the only set of this match that went to three games being that between fifteen-years-old D. Rigby, of

St. Michael's, and J. Grayson, of C.L.C. Rigby, who seemed nervous at the start and lost his first game 21-10, gained confidence to win 21-14, 21-17.

Aigburth "A" and Holme Hey met with both looking for their first points and it seemed as though they might share the points when the last pair went to the table with the score 5-4 in Holme Hey's favour. Though S. Angelis, of Aigburth, fought hard the more experienced Jack Dickinson won in two straight to give Holme Hey their first win.

Port Sunlight O.B. gained a good 6-4 victory over Waterloo Dock, when Alf Simpson, their No. 1, playing extremely well, defeated Seddon and L. Burrows.

I expected better things of Dunlop when the season began, but they went down at home to Kingsway 6-4, the undefeated E. Davies, having no difficulty in beating Kingsway's S. J. Railton and M. Williams.



"SING, CHOIRS OF ANGELS....."

With acknowledgements to "Nuts" Magazine of J. Bibby & Sons, Ltd.

PAPER SET-BACK

Three months after its birth, the Table Tennis Digest has had a set-back, and it is with great regret that we have to announce that, owing to the present shortage of newsprint, we have been compelled to reduce our size by four pages.

This is a matter over which neither we nor our printers have any control, and we only agreed to it on learning that the position is nation-wide. We, therefore, ask our readers' forbearance, at the same time assuring them that the moment the position improves the Digest will be restored to its proper size, and, if possible, will be made even bigger.

Meantime may we take this opportunity, on behalf of the Management Committee of the League, the Editorial Board, and all our contributors, of wishing you all a very

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

and a

PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR,

full of interesting and hard league and cup matches.

Chester Next Cup Opponents

By F. J. Farrell,

Liverpool had little difficulty in entering the third round of the Willmot Cup, beating Preston in the second round without conceding a set.

We are now drawn to meet Chester at Chester, and it should be a much easier task than that which Liverpool Ladies' face in the third round of the Rose Bowl, namely Manchester Ladies' at Manchester.

Our "B" team had a hard fight in their league match with Chester, but they only just missed gaining the full verdict by the narrowest of margins.

With the score standing at 5-4 in Liverpool's favour, Norman Jones, of Balfou, faced W. Devine, and the latter's long experience gained him the set at 21-19, in the third game.

It was, however, only one of the several sets which Chester won by the odd point in the third.

Here are the Lancashire League results:—

Liverpool "A" 4, Manchester "A" 6.
Chester 5, Liverpool "B" 5.

Forthcoming League matches are:—

Jan. 5—Liverpool "B" v. St. Helens,
at Wakefield.

Jan. 12—L'pool "A" v. Macclesfield.

Keep Up-to-Date

"Table Tennis Digest" provides you with all the local news and the national events and topics can be found in "Table Tennis", the official organ of the E.T.T.A., or in "Table Tennis Review", which is published by Arthur Waite, of Manchester.

Mr. Ken Baldock is responsible for the distribution of these two magazines in his capacity of magazine secretary, and he informs us that sales have not yet reached last year's level and that he has several copies on his hands which may be a loss to the League if they are not sold.

The subscriptions are 5/- for "Table Tennis" for nine monthly copies (September to May) and 5/5 for "Table Tennis Review" (five bi-monthly issues), both post free.

Send a postal order to Mr. Baldock, 104 Manor Road, Wallasey, and you will receive back numbers and be assured of future copies.

Pen Personalities

MR. W. GALE.

There must be a great deal of satisfaction and pride in aiding the birth of a new venture and helping to nurture and foster it through its infancy and adolescence, until it reaches its full bloom.

In his quieter moments of reflection, some such satisfaction and pride must come to Mr. Walter Gale, as he looks back on his connection with the league.

His club, Domestic Mission, was one of the six clubs with which Mr. Les Forrest, founded the league and they are now the only one left of that original six. As their secretary then, as he is now, Mr. Gale was naturally "in" at the "start" and in his quiet but efficient way, did much to guide the league through its first troublesome years. Until last season, he had been a member of the Management Committee, where his counsels have always been valued.

And it has not only in the council chambers that his worth has been valued. He has been, and still is no mean performer on the table, for Domestic Mission look upon him as a more-than-useful No. 3.

MRS. E. BAIRD

Mrs. Baird is the secretary of the Burrowdale Club, which she formed in 1945 from ex-members of Leasowe Road First-Aid Post, and the fact that never in 287 matches has the club failed to turn out a complete team is evidence of her efficiency and keenness.

