

JANUARY, 1954

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Vol. IV. No. 3.

PRICE 6^D.

TABLE
TENNIS
DIGEST

Official Magazine

OF THE

LIVERPOOL SOCIETY OF TABLE TENNIS CLUB

Table Tennis

All correspondence
must be addressed to
The Editor "Table
Tennis Digest," 9
Podium Rd. L'pool 13

Digest

Published on the third
Thursday of each month
from October to March.
Subscription for season
3s 9d. post free.

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Joint Editors: J. D. Pattison and J. D. Loughrey

D. M. Foulis

W. Stamp

A. Montgomery

COMMENT

DURING a recent conversation a club secretary remarked that although he personally disapproved of playing members in lower teams than their strength merited, he was going to do so in future. His main reason was that numerous clubs were now doing this in order either to gain promotion for a junior side or to save it from relegation, and he failed to see why his club should suffer because of his private opinion.

This raises a question of first importance and one to which the Management Committee must give their attention as soon as possible.

There is no doubt that the practice has been growing in the past two seasons or so. Instances can be quoted where unbiassed opinion would certainly agree that an advantage was being sought by the playing of a member in a side lower than his strength justified.

In doing so, of course, no club infringes the rules of the League. Clubs with a number of teams are perfectly entitled to take the step, but it is important that the smaller clubs should realise what is going on and just how much their chance of success is being jeopardised.

The danger in the practice is that the whole framework of the League's competitive programme may be reduced to a farce, with the large clubs making it almost impossible for the small clubs to have a fair chance in the promotion and relegation struggles, or in the various cup competitions.

The impossibility of disagreeing with a club's estimate of their players' strength forces one to the conclusion that revolutionary changes may be needed.

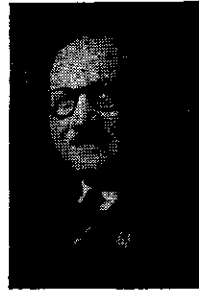
Is the solution in limiting clubs to two teams and where there is accommodation for a big membership compelling that membership to be split into separate groups under distinct titles. A necessary corollary to that might be that no transfers could be allowed between the groups in any one season?

Or should the Football League system be adopted whereby only first teams are allowed in the league proper and that there be separate leagues for the A, B, C and D teams?

It is a difficult problem, but if serious injustice is not to be done steps should be taken to tackle it at the end of the season. Much will rest with the smaller clubs themselves. It is for them to voice their opinion as to whether a serious move should be made to remove what might become a serious threat to the well-being of the League in general.

FEBRUARY 9 IS DEADLINE FOR "CLOSED" ENTRIES

By W. STAMP.



THE Closed League Championships have for many years been played at the end of the season, but at the last A.G.M. it was suggested that the tournament take place midway between Christmas and April.

The reasons advanced for the change were that secretaries could not contact their members; that many were playing tennis or cricket and not available either to compete or give us their support as spectators at the finals. The Management Committee have accordingly made arrangements for Dingle Vale School, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 25-27; Men's Singles and Consolations- at 6 p.m. on 25-26 and the Women's events commencing at 1 p.m. on the Saturday, followed by the Mixed at approx. 5 p.m. and the Men's Doubles at 7 p.m.

We may have to conclude some of the events on Monday, March 1, if the entry justifies it. Otherwise this night will be used to play the semi-finals of at least Three of the Cup competitions.

Only One Price

The Championship finals will, as usual, take place in the theatre of the Y.M.C.A., Mount Pleasant, on Friday, March 5. There will be one price only for admission, viz 2/- with a choice of seat anywhere in the hall.

We do not want to have the fiasco we had at Picton Hall, and secretaries will be sent tickets proportionate to their playing strength and every club will be expected to support the League tournament, and not leave it to the same faithful few that rally round each year. The old excuse that the season had ended and the members scattered, no longer applies.

The Regional Singles events have been discontinued as many of the

competitors who were eligible seemed to feel they were catered for in the Regional tournaments organised by the respective secretaries. I think this rather short-sighted, as in a Regional tournament they can only be drawn against players they have been meeting in league matches, whereas they had the opportunity in the Closed of playing against members of the other three Regions. However, many of the players for whom these events were inaugurated, failed to support them so there is no point in trying to flog a dead horse.

We have re-introduced a Consolation event, which means that competitors in the Men's and Women's singles will have at least two sets, as players knocked out in the first round are automatically placed in the Consolations without further fee. They will be played in the same session as the Singles events.

Entry forms are now in the hands of secretaries (who can obtain more by sending a stamped addressed envelope). Entries close on Tuesday, February 9. Do not leave it until the last minute before posting.

Names Cards

I had hoped to publish the winners in the names cards competition, but this has been impossible because 23 clubs have not yet sent in the result of their efforts. Is it You that is at fault in not returning the money for your card to the secretary?

Please give this matter your immediate attention, as the result has been somewhat disappointing, but there is still time for you to do your bit. I will give some interesting facts and figures in a future issue.

From Top To Bottom

AT this stage it appears that the division has taken on certain defined sections, with Linnets and Lucem having a private battle for the leadership and the luckless Wavertree doomed for relegation.

But I would say this for Wavertree. They strengthened their side with the inclusion of B. Reeves and T. Ellis, and were unlucky to lose 6-4 to Oakhill A away from home. M. Hamill (Oakhill) only just beat R. Hulse 20-22, 21-19, 22-20. But that's the way it goes.

Of the others, the records of three teams call for particular mention, two of whom have slowly risen in the League table. First there is Balfour C, who fight hard and fair. Their 7-3 win over Cheshire Lines was certainly no fluke, with Ken Harold (Balfour No. 1) defeating G. Gower 21-13, 21-10.

Giant Killers

Then they drew with Litherland at home, and Jim Dickinson lived up to the name of the "giant killer's captain," for in both games he won all his sets.

Oakhill, fielding a side weakened by the loss of J. Grant, are still winning and can beat the best in the division. Victoria Park are another steady team. They proved it by beating Litherland 7-3 at home, with M. Trueman (Victoria Park) taking A. Taylor very close, the scores being 22-20, 21-23, 21-13.

Of the remaining five teams, Cheshire Lines, Bootle Y.M.C.A., and Bohemians will, I think, finish in the top half of the table, while Waterloo Dock and Rafters B, unless strengthened, have serious relegation worries.

Cup Success

Two Second division teams fought their way through to the last eight of the Readman Cup and Bootle Y.M.C.A. played a great game in beating the First division side, Rafters, despite reports suggesting that Rafters had a weak team on the night.

That's just too bad and it doesn't discredit Bootle's win, which means they are in the semi-finals.

Lucem on the other hand went out easily to Anfield, a strong side, the score being 8-2, but on the whole all our teams have a good performance in both the Stamp and Readman Cups.

In the averages, which include cup games, are A. C. Taylor (Litherland) 89.28 per cent; G. Gower (Cheshire Lines) 81.48; J. Rimmer (Lucem) 80; W. Allanson (Bootle Y.M.C.A.) 74.19; F. Thomas (Linnets) 72.41; A. Topping (Linnets) 70.83. In that order they lead the way.

So far in this division, the competition has been very keen, the sportsmanship shown throughout the season first-class and the complaints few. Keep it that way and good luck for 1954.

And Veterans As Well

Peter Rumjahn is keen to accept the challenge thrown out last month by Ken Boden for an inter-divisional match between their juniors.

"Will the Under-18's in the first division please drop me a card?" he writes. "Perhaps we can then meet Ken Boden's challenge."

But he goes on: "If not, it will have to be a veterans' match. How many over 40?"

Perhaps Ted Cameron, to whom the challenge was also issued but who finds that juniors are almost unknown in his third division, will be more interested in that angle.

Why not juniors and veterans, lowering the age of the latter to 35? They could be good fun.

NICKNAME THAT FITS HIM

HAVING already nominated the promotion pair, let us deal with some of the also-rans.

First and foremost in this group come Osterley and Bath Street, both very good teams who will probably be pipped for promotion.

When reviewing the teams at the start of the season I fancied Osterley with their added strength. Unfortunately for Jack Carridge and his lads, and of course Miss Willcox, a run of bad luck came the way of one of their last season's stalwarts and a few points slipped away. They may still make it of course, but I expect them to finish third.

In His Lair

Following them will be Bath Street, which brings me to the "Spider." How many of you know G. Aspinall by this name? I heard it first from an ex-fourth division colleague of his and somehow it fits. He stands at the corner of the table, in his lair as it were, and darts out to deal with the ball as effectively as any spider with its prey. He looks a little awkward, but his unorthodox ways have made him the most feared of all opponents in the division.

With big Stan Draper of Bohs, Aspinall shares the distinction of having defeated Basil Townsend. In his tenth match, however, he met his own Waterloo, losing to that other pen shaped maestro, Dick Hough of the Police.

Keeping to personalities, another heavyweight now finding his form is T. Larkin, of Linacre. I am always amazed at the lightness of foot shown by a man of such a build.

English Electric are slipping back after a promising start. Perhaps their star is Eric Smitton; I have never seen him play a bad game.

Cadwa are the last of the serious challengers, with Rene Crafter at the helm. They are building a useful team which will be coming into its own in the not too distant future. Rene has probably the longest playing record with the league of all in division three.

My own club, Victoria Park, are playing very disappointingly, but we are particularly pleased with the form of

J. Houghton, now at No 1, and with the return of Bill Watts we hope to avoid the big drop.

I hear that there is panic afoot in the Bohs camp. Ken Jones, regular first teamer, has been relegated to our divisional team and with a few more team shuffles they are hoping to save the day. Ken, of course, still plays as a reserve for the first team in hard matches. It is all within the rules—your rules too.

Technical Students, strong candidates for Division 4, have in B. Smith the best 17-year-old prospect in the Division. A little more thoughtfulness and a little less wild hitting would improve his game 50 per cent.

Alas I could not muster five such youngsters to take up Ken Boden's challenge. I believe I have mentioned before that Division 3 is almost the veterans' league, although in saying this I have not inspected birth certificates and leave myself wide open for attack from the possible "babes" I have misjudged.

for Table Tennis

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Parade of Personalities

THIS stage of the season, when we have all met each other at least once, seems to present a good opportunity for a general look at the outstanding members of our teams.

I still fancy Panto are the glamour side of the division. Few players will beat Bert Harkness this season, while extremely able backing comes from Bill Slater and Phil Coulter.

At Bootle, solid consistency is the keynote, and this season's only newcomer, Albert Harris, is going from strength to strength. Congratulations to him, and to clubmate Ian Rogerson (unbeaten in his last twelve league sets) and Ron Mason, of Panto, on reaching the final stages of the Maxwell Fyfe.

These three proved that success of the handicap event goes to the man in form, they show only one defeat between them in their last four matches.

Wavertree's Jump

Another side with the accent on consistency is Waterloo Park, where Charlie Bray has struck grand form and R. Musker is proving himself one of the best low-position players in the division.

Over at Wavertree, P. G. Evans has completely reconstituted his side, and the new look team has shot up to fourth position. Cohen and Fowler will doubtless render first rate assistance to their skipper in his rather belated challenge for promotion.

Domestic Mission have slipped somewhat in recent weeks, due, perhaps, to Frank Varty's Wirral commitments, and a surprising loss of his early season form by Albert Hill. If they can field their full strength for the rest of the season, they should still be thereabouts in April.

Lofters are situated a comfortable sixth, with Bill Askew perhaps the most inspired player in the division, and Mrs. Beryl Waterson strengthening the middle of the side in fine style.