Although claiming no spectacular playing triumphs, she was a semi-finalist in the 1947 Regional Singles and a year later won the Women's Singles in the Wallasey (Homecroft) Tournament. Her encouragement and advice to young members of many Wirral clubs, and her facility for getting every ounce of enjoyment out of a game, have made her deservedly popular.

Mrs. Baird worthily represents that great mass of players who unobtrusively do so much to further the interests of our game by their example and enthusiasm. They are the backbone of every league.

LEAGUE TABLES

Up to December 2nd, 1950

	First Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour Inst.	7	5	0	2	48	22	12
Rafters	8	5	2	1	46	34	11
15th Crosby	8	4	1	3	40	40	11
Homecroft	8	4	2	2	49	31	10
B'head Y.M.C.A.	8	3	2	3	46	34	9
Rafters "A"	8	3	2	3	46	34	9
Balfour "A"	8	1	3	4	35	45	6
Oakhill	8	2	4	2	33	47	6
Anfield	8	0	6	2	28	52	2
African Oil	7	1	6	0	19	51	2

	WOMEN—First Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour Inst.	8	8	0	0	67	13	16
Rafters	8	7	1	0	65	15	14
Bibby's	8	5	2	1	46	34	11
Homecroft	8	5	2	1	46	34	11
Aigburth	8	5	3	0	47	33	10
Bootle C.D.	8	3	4	1	32	48	7
C.L.C.	8	2	5	1	29	51	5
Oakhill	8	2	6	0	30	50	4
Anfield	8	1	7	0	22	58	2
Wav. C.C.	8	0	8	0	16	64	0

	Second Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bibby's	8	7	1	0	52	28	14
Homecroft "A" ...	7	5	1	1	51	19	11
Acacia	8	4	2	2	48	32	10
Bootle Y.M.C.A.	8	4	2	2	44	36	10
B'head Y.M. "A" ...	7	3	1	3	40	30	9
Anfield "A"	8	3	3	2	42	38	8
I.C.I.	8	3	4	1	39	41	7
Oakhill "A"	8	3	5	0	35	45	6
L.P.A.S.	8	1	6	1	29	51	3
Aigburth	8	0	8	0	10	70	0

	Second Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Aigburth "A"	8	6	2	0	64	16	12
Littlewoods	7	6	1	0	48	22	12
Rafters "A"	6	5	0	1	43	17	11
Domestic M.	8	5	2	1	55	25	11
Mossley Hill	8	4	4	0	43	37	8
Osterley	6	2	3	1	23	32	5
St. Josephs	7	2	4	1	23	47	5
Littlewoods "A" ...	7	2	5	0	23	47	4
I.C.I.	7	1	6	0	21	49	2
P. Sunlight	8	0	6	2	12	68	2

	Third Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians	6	6	0	0	45	15	12
Hoylake Y.M.C.A.	6	5	1	0	44	16	10
Wall. Y.M. Jrs.	6	4	1	1	44	16	9
Livex	6	3	1	2	39	21	8
Oakhill "B"	6	3	3	0	27	33	6
Victoria Park	6	3	3	0	27	33	6
Domestic Mission..	6	1	3	2	19	41	4
Westfield	6	1	5	0	21	39	2
Rafters "B"	6	0	4	2	16	44	2
Wavertree C.C.	6	0	5	1	18	42	1

	EAST—First Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour "C"	6	6	0	0	50	10	12
Bohemians "A" ...	6	5	1	0	42	18	10
Taxes	6	3	1	2	33	27	8
Anfield "B"	6	3	2	1	38	22	7
Osterley	6	3	2	1	34	26	7
African "A"	6	3	3	0	29	31	6
Cadwa	6	2	3	1	28	32	5
St. Barts	6	2	3	1	27	33	5
Westfield "A"	6	0	6	0	12	48	0
St. Aloysius	6	0	6	0	7	53	0

	Fourth Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
St. Michael's	6	5	0	1	49	11	11
Kingsway	6	5	0	1	43	17	11
Balfour "B"	6	5	1	0	44	16	10
C.L.C.	6	5	1	0	35	25	10
Dunlop	6	4	2	0	33	27	8
P. Sunlight O.B.	6	3	3	0	29	31	6
Waterloo Dock... ..	6	1	5	0	20	40	2
Holme Hey	6	1	5	0	18	42	2
Edwardians	6	0	6	0	17	43	0
Aigburth "A"	6	0	6	0	12	48	0

	Second Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour "D"	6	6	0	0	43	17	12
Bohemians "B" ...	6	5	0	1	41	19	11
East Wav.	6	4	1	1	37	23	9
Roby Y.C.	6	4	2	0	36	24	8
N.A.B.U.K.	6	4	2	0	31	29	8
R.A.F.A. (L/P.) ...	6	1	4	1	27	33	3
Bohemians "C" ...	6	1	4	1	24	36	3
Osterley "A"	6	1	5	0	22	38	2
Oakhill "C"	6	1	5	0	20	40	2
Edwardians "A" ...	6	1	5	0	19	41	2

	SOUTH.—First Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Lucem	6	6	0	0	54	6	12
Wav. C.C. "A" ...	6	6	0	0	52	8	12
L'pool Y.M.C.A.	6	4	2	0	40	20	8
Elm Hall Drive... ..	6	4	2	0	35	25	8
Aigburth M.	6	4	2	0	34	26	8
Victoria Park "A" ...	6	3	3	0	32	28	6
Tech. Studs	6	1	5	0	21	39	2
C.L.C. "A"	6	1	5	0	19	41	2
Mossley Hill	6	1	5	0	9	51	2
Aigburth "B" ...	6	0	6	0	4	56	0

	SOUTH.—Second Division						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Livex "A"	6	5	0	1	51	9	11
Lucem "A"	6	5	0	1	46	14	11
Cadwa "A"	6	5	1	0	40	20	10
L'pool Y.M. "A" ...	6	4	2	0	35	25	8
Dunlop "A"	6	3	3	0	33	27	6
Wav. C.C. "B" ...	6	2	3	1	29	31	5
St. Michaels "A" ...	6	2	3	1	27	33	5
Deaf Inst.	6	2	4	0	26	34	4
Aigburth "C"	6	0	6	0	8	52	0
C.L.C. "B"	6	0	6	0	5	55	0

LEAGUE TABLES

Third Round

Up to December 2nd, 1950

Cup Draws

WEST—First Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Thorndale	6	5	0	1	38	22	11
Bronze Sports	6	5	1	0	42	18	10
Wall. Jrs. "A"	6	4	0	2	38	22	10
St. Joseph's	6	2	2	2	34	26	6
Victory Soc.	6	3	3	0	28	32	6
Claremont	6	2	3	1	31	29	5
B'head Co-op.	6	2	3	1	29	31	5
B'head Y.M. Jrs.	6	1	3	2	26	34	4
Wall Motors	6	1	4	1	20	40	3
Creep Inn	6	0	6	0	16	44	0

Second Division

Cosco	6	5	0	1	49	11	11
St. Peter's	5	4	0	1	37	13	9
Burrowdale	6	4	1	1	41	19	9
Hoylake Y.M. "A"	6	4	1	1	35	25	9
Claremont "A"	6	3	3	0	34	26	6
St. Joseph's "A"	6	2	3	1	25	35	5
Creep Inn "A"	5	2	2	1	19	31	5
Kingsway "A"	6	1	5	0	23	37	2
St. M. and Paul	6	1	5	0	19	41	2
Vernons	6	0	6	0	9	51	0

Third Division

Thorndale "A"	6	4	0	2	41	19	10
Port Sunlight	6	5	1	0	39	21	10
Cosco "A"	6	4	1	1	42	18	9
Burrowdale "A"	6	4	2	0	43	17	8
Thingwall	6	3	1	2	39	21	8
Wall Motors "B"	6	3	3	0	33	27	6
Creep Inn "B"	6	2	3	1	20	40	5
Burrowdale "B"	6	0	4	2	20	40	2
Claremont "B"	6	1	5	0	15	45	2
Cosco "B"	6	0	6	0	8	52	0

Fourth Division

R.A.F. (W. Kirby)	6	6	0	0	58	2	12
R.A.F.A. (B'head)	6	5	1	0	36	24	10
B'h. Y.M. Jrs "A"	5	4	1	0	36	14	8
Prenton Meths.	6	3	1	2	31	29	8
Thorndale "B"	6	3	2	1	33	27	7
Neston O.B.	6	2	3	1	25	35	5
Wall. Jrs. "B"	6	1	3	2	26	34	4
Y.W.C.A.	6	1	4	1	20	40	3
P. Sunlight "A"	5	0	4	1	15	35	1
Thingwall "A"	6	0	6	0	10	50	0

NORTH

Burlington	5	5	0	0	37	13	10
Bootle Y.M. "A"	6	5	1	0	40	20	10
Linacre	5	4	1	0	33	17	8
Eng. Elec.	6	3	3	0	35	25	6
Bath Street	6	3	3	0	30	30	6
Hamilton Mission	6	3	3	0	30	30	6
Waterloo Park	5	2	2	1	24	26	5
Waterloo Dk. "A"	6	1	5	0	17	43	2
Brenka	5	0	4	1	15	35	1
Rafters "C"	4	0	4	0	9	31	0

The draws for the third rounds of the Readman and Hyde Cups, to be played during the week beginning Jan 1st, are as follows:—

READMAN CUP.