If it is true that Bob Platt has been "lost" to one of Oakhill's senior teams, then the Kensington club's third string may be in for a few anxious moments, though Wilf Glover has proved himself an extremely hard player to beat.

Fine Captain

At Victoria Park the B team has a fine captain in Don Cameron, while B. Roddy seems to have struck form recently. The C side appears to rely on Les Hunter and Charlie Manning for most of their sets.

Livex A are struggling somewhat, through senior calls, but in G. Corless they have unearthed a player who will improve considerably with time, patience and coaching. Bohemians are badly situated. Their surprise win at Domestic Mission may, however, be the sign of happier times ahead.

African Oil look doomed for a trip to the regions, but this reflects no discredit on Ron Davies, who has scored more than half their sets. In E. Culdhaw they have a boy with good strokes who will win sets when he begins to use his head and develop match temperament.

Congratulations to Panto on reaching the semi-final of the Rumjahn Cup. They did so at the expense of the Third Division side, Bohemians A. And also to Bootle Y.M.C.A. A in holding Liverpool Police to a draw in the quarter final. At the time of writing the replay had not taken place.

Waterloo Park also deserve a mention for reaching the quarter finals and for giving Liverpool Y.M.C.A. A a hard fight of it before passing out 6-4.

LEAGUE TABLES

up to week ending 16th January, 1954

First Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour A	12	10	0	2	87	33	22
Rafters A	12	9	1	2	85	35	20
15th Crosby	12	7	2	3	73	47	17
Balfour	12	7	5	0	77	43	14
Liverpool Y.M.	12	5	3	4	68	52	14
Balfour B	12	5	4	3	55	65	13
Rafters	12	5	5	2	62	58	12
Oakhill	12	5	6	1	57	63	11
Anfield	12	4	6	2	62	58	10
Anfield A	12	3	8	1	39	81	7
Livex	12	1	9	2	44	76	4
African Oil	12	0	12	0	11	109	0

Women's Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Rafters	12	9	0	3	87	33	21
Bohemians	12	9	2	1	84	36	19
Lofters	12	8	1	3	80	40	19
Balfour	12	8	3	1	72	48	17
Oakhill	11	7	3	1	65	45	15
Anfield	11	5	4	2	62	48	12
Linnets	12	5	7	0	61	59	10
Bibbys	12	4	6	2	57	63	10
Littlewoods	11	3	6	2	50	60	8
Cheshire Lines	11	2	8	1	37	73	5
Brenka	11	1	10	0	20	90	2
Linnets A	11	0	11	0	15	95	0

Second Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Linnets	12	10	2	0	74	46	20
Lucem	11	8	2	1	68	42	17
Litherland	12	7	2	3	68	52	17
Oakhill A	12	7	4	1	58	62	15
Victoria Park	12	6	4	2	67	53	14
Cheshire Lines	12	5	4	3	65	55	13
Bohemians	12	5	5	2	64	56	12
Balfour C	12	5	6	1	54	66	11
Bootle Y.M.C.A.	12	4	6	2	62	58	10
Waterloo Dock	12	2	8	2	47	73	6
Rafters B	12	2	9	1	45	75	5
Wavertree C.C.	11	1	10	0	38	72	2

Women's—Division II

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Beauclair	12	10	1	1	90	30	21
Waterloo Park	12	9	0	3	86	34	21
Osterley	12	6	2	4	81	39	16
Bohemians A	12	6	3	3	80	40	15
Wavertree C.C.	12	7	4	1	70	50	15
Littlewoods A	12	6	5	1	55	65	13
Aigburth	12	5	5	2	66	54	12
Leyfield	12	4	4	4	62	58	12
Lucem	12	5	6	1	48	72	11
Dunlop	12	2	8	2	36	84	6
Beauclair A	12	0	11	1	27	93	1
Catholic Metro	12	0	11	1	19	101	1

Third Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
L'pool Y.M. A	12	10	0	2	89	31	22
Anfield B	11	8	2	1	64	46	17
Osterley	11	6	3	2	67	43	14
Bath Street	11	5	2	4	62	48	14
Cadwa	12	6	4	2	65	55	14
L.P.A.S.	12	5	5	2	59	61	12
English Electric	12	4	6	2	56	64	10
Victoria Park A	11	3	6	2	53	57	8
I.C.I.	12	3	7	2	51	69	8
Tech. Students	12	3	7	2	43	77	8
Bohemians A	12	3	8	1	48	72	7
Linacre	12	3	9	0	43	77	6

North Regional I

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bootle Y.M. B.	12	11	1	0	83	37	22
Littlewoods	12	9	3	0	74	46	18
Maghull	12	8	3	1	73	47	17
Litherland A	12	6	2	4	71	49	16
Brenka	12	6	2	4	67	53	16
Everton Y.M.	12	6	4	2	64	56	14
English Elec. A	12	5	4	3	66	54	13
Warbreck Moor	12	3	6	3	57	63	9
Waterloo Park A	12	3	7	2	49	71	8
Lofters A	12	3	9	0	46	74	6
Waterloo Dock A	12	2	10	0	45	75	4
15th Crosby A	12	0	11	1	25	95	1

Fourth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bootle Y.M. A	12	10	0	2	85	35	22
Panto	11	10	0	1	84	26	21
Waterloo Park	12	7	4	1	80	40	15
Lofters	12	5	3	4	62	58	14
Wavertree C.C. A	12	6	5	1	62	58	13
Oakhill B	12	5	5	2	65	55	12
Domestic Mission	12	5	5	2	58	62	12
Bohemians B	12	4	7	1	47	73	9
Victoria Park B	12	3	7	2	46	74	8
Victoria Park C	12	3	8	1	45	75	7
Livex A	11	2	7	2	42	68	6
African Oil A	12	0	9	3	34	86	3