Bath St., v. African Oil
 I.C.I. v. Bootle Y.M.C.A.
 Hoylake Y.M.C.A. v. R.A.F. W.K.
 Rafters v. Rafters "A"
 Victoria Park v. Aigburth
 St. Michaels v. Bibbys
 Homecroft v. Oakhill "A"
 L.P.A.S. v. Bohemians
 B'head Y.M.C.A. v. Oakhill
 Anfield v. Balfour
 Anfield "A" v. Lucern
 Oakhill "B" v. Bhd Y.M.C.A. "A"
 Balfour "A" v. Wallasey Jnrs.
 Crooby v. Elm Hall/Wat. Dock.
 Dunlop v. Homecroft "A"
 Bolis "A", Thorndale v. Acacia

HYDE CUP

Claremont v. Anfield "B."
 Thorndale v. Thingwall.
 Lucern "A" v. St. Josephs.
 East Wavertree v. Roby Y.C.
 St. Peters v. Lucern.
 Balfour "C" v. Hoylake Y.M.C.A. "A."
 Osterley v. African Oil "A."
 R.A.F. (W.K.) v. Bootle Y.M.C.A. "A."
 Aigburth "B" v. Westfield "A."
 Elm Hall Drive v. Bronze Sports.
 Fath Street v. Wallasey Jrs. "A."
 Waterloo Park v. Cosco.
 Waterloo Dock "A" v. English Elec.
 Hamilton M. v. Taxes.
 Wavertree C.C. "A" v. Burlington.
 Thorndale "A" v. Bohemians "A."

YOUTH

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
B'head B.C.	7	6	1	0	51	19	12
B'head B.C. "A"	8	5	2	1	53	27	11
Hoylake Y.M.C.A.	6	5	1	0	44	16	10
Ashville	8	5	3	0	52	28	10
St. Annes	7	4	3	0	33	37	8
Heswall N.S.	7	2	3	2	36	34	6
Woodchurch	7	3	4	0	36	34	6
Grasby	7	2	4	1	30	40	5
Shaftesbury	8	2	6	0	22	58	4
Conv./Youth	7	0	7	0	3	67	0

Quantity But Not Quality

By J. H. C. Hughes

God Bless the women, heaven help the men, for without our women Liverpool table tennis is an also ran as far as playing prestige is concerned. If you do not believe that, look at the record.

Pre-war—several players selected for internationals; winners of many open tournaments, including the Mersey-side; runners-up, and should have been winners, of the Wilmott Cup.

Post-war—one international, Ronnie Rumjahn (and he is really a product of pre-war days), plus one junior international, Bill Pierce. No premier open tournament successes, though the veteran Bob Roberts kept the flag flying in an open Cheshire. As for the Wilmott Cup, the best thing that can be said is that our expenses have been very light.

We have started this season by being well beaten by Bolton, and we turned out one of our strongest teams. This would have been a sensation pre-war, but to-day is treated as a normal happening, and I do not see much hope for anything better in the near future, though I very much hope I am wrong.

HOPES NOT HIGH

How is it then that with our quantity of players so high, our quality is so low? Some people blame the war and continued conscription; others say wait till the result of the coaching scheme has a chance to show itself, but my hopes are not high, for, though our juniors are equipped with many strokes, they lack a solid foundation, namely the ability to play the short ball.

It is this inability to play the half-volley push stroke that is the trouble. Stan Proffit quite rightly referred to this in his article in the National Magazine last season, and it is not for nothing that Jack Carrington, in his book "Modern Table Tennis," takes it first, for without it all the forehand drives, backhand flicks, and chop defences will get nowhere.

Now the last thing I want is an army of pushers, but I am certain that unless our younger players learn how to push, then their battery of attacking shots will not get them very far.

There does not appear to be a willingness either to work hard at the game

to learn from others with experience or to use their own brains. Tactics and strategy never seem to enter their heads; they just go on and play the same game against "A" as against "Z."

CHOP, CHOP, CHOP

Do they ever use the knock-up to find out something of their opponent's strength and weaknesses? No, they just use it to show off their own particular strong points. When formed on the defensive they just chop, chop, chop, and never think of slipping in a slow return, thus causing their opponents to overhit.

The most disturbing feature to me, however, is the unwillingness to learn or even to listen to advice. Two examples come readily to my mind. I am told that one promising junior left a coaching class because he did not want the coach to interfere with his pet shot—he knew it all at sixteen years of age.

The second example is a player, who, though not a junior, had years of table tennis in front of him, but his backhand side, both in attack and defence, was very weak. When I suggested some concentrated practice on his weakness, he replied that he was too fond of his forehand to give time up to his backhand.

To conclude, let me ask our young players to put away all their attacking shots for a short time and practice using the short half-volley, so that they may have a sound foundation on which to build their other strokes. If they will do this their more attractive and spectacular shots will bring greater reward, and the renaissance of the men's game in Liverpool will have been started.

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Anfield Break Their Duck

Judging from the play in the preliminary rounds of the "Open," the standard of the average player is definitely improving. One or two of the lesser-known players were almost responsible for the surprise of the tournament and a headline for the magazine!

This improvement is also obvious from match score cards. Although one or two clubs and several players are still chasing the elusive victory, each week they are showing better results: many of the events going to three close games.

Well played Anfield, who scored their first victory against Wavertree C.C. Beryl Ward, Nan Lamb, and M. Cross each won two sets, and N. Patterson and T. Stokes only just lost to Pauline Fitzpatrick and J. McCue in the third game in each case. Both these clubs are typical examples of what I have been trying to illustrate, and they are obviously benefiting from playing against stronger opposition in the First Division.

I.C.I. had their first victory against Port Sunlight in November, therefore all teams in the Second Division have scored points. Although Port Sunlight have yet to win a match they have two points to their credit, having drawn in two matches.

Littlewoods still lead the Second Division, having only lost one match, to Ratters "A" who come a close second with a match in hand, having only dropped one point in a drawn game against Domestic Mission. The Mission and Aigburth are "hot" on the leaders' tail, so there are likely to be some keen matches, for all have their eye on promotion to the First Division next season.

Well done, Ita Howley (Balfour), who won a local Civil Service (N.H. section) tournament. Beryl Ward (Anfield) was runner-up. Both players show great promise.

Congratulations to Andress Jones, who won the "Evening Chronicle" Tournament on December 4th, defeating Jean Titterington (Manchester) in the final.

ROSE BOWL SUCCESS

Liverpool Ladies, represented by Eileen Mansell, Bluey and Pinky May, broke new ground when they went to

Burnley for the first round of the Rose Bowl Competition on November 18th, winning every event and conceding only two games. Their success was celebrated on the way home in true Lancashire fashion, with a feed of "fish and chips."

The first league match was against our Blackpool friends on December 1 at the Bohemians' pillion. It was a good match, resulting in a 6-4 win for Liverpool. Kay Benson played well to win all her singles, particularly after being 4-10 down to Eileen in the third game. Doreen Ward was the other winner for Blackpool. Liverpool scorers were Eileen Mansell (2), Pinky May (1), Andree Jones (2), Eileen and Pinky winning the doubles against Kay and Margaret Booth.

Saturday, December 9th, was a busy day for Liverpool Ladies, for they had to travel to Crewe, for a Lancashire League match and a second round tie in the Rose Bowl.

The league match was won by nine sets to one, our loss being in the doubles.

In the Rose Bowl game, before Pinky and Bluey won the doubles 24-22, 23-25, 21-18 which, with four wins in the singles, put us into the third round of the competition.

Bartholomew & Stamp Cup Draws

The draw for the first round of the Bartholomew and Stamp Cups, to be played during the week beginning Jan. 1st, are as follows:—

BARTHOLOMEW CUP.

Osterley v. I.C.I.
Aigburth v. Wav. C.C.
Oakhill v. Bootle C.D.
Balfour v. Littlewoods.
Twelve Byes.

STAMP CUP.

Woodchurch v. Shaftesbury.
Hoylake Y.M.C.A. v. Ashville
Six Byes

Wallasey Motors' New Strength

Lady Luck has so far been unkind to Creep Inn, Vernons, Cosco "B" and Thingwall "A" this season, but they will all be out to gain points from the final games of the year, and I think that with the exception of Thingwall who have to visit the all-conquering R.A.F., West Kirby, each has a reasonable chance of snatching at least a point.