North Regional II

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bootle Y.M. C.	12	12	0	0	92	28	24
English Elec. B	12	10	1	1	80	40	21
Brownmoor Park	12	7	3	2	79	41	16
Bath Street A	12	7	4	1	69	51	15
Litherland B	11	5	2	4	64	46	14
Waterloo Park C	10	4	4	2	55	45	10
Anfield D	11	4	5	2	53	57	10
English Elec. C	12	4	6	2	50	70	10
Waterloo Park B	12	2	8	2	46	74	6
Co-op	12	1	8	3	42	78	5
Bootle Police	10	2	8	0	31	69	4
Maghull A	12	1	10	1	29	91	3

LEAGUE TABLES

South Regional

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Cheshire Lines A.....	10	10	0	0	86	14	20
Beauclair	11	10	1	0	92	18	20
Linnets A	11	9	2	0	77	33	18
Cadwa B	11	6	3	2	55	55	14
Aigburth	10	6	4	0	58	42	12
Dennis	10	4	5	1	49	51	9
Wavertree C.C. B	11	4	6	1	50	60	9
Linnets C	11	3	8	0	43	67	6
Dunlop	10	2	7	1	35	65	5
St. Peters	10	1	9	0	20	80	2
Dom. Mission A	11	0	10	1	15	95	1
Aigb'th Meth., Resigned, Record expunged							

East Regional

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
L.P.A.S. A.....	12	12	0	0	92	28	24
Vagabonds.....	12	10	1	1	97	23	21
Balfour D	12	8	3	1	72	48	17
Cadwa A	11	7	3	1	64	46	15
Osterley A	12	6	4	2	64	56	14
Wavertree Lab.	12	5	6	1	61	59	11
Cadwa C	11	4	5	2	53	57	10
Leyfield	12	3	6	3	53	67	9
Edwardians	12	3	8	1	48	72	7
Fairlawn	12	3	9	0	34	86	6
L.P.A.S. B	12	2	9	1	36	84	5
St. Dominics.....	12	1	10	1	36	84	3

Central Regional I

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Anfield C	12	10	1	1	87	33	21
L'pool Y.M. B	12	9	1	2	83	37	20
Panto A	12	8	3	1	79	41	17
Old Xaverians	11	7	2	2	68	42	16
R.A.F.A. (L).....	12	7	3	2	69	51	16
Linnets B	12	6	4	2	66	54	14
Oakhill C	12	6	5	1	67	53	13
Lucem A	12	4	6	2	55	65	10
Daily Post & Echo ..	11	2	8	1	43	67	5
Vagabonds A	11	0	8	3	29	81	3
Catholic Metro	12	1	10	1	29	91	3
Lussac.....	11	0	9	2	25	85	2

Central Regional II

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
R.A.F. Movement ..	12	12	0	0	103	17	24
Stanley House	11	9	2	0	78	32	18
Cheshire Lines B ..	12	9	3	0	76	44	18
Peel Hall	12	3	4	5	59	61	11
Livex B	12	4	3	5	58	62	13
Beauclair A	12	5	6	1	52	68	11
Florence Oxtton ..	12	5	6	1	52	68	11
Oakhill D	12	3	6	3	52	68	9
C.L.C. C	10	2	4	4	45	55	8
Tech Stud. A	12	3	7	2	49	71	8
Old Xaverians A ..	11	2	7	2	40	70	6
Deaf Institute	12	0	9	3	36	84	3

Round and About

THREE members of the Victoria Park club, Bill Watts, George Williams and Don Cameron, appear to have become honorary and unofficial selectors of the Liverpool Boys' Association team to tour the continent. They were invited to assist in the selection last season—which incidentally led to the signing up of Mike Trueman—and they have again been acting in the same capacity this season. Incidentally, No. 1 in the team of six is Fred Cuff, of Anfield.

Her many friends in the League will join in an expression of sympathy with Mrs. Steen Farrell, of Bohemians, on the death of her father in Holland.

Still representing the League in the *Daily Mirror* tournament are Mrs. Beryl Waterson (Lofters) and Mrs. Moya Jones (Bohemians). In the fifth round Mrs. Waterson beat Miss Wardle, of Crewe, 21—14, 21—11, 21—9, and Mrs. Jones beat Miss L. Rimmer, of Wirral, 21—12, 22—20, 21—14.

At present on the sick list is Mr. Jack Neill, the North Region secretary. He was at first the victim of a cold but unfortunately this has developed into pleurisy. All his friends in the League, in addition to his "children" in the North, will wish Jack a speedy recovery.

Only definite success in the Flintshire Open was scored by Tony Smith (Balfour) when he won the consolation singles. Bernard Hand (15th Crosby) reached the semi-final of the men's singles.

Frank Thomas, Linnets No. 3, gained a notable win when he beat Bernard Hand, 15th Crosby's Liverpool champion, in the *Evening Chronicle* tournament.

SPECIAL NOTICE

In view of the League Closed Championships being extended to Monday, 1st March, 1954, all matches due to be played on this date must be played on the previous Monday, 22nd February, 1954, this being a blank date in the fixtures.—G. Williams, (Hon. Fixture Secretary).

RECORD THAT NEARLY WENT

PANTO 6, Oakhill B 4—the result shows that the Fourth Division leaders retained their unbeaten League record, but it does not show how very near they were to losing that record.

Though without Harkness, Panto started off by winning the first two events, but when the halfway mark was reached the visitors were leading 3—2, and though after many near things, Panto went into a 5—3 lead it was not until the final point of the night was scored that they were assured of victory.

This Oakhill team should perhaps be called Oakhill Veterans, for they tell me their average age is 41. At No. 5 is Sorsky, the old City Club player, making a return to the game after no less than 20 years' absence. They certainly enjoy their game, and with their different styles will cause more than Panto a few worries.