Of the four I have so far seen Vernons and Cosco "B," and I must say that if they haven't been able to command success, at least they have done their best to deserve it.

Only in a slightly better position are Wallasey Motors, Port Sunlight "A" and Y.W.C.A., but the first-named, in view of the recent additions to their strength, should begin piling up the points before long. The two Fourth Division teams, after a shaky start, are now settling down well in their first season.

CLOSE FIGHT

Port Sunlight "A," in particular, had an extremely close fight with Thorndale "B" recently. They lost 4-6, but as E. Phillips scored 22-24, 19-21 against J. O'Dwyer and 20-22, 16-21 against M. Tolton and P. W. Haselgrave only just lost 21-13, 16-21, 18-21 to H. McBride, it was a near thing.

D. Whalley, W. Evans, and W. Jones might be considered the outstanding members of the Y.W.C.A. side, but the drawn game against Wallasey Juniors "B" was very much a team effort. All five players won one set each and showed the value of steadiness from No. 1 to No. 5.

Another drawn game—Thingwall v Cosco "A"—was notable for some high-scoring games. W. A. Blundell beat W. S. Jackson 18-21, 21-17, 29-27, but this was offset by a win for Cosco "A" by J. Turner over E. Gaunt 21-15, 18-21, 30-28! Although K. Peters and Blundell won their four sets for Thingwall, R. Hollingworth, Turner, and P. R. Springings forced a draw by dropping only one set between them.

With the inclusion of C. Nicoll in the team, Burrowdale "A" have become a formidable side. Recently they took maximum sets from Claremont "B"

and Creep Inn "B" in successive weeks. In the first match Miss E. Kean, C. Nicoll, and V. Popham (the last-named deputising for W. E. Savage) won their six sets two straight, while J. E. Baird and W. D. V. Jones (father of Andree) added four more for the loss of only two games. Claremont "B's" best performances were by F. Bush, L. T. Whiteway, and J. Wyld.

FLOOR PROBLEM

Claremont "A" beat Creep Inn "A" 8-2, but the visitors found great difficulty in maintaining a foothold during the play. This problem of slippery floors is one facing several clubs, although often no solution is possible as control of the room rests in other hands. As a rule all that can be asked is that clubs should do everything within reason to alleviate the trouble and so decrease risk.

Set winners for Claremont "A" were J. Bray (2), L. Bithel (2), H. Beard (2), D. Thomas, and D. Wright, while K. Prowse and A. Butcher replied for Creep Inn "A." In three of the sets however, R. Wood, K. Jones and J. Wood were only beaten narrowly after tense struggles.

I suppose more controversy has arisen over the service rule than any other in the E.T.T.A. handbook. I hear that in a few instances it has given rise to disputes in the Region. Whatever one's individual views on the rule may be, one thing is plain. Players, who observe the rule and expect their opponents to make a genuine attempt to do likewise, are clearly in the right and any hint that they are unsporting is obviously ridiculous. On the whole, I have found players are approaching this matter with toleration and common-sense, and I feel sure that if the reasonable attitude of the majority can be adopted throughout the Region there need be no occasion for disputes over the rule.

Up to the point of writing only three players have played in every match without defeat. They are E. Smith (Bronze Sports), A. McColl (R.A.F., West Kirby), and R. Cox (Wallasey Juniors "B"). I wonder who will be the last survivor in the "ever-present, never-beaten" struggle.

East Region.

By V. Jenkinson.

Balfour Retain Their Record

Three months have elapsed since the season began and I have been impressed with all I have seen. The standard of table tennis in the Region is good, but it will be seen to better advantage when the Regional Tournament takes place on Sunday, January 21st. This has been made possible through the co-operation of Cadwa, who have given us the use of their hall.

Balfour "C" are going great guns in the first division. Not only are they unbeaten, but they are piling up a useful set average. An interesting point is that B. Townsend, J. Dickenson, and A. T. Jones, at the time of writing, hold 100 per cent. records.

Probably their finest win so far was over Bohemians "A," until then undefeated. It was a great game in which eight of the sets went to three games, and Balfour's 7-3 victory definitely established them in the leadership of the division.

TOUCH AND GO.

Previously Bohemians had nearly had their wings clipped by Cadwa. With Cadwa leading 4-3 you could have heard a pin drop when May Alcock, playing with grim determination, levelled the scores. Even then it was touch-and-go for the Bohs., for Alan Richardson almost threw his set away by careless serving. Time and again they either struck the front edge of the table or overshot the other end. Joe Alcock clinched the match at 6-4 with a barrage of forehand and backhand drives.

The fact that Osterley were entertaining St. Bart's was a good excuse to drop in on the Tuebrook side, and, believe me, it was an evening well spent. Not only did I see good table tennis, but I also saw the perfect example of hospitality. In beating St. Bart's 7-3 Osterley got their first win of the season. Jack Carridge was in great form—his record makes him a candidate for the regional team—and the aggressiveness of Stan Bath and close table tactics of Wilf Hawitt gained them two victories. Frank Harthman added the odd.

In the St. Bart's side I was impressed by Johnny Gerrard and Ken Cantrill, both of whom have made great improvement since last season. Gerrard might have been playing from the book, his shots were so well calculated.

Eddie Jane and Harry James did well, and I understand that Johnny Backhouse was playing with a strained arm. Indeed, never during the game did he seem comfortable.

MEMORIES

Apparently even poker-faced Fred was unable to prevent himself showing his pleasure at his success, as he receives the Montagu Burton Cup from Mr. C. H. Bartholomew, watched by Don.

All three appear to be wearing well, for they have changed little with the passage of years.



This picture may recall memories of a tough five-game set to Don Foulis and Fred Bamford, when the latter won the League Championship in 1935.

CRAZY DEFINITIONS

Pen Holder.—Bill Stamp before the League bought a typewriter.

Love All.—A religious term.

READY FOR REGIONAL TOURNEY

The most interesting feature this month is undoubtedly the South Region Tournament for which arrangements are now complete.

Don Brown, Regional Secretary, tells me it is to be played at Cheshire Lines Club on January 15, 16, and 17. Billy Liddell and Eddy Spicer, the Liverpool footballers, will present the trophies.

The events will include ladies' and men's singles, ladies' and men's doubles and mixed doubles. It is hoped there will be a record entry, and intending competitors are asked to note that entries must be in by January 3.

As the South Region are in need of funds, an enterprising person has suggested that a "stop watch" competition should be run—the prize to be a 20 guinea watch! South Regioners will be informed of the details in due course.

SECRETARIAL HEADACHE

One of the major headaches of a Regional Secretary is picking a team to represent the region. Don Brown, who has been making the rounds of the clubs, says that likely players are J Houghton (Victoria Park), N. Owens (St. Michael's), S. Shur (Wavertree Community "A"), and B. Maddocks (Lucem). As he has not yet seen all the clubs in action, there will be some additions later.

In Division 1, Wavertree Community "A" and Lucem are still fighting "neck-and-neck" for the leadership. Lucem had a close fight with Liverpool

Y.M.C.A., whom they beat by 6-4, after leading 5-0 at half-time. Both Lucem and Wavertree had 10-0 victories over Aigharth "B," only one game being dropped.

In Division 2, Liverpool Y.M.C.A., who were top of the league last month, lost to Lucem 4-6 in an exciting match in which six of the events went to three games. Cadwa "A" lost to Livex "A" 2-8, but there is little indication which way the championship will go in this division.

Keeper of Records

Only a few of the players in the League have been aware that for the past two years a complete playing record has been kept of all the members. Into a book has gone all the individual scores of each player.

The keeper of these records has been and is Des Loughrey, secretary of Oakhill and Joint Editor of Table Tennis Digest. Recently he presented to the League the 1949-50 records neatly compiled and bound.

During those two seasons Des kept his records unofficially, but now his status has been made official, for the League have appointed him statistician.

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Rafters Set a Problem

Since my last notes, our League complement has undergone a change. Gordon Institute, through internal difficulties, have had to resign, and their place has been taken over by Rafters "C."

The question of great interest now is: "How strong are Rafters?" At the time of writing no one can say, but it is probable that they may make our leading teams watch every point. I have the feeling they will add strength and keenness to the Region.

Burlington are at the present time worthy league leaders and North Region representatives in the Readman and Hyde Cups. In their first five matches they had only 15 sets scored against them. From my knowledge of the sides in the Region, it looks as though Linacre are the only side likely to take a point or two from them, but the keen youngsters of Bootle Y.M., imbued with the real team spirit, are keenly awaiting their return match with Burlington, to whom they only lost 6-4 away.