Pulled Table in Two

In Platt at No. 1—he won his two sets—they have a tenacious player with a strong forehand drive which he uses to all parts of the table. He nearly slipped up against Duffy, for having won the first game he had a lead of 17—13 in the second only to let Duffy take it at 21—17. But he made no mistake in the decider.

Captain Farrall played and tried hard but without success. He tried so hard that at 18—20 down to Mason he pulled the table in two—accident, I know, but it worked for he got to 20—all, only to lose the next two.

I can see some of the shrewder gentry entering that into their notebooks.

Farrall also shook the dwellers of the Victoria Street "catacombs" with his "Little Boy Blue" outfit.

Imundy and Glover obtained the veterans' other two sets, the former with his half volleys and fierce topspin forehand, and Glover with his rather unorthodox side spin.

Glover gave us all the laugh of the night, for after his second set he bade us all "Good night" only to reappear some 20 minutes later to ask the

location of the dressing room. He had been wandering round the nether regions all that time.

The turning point of the match came when the score stood 3—all and 5—3 for Panto, and Sorsky was concerned both times. He flattered to deceive in both games for he started with a rush, sending over a stream of backhand flicks that had Barna written all over them.

Changed Tactics

Neither Coulter nor Johnson could do much about these storms but Sorsky changed to his forehand, which was not nearly so steady. All praise to his opponents, especially Johnson, a young inexperienced player, for sticking to it.

I do feel, however, that with a little more concentration Sorsky could have won both and given his side the distinction of being the first to defeat Panto in the League this season. Still, after a gap of 20 years, I imagine concentration is one of the hardest things to recover.

Slater played not only a sound steady game to win both his sets for the winners, but also played a captain's part when his ship was definitely rocking.

Mason played well in patches, but would do well to give his flick a rest if it is not working—one winner to ten losers is too big a price to pay, especially when one has a defence as good as Mason's.

Duffy and Coulter were steady if not spectacular but contributed a win each to their team's final success.

This Panto side, with Harkness in, are undoubtedly a useful one—no stars but steady and sound all the way down—and one can well see why they have been so much in the honours.

Still, they will be glad they don't have to meet the old men from Oakhill every week, for the shaking they got seemed to be transmitted to the lights which kept flickering. This made me wonder what hopes ordinary mortals have if the G.P.O. wiring is thus affected.

Cup Gamble That Failed

IT is always something of a gamble to switch one's team and so sacrifice sets. It means that the remaining members of the team must be on top form and make certain of winning.

When they found that they were going to be short of their regular Nos. 4 and 5, Mrs. Steen Farrell and Mrs. Daisy Mezey, for their third round Bartholomew Cup match with Lofters, Bohemians tried to cut their loss by switching their team.

They played Pauline Fitzpatrick and Edith Glead in the first two positions, and their normal Nos. 1, 2 and 3—Mrs. M. Jones, Miss C. Glead and Mrs. M. Alcock—in the lower positions.

Their gamble failed for Lofters won 6—4. Only Moya Jones could win her two sets, Chris Glead and May Alcock contributing one apiece. Nevertheless it looked at one time as though the gamble would succeed, for they led 4—3, but the Waterloo players made sure of their place in the semi-final by winning the last three sets.

More Hectic

It was obvious soon after the season began that the fight for the women's championship was going to be a very close affair. Now, as the second half of the season opens, it is even more obvious that the struggle is going to be more hectic than ever.

With Bohemians still unbeaten a fortnight before Christmas, the Stoney-croft team bade fair to add a new name to the list of champions, but their 7—3 defeat at the hands of Rafters considerably changed the outlook. It not only put Rafters on level terms with the Bohemians, both on points and set averages, but it also put renewed hopes into the hearts of Lofters.

With the news too, that Bohemians were losing the services of Daisy Mezey and Rafters those of Bluey Casselman for the rest of the season, Lofters could hardly be criticised if they saw the possibility of their going one better than last season, by gaining a league and cup double, more especially after their 6—4 win over Bohemians in the semi-final of the cup.

How Bohemians must have bemoaned the absence in Holland of Steen Farrell

in that vital pre-Christmas match with Rafters, and still more her continued absence, together with that of Mrs. Mezey, in the cup tie. There have been few more successful Nos. 4 and 5 in the first division this season than these two players.

It is, of course, always conjectural whether the result of either of the matches would have been different even if Bohemians had been at their full regular strength.

Owing to illness Miss Margaret Lindner has been unable to contribute her usual article. As she is improving, we hope that we shall have her notes next month.

Where Lofters may fall down is if they go for the double. The availability of Joyce Lloyd is very much restricted owing to her police duties. They found to their cost what her absence can mean when they met Littlewoods earlier in the season without her and could only gain a draw.

Saving Move

By a readjustment in the composition of their two teams, Linnets have obviously given up any hope they have had of winning the championship and now seem more concerned with keeping their A team in the premier division.

Should their move prove successful, it is likely to have the effect of sending Cheshire Lines and Brenka into the second division.

Beauclair's victory over Osterley just before Christmas has virtually ensured their promotion with Waterloo Park. The latter have finished the first half of the season without tasting defeat and the only two points they have dropped were when they were held to a draw by both Beauclair and Bohemians A, both when playing away.

A well balanced side, the Waterloo players are unlikely to let themselves slip during the second half, and as they will have table advantage when they next meet Beauclair and Bohemians they may easily go one better.

Blot in Handicap Tourneys

By J. D. LOUGHREY

THE final returns of the Maxwell Fyfe and Foulis Cup competitions to date this season, show that practically one in every five entrants failed to appear on their appointed evening, the total being 39.

Roughly five of that number informed either myself or the secretary concerned that they would be unable to attend, which to my mind makes a sorry story.