FINE RECORD

I wonder how many teams can equal the fine record of Linacre, who have played five league matches and three cup-ties with the same five players and in unchanged order? No other team in our Region can.

Jack Lambert, of English Electric has signed on John Ashton from Bohemians. I recommended him to them and they should be strengthened by his inclusion.

Hamilton Mission, by their fine win over Bath Street, may regain their lost confidence and become the useful opposition they were last season, but Brenka are still feeling the loss of three former playing members. Waterloo Park, however, despite their loss of players, are still optimistic of brighter days.

Alf. Webster, Waterloo Dock's secretary, once again undertook the responsibility of staging an inter-city match—Liverpool v. Preston. His "A" team have not done too well yet

but they are worthy triers.

I would like to say that I appreciated the support given to Umpires at Mather Avenue, by the Chairman of the League and the Management Committee.

There were players who endeavoured to intimidate Umpires. I personally observed that these bad sportsmen never once umpired games themselves.

The correct service is still not being adhered to and until we get umpires strong enough to penalise deliberate offenders, we will have trouble and strife.

I want to congratulate all my North Region teams on their fine Readman and Hyde Cup efforts and successes.

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Revival of R.F. St. Annes

By E. G. McGenity

After their dismal start to the season, St. Annes have again secured the services of their coach and secretary, and he assures me that Rock Ferry mean business from now onwards, as Greasby and B'head Boys Clubs have already found to their cost.

The outstanding feature of the Greasby match was the tremendous din which went on throughout the evening. Despite this great drawback, the boys on both sides tried their utmost to concentrate on the game and the score of 10-0 in favour of Rock Ferry, hardly did justice to the great-hearted efforts of the Greasby lads.

W. Aleock, their captain and No. 1, found both McGhee and Doherty, just a little too canny for his attacking game and often found himself "groping" for judiciously placed defensive shots. K. Edge, the No. 2, experienced much the same difficulty, but by varying his tactics, did manage to take one set from Doherty.

JOY TO WATCH.

The personality of the match was young Anthony Colegate, the home side's No. 3, who fully extended both Jones and Sullivan. It was a joy to watch the enthusiasm of this boy, both in his play and in the attention which he lavished on his visitors. R. Law found Rowe and Hazelhurst, a tidy handful, just "getting there" in the third set against each of them.

Birkenhead Boys Club, who have been carrying all before them in recent weeks, also came a cropper against St. Annes. They lost 9-1 in a match which was dominated by their Nos. 4 and 5, McKeown and Hoolahan, both of whom showed considerable promise for the future.

Here again, the glaring need for some sort of coaching manifested itself. These Birkenhead Boys are as keen as mustard and it is a shame to see such obvious ability lying dormant for the want of a guiding hand.

Hoylake Y.M.C.A. are still at the head of affairs, while Convention of Youth, hold the unenviable position at the other end of the table. Shaftesbury, Ashville, Woodchurch and Heswall are all meeting with fluctuating fortunes

The Half-Volley Shot

By Peter Rumjahn

This month's hints are devoted to the playing of the half-volley shot, that is the shot by which the ball is struck immediately it bounces.

1. Half-volley v. half-volley.

Use backhand to play this shot, as you can cover the whole table with it. The bat is held vertically with the handle-blade line horizontal, the ball is struck with a slight forward motion of the bat as soon as it bounces.

Learn to place ball accurately at various speeds.

2. Half-volley v. a "Chop" return.

Tilt the blade back and face up along horizontal axis to allow for back spin, and play into ball slightly upwards.

3. Half-volley v. Topspin return.

Tilt bat forward to cover spin, let ball hit bat on half-volley, keep bat still.

Half-volley is used:—

- (a) to change defence into attack.
- (b) to receive most services.
- (c) to angle the ball across the table.
- (d) for a drop shot played with a dead-bat, ball must be smothered
- (e) as an emergency shot.

TIPS

Beginners will find it advantageous not to bend the wrist.

Keep forearm, wrist, back of hand, and bat in one straight line from elbow

Play half-volley shots with bat and elbow in line and parallel to net.

Bat tilt is achieved by rotation of the forearm.

Lancashire Open

The Lancashire Open will be held at the Drill Hall, Stretford Road, Manchester 15, on Saturday, January 20th. Closing date for entries is Saturday January 6th. Forms may be obtained from Mr. W. Stamp, Organising Secretary.

Other dates to note are:—

- Jan. 18-20.—Lancashire Open.
- Feb. 9—England v. Ireland, at Liverpool.
- Mar. 26—League Championships.