The worst section was at Lofters where eight women players attended and six did not, so that the proceedings were concluded in just over the hour. Efforts at time schedules are obviously doomed to complete failure while this sort of thing continues, and, to be honest, the fact that more than a quarter of the time spent on the Don Foulis Cup handicaps was completely wasted—25 per cent of the women failed to attend—is both unfair to the organisers and to other entrants.

Just what the reason may be is beyond me, but may I suggest that in future players should make a little more effort to honour their entries, as it makes things very difficult for the organisers when they do not attend.

Repeat Success

In the Maxwell Fyfe Cup, R. Mason, of Panto, achieved the distinction of being the only player from the previous season to again come through to the final rounds, a fine performance. The main honour, however, must go to Anfield, who, with three winners, did particularly well, not forgetting Bootle Y.M.C.A., who boast of two competitors to go forward.

Generally speaking matches were more closely contested and at a few centres there were a succession of desperately close contests, none more so than at Oakhill. Here there were some particularly close sets and provided possibly the best evening of the lot.

The personality of the session was without doubt W. Davies, of Vagabonds who quite disconcerted some representatives from loftier circles. He must be

a unique player as he apparently frequently plays his backhand shots with two hands, and, let it be said, most effectively.

He belongs to the Eric Caird Club, the grunting brigade, and with the huge arc of his swing threatening to decapitate spectators, and the threatened destruction of the clubroom as he attacked and defended, I make him the personality of the week.

The wiles of veteran Jim Green finally tamed him after he had collected the scalps of such noteworthies as Fay of Anfield and P. Short of Rafters.

Magic Touch

At Anfield, Clint Casselman found his magic touch, and gave a really brilliant display throughout the evening, his backhand being consistently devastating. A continuation of this form would make him a likely winner.

The surprise here nevertheless was the success of Eric Caird, who so far has not enjoyed much luck in League matches. He achieved a fine victory over E. Mandeluff, of Liverpool Y.M., and fought very well against his club colleague in the final. This surely cannot be his normal form in his weekly sets?

One of the best finals was seen at Lofters, where Bintley beat Allanson in a grand set by the closest possible scores—30—32, 31—29, 31—29. The result was in the balance right to the end, and looking to the future, it is clear that Allanson has made a very big advance this season. In the semi-final he had beaten Bernard Hand even though the Liverpool champion was playing at his best.

The success of Eric Anderson (Litherland) gave rise to much favourable comment, and his form at Bath Street was extremely good. With an allowance of 17, this regional player may take some stopping in the final stages, and he may prove to be the surprise of the season.

BALFOUR PLAYER WAS SURPRISE

Last year's winners of the cups, D. Bruce and Mrs. Beryl Waterson, both failed to come through, the former falling to the winner at Waterloo Park, another youngster, I. Rogerson of Bootle Y.M.C.A.

Beryl, however, made a stern fight in defence of her title, and it was one of the week's surprises that Joyce Richardson (Balfour) beat her in a close final. The Balfour player had done well earlier in beating M. Willcox of Osterley, making it a fine evening's work.

Three Out of Four

The necessity of catching a late bus prevented the playing of the final at Linnet between M. Hoey of Dunlop and K. Rumjahn of Rafters. The match will be played with the other final rounds at a later date.

With three out of four semi-finalists at Lofters, Bohemians, as expected, provided the winner, M. Jones achieving a close victory over colleague C. Gleed, while at Balfour, Audrey Brown had a fine evening after a poor first half of the season by beating formidable opponents in Nan Lamb and Joan Brennand.

Final arrangements will be communicated in due course to the finalists, but for the present may I extend my sincere thanks to those secretaries who co-operated so well to make a success of the tournaments. Their help made all the difference in ensuring the smooth running, and speaking personally outweighed the comments of some of the disgruntled competitors.

In passing may I hand a medal to a certain lady from Oakhill who is the only person in the three year's history of the competitions who has approached me with a protest that her handicap was too high!

The finals at the various centres resulted as follows:—

Maxwell Fyfe

R. Mason (Panto, 13) beat S. Harvey (Victoria Park, 12) 31—25, 28—31, 31—22.

C. Casselman (Rafters, 11) beat E. Caird (Rafters, 13) 31—22, 31—29.

J. Grant (Oakhill, 12) beat M. Lijnski (Anfield, 6) 31—28, 25—31, 31—25.

I. Rogerson (Bootle Y.M.C.A., 15) beat W. Askew (Lofters, 13) 31—25, 31—24.

W. Bintley (Anfield, 8) beat W. Allanson (Bootle Y.M.C.A., 11) 32—30, 29—31, 31—29.

A. Harris (Bootle Y.M.C.A., 14) beat L. Kilshaw (Waterloo Dock, 14) 25—31, 31—27, 31—29.

J. Brierley (Anfield, 14) beat J. R. Green (Linnets, 14) 31—27, 31—22.

J. Seddon (Waterloo Dock, 11) beat K. G. Davies (Vagabonds, 16) 31—21, 31—20.

E. F. Anderson (Litherland, 17) beat A. Hayden (Waterloo Park, 15) 31—18, 31—25.

M. Cohen (Anfield, 12) beat J. Houghton (Victoria Park, 14) 31—25, 31—29.

Foulis Cup

Mrs. M. Jones (Bohemians, 5) beat Miss C. Gleed (Bohemians, 9) 31—29, 31—29.

Miss J. Richardson (Balfour, 15) beat Mrs. B. Waterson (Lofters, sdr.) 31—28, 32—30.

Mrs. A. Brown (Linnets, 13) beat Miss J. Brennand (Rafters, 8) 31—27, 23—31, 31—27.

Mrs. K. Rumjahn (Rafters, 11) and Miss M. Hoey (Dunlop, 13) to play off.

We Lose The Methodists

BY now you will all probably know that one of our teams, Aigburth Methodists, has resigned from the League. The reason is not clear, but I am convinced it must be a sound one, because this club have built up a reputation for good sportsmanship over a number of years and it would not be in character for the men to break their club from any unworthy motive.

I regret their withdrawal deeply, and I am sure that the same feelings will predominate every club who have come in contact with them during their long career. Good luck to you, Meths. And may we see you back next season.

Stan Wilkinson has transferred to Linnets, where he rejoins Allan and Barbara Topping, while Jim Cashin has added considerably to the strength of his works team, Dunlops, who can now look forward to a more successful season.

Stronger Team

They have a dependable looking team, vastly stronger than their original five of the season, and will give the toughest of us a good fight. While I have not seen him myself, I am pleased to see from the records that Sam Bennett who played in that fine Dunlop team of four or five years ago, is still putting his best efforts into the cause.

The actual date is not yet fixed as I write, but this month the South are due to play the East (away) in the first of the inter-regional matches.

Contrary to previous seasons we have a wealth of talent from which to pick this year. I have no doubt that you will all think my selections are wrong, but I have invited the following to

represent us in this first effort:—R. Burge and J. Grayson (C.L.C.), B. Pardy and D. Rodrigues (Linnets) and S. Porter (Beauclair). As soon as the date and venue is fixed your secretary will be notified and I sincerely hope to see the South given some royal support.

Shortly, too, entry forms for the South Region tournament will be available at your clubroom, and I confidently expect all your entries. This is a "do" run specially for you, and while I am pleased to put my modest effort into it, I need yours to make it a success. Cheshire Lines are once again staging the tournament, and we have always had a fine time there.

The League matches for the tournament week should be played earlier to keep the week clear. Club secretaries are reminded to notify Mr. Williams as to when they will be playing these matches.

Dates Clashed

The dates of the tournament has had to be re-arranged, due to clashing with the finals of the Liverpool Closed. As I have no confirmation of the new dates, I will advise club secretaries as soon as I am in possession of them.

Here are some of our leading averages. Two are (according to my latest advice, i.e., up to December) unbeaten, namely J. Grayson and C. Grimes (C.L.C.). Following these are O. Hughes (C.L.C.), S. Porter and L. Carter (Beauclair) 92.85 per cent. D. Rodrigues and B. Pardy (Linnets) and J. McKim (Beauclair) 85.71 per cent; R. Burge (C.L.C.) 83.33 per cent; G. Kettle (C.L.C.) and M. Foster (W.C.C.) 80 per cent.

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FINDING A REGION TEAM

BEFORE the end of this month our Region must play the Central Region in the Micklesfield Medals competition.

In previous seasons it has been a not too difficult task to find the first outstanding players from the ten or twelve teams comprising our establishment. I have to admit I am becoming more confused as the rival schools of thought expound their arguments.

The draw for the inter-region matches resulted as follows:—North v. Central; East v. South. South v. North; Central v. East. North v. East; Central v. South.

Average Conscious

Recently through the Saturday Sports Magazine edition of the *Liverpool Echo* clubs were very strongly reminded that it was absolutely wrong to be in the belief that a team should be played in order of playing strength. I was one who supported this reminder although, strangely enough, I have always played my teams in order of merit.

There has been a trend recently for players to become "average conscious." They know that their names are published if they obtain 50 per cent or over. What is happening now is that a club with no hope of winning the league switches its team so that John Brown playing at No. 2 for a while without much success, is played at No. 3 for three matches to bring his average up to scratch, while the other players take a turn at No. 2 for the three weeks.

This policy is not good for the game and gives an absolutely false indication of a player's true standard. That is bad, but I have now seen everything.

A player representing Liverpool, actually played at No. 3 in a team-switch gamble. What happened was that the match was a flop because half the individual matches were massacres and a certain someone lost a tremendous amount of respect.

How then does one discover the real players genuinely equipped to play for

their region, etc.? I am glad to say the greater percentage of our region plays in order of merit, thus matches become a real test between rival players.

Do not be surprised if a player or two from the second division of our region gets a trial.

Bootle Y.M.C.A., from No. 1 to No. 5, are remarkably strong. Olven (13), McKenna (15), Cralley (15), B. Davies (18) and Beattie (16), have, at the time of writing, contributed the number of sets shown in brackets.

H. Dean, of Bath Street A, also has a consistent record of wins, although his appearances in matches are restricted.

Twelve Tried

Anfield D are indeed, unique. They have tried twelve players and it is pleasing to see Les Lewis and Mrs. Lewis playing in the same team each season. Les Lewis, playing at No. 1, has secured 14 out of 16 in the last eight games.

English Electric B, with its famous "F" formation of Fane, Fullerton, Fennerty and Flattery, have played together grandly from the start of the season.

I saw Eric Anderson, of Litherland, qualify for the last ten of the Maxwell Fyfe Cup. He impressed most people by his ability and temperament, and as he had the best handicap of the finalists—17—he must have a reasonable chance.

A certain captain in our area telephoned to ask if I would write something which would have the effect of steadying a player who constantly refuses to play to orders and when within sight of victory, say 18—12, goes wild and in trying to finish the game spectacularly often finishes up beaten.

There are a number of this type and the only cure is to refer to them, not as "bighead" but "blockhead."

Look out for the date of our match with the Central. We want your support.

AIRMEN TO LOSE WILDBLOOD

IN our first issue I said I expected great things of Anfield C. They have crept quietly into first place and unless something unforeseen happens I think they will hold that position at the end of the season.

Recent signings at Anfield have meant the return of Rea to the C team, adding even more strength to an already successful team.

Y.M.C.A., one point behind, will be all out to gain the extra point when the teams meet in the return match on their own table on January 27.

R.A.F.A. continue to slide back and only managed to draw with Panto A, who are improving as the season progresses.

Unbeaten First Half

In the second division, R.A.F. Movements completed the first half of the season undefeated. Their game with Cheshire Lines B did not prove as keen as I anticipated.

Cheshire Lines team was much changed for the occasion. Tom Buchanan, normally No. 1, was down to No. 4, and at No. 3 we found Charlie Grimes, who has played regularly in their A team since signing for them. Brains at the table, however, proved more effective than brains in writing out team orders.

While Grimes, I understand, maintains his 100 per cent in South Region games, he met his match in Briggs, who spotted a weakness in backhand defence and played on it whenever possible. Grimes, however, won his first set against Annand quite comfortably.

Buchanan played well to beat Hemming, who needs to acquire a defence. Buchanan used his backhand attack to advantage. He has improved this stroke considerably since I saw him play earlier in the season, and is playing a steady all-round game, which no doubt gained him promotion to No. 1.

Payne, on the other hand, threw away countless points by continuing to use an erratic backhand flick. The margin between winners and misses was too costly in such an important match. Wildblood and Anderson maintained their 100 per cent.

The 8-2 result was a fair indication of the match, but the Movements now have to face the second half of the season with not very strong hopes of maintaining their lead.

As their name implies, several of their team are on the move. Wildblood leaves immediately on a several weeks' training course and others are due for overseas postings. Having tried out a couple of prospects from the new recruits, Sgt. Annand is not very hopeful.

Seeing Florence Oxtan in action against Beauclair recently, I was rather disappointed in their standard of play. Judging from some of their results in other matches, I expected a better display.

Lost Their Way

The events of the evening probably had an adverse effect on their game. Cook and Linsner having lost their way, wandered round for over an hour in the bitter cold. Their team-mates were unsettled in their first sets as another player went to search for the wanderers.

They settled down and played much better in the second half, but Cook and Linsner never got into their stride, with the result that Cook suffered his first defeat of the season.

Do members of the league learn the rules? Rule 23 plainly states: "The official starting time shall be 7-30 p.m." but it is being consistently broken this season.

I have had complaints from teams in other regions of the late arrival of Central Region teams to play in cup matches. Home teams arriving between 7-45 and 8 p.m. is not very creditable. Please think of your opponents and if you know you may be late notify your secretary so that he or she can ask permission for your late arrival.

Rule 19 is another to which I would draw attention. Collars and ties should not be worn, even in the regions.

The Central v. East match takes place on Friday, January 22, at Beauclair. Be there to cheer your team.

Police are Promotion Bound

AS we are now over the first half of the season, the position of things has become clear and some comment on what has gone before seems to be in keeping.

Unfortunately the region table has divided itself into a group of three at the top and the remainder following along at increasingly greater distance.

Of our three leaders — Liverpool Police A, Vagabonds and Balfour D—the only undefeated side are the Police, who have not even surrendered a point and seem clearly labelled for promotion.

They have been very consistent all season and this can be said to be due almost entirely to a regular team and the few sets lost by Heague and Conroy, who usually occupy positions one and two in the team.

Consistent Form

Vagabonds have only lost one match—when they were beaten by the Police—so they can rightfully claim second place, due almost entirely to their defeat of Balfour D. Again the reason can be given as a fixed team, although it must be noted that No. 1, M. Gallagher, has played most consistently and must be given due credit.

Balfour can claim that their only defeats have been at the hands of Police and Vagabonds, so that there is no doubt that these three teams make up the only real strength of the region.

Osterley have shown an improvement on last season and should hold a good

position at the season's end if they keep up the good work and the regular teams that have so far been playing.

Wavertree Labour, who again have N. Hambleton; Cadwa A and Edwardians make a small block of their own among them anything can happen.

May Do Better

I must not forget the weaker members and must say how surprised I am that Police B have not done better in view of the good start to their fixtures. But, of course, making up extra matches can make team selection hard, so maybe the second half will prove more lucrative in the way of points.

Our interest in the Hyde Cup has rapidly dwindled and our sole survivors are our region leaders, Police A, and Cadwa A. To both of them may we extend the wish that they will continue to carry the East representation into further rounds.

On January 22 the region plays its first inter-region match and the players from whom I propose to select our team are Heague and Conroy (Police), M. Gallagher (Vagabonds), R. S. Webster and W. Rogers (Balfour D), A. Povall (Cadwa) and N. Hambleton (Wavertree Labour).

In the very near future I shall be writing to club secretaries asking for entries for the regional tournament. I ask all to enter who possibly can do so as this is our only get together where anyone can play anyone.

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First Win Came At Chester

LIVERPOOL gained their first win of the season when they beat Chester 9-1 away from home. Their task was made easier when, on arriving at Chester, they found that D. G. Ellison, the former Bolton player now studying at Chester and playing No. 1 for them, was at the last minute unable to play.

Chester won the first set when W. Devine beat W. Pierce 2-0, but this was their only success for B. Hand and R. Rumjahn were too good for Devine, who was the only Chester player to extend the Liverpool team. The match was too one sided to be enjoyable from a spectators point of view.

The next match against Bolton was a much closer affair, with B. Hand beating Brooks in the last set of the evening to give his side victory by 6 sets to 4. Liverpool were represented by B. Hand, E. J. Rumjahn and R. Hetherington, but Bolton, who have lost three of their best players this season due to National Service and studies, had the star player of the evening in A. H. Costello, who won his three sets without dropping a game. The Liverpool players each won two sets, all beating Brooks and Bell.

Division Leaders

Liverpool A went to the top of the Second Division (South) when they beat the hitherto unbeaten leaders, Runcorn, by 8-2 at Victoria Park. N. R. Jones and A. C. Taylor each played well and won their three sets, K. Gaulton winning one.

The A team have now completed half their fixtures without defeat, the only two points they have dropped being the drawn games away from home against Macclesfield and Southport.

Our ladies team have only played one game during the past month. They were due to play Bury at the Balfour on December 18, but the game could not be played due to the non-arrival of the Bury team. This was a disappointment to our players and spectators, some of whom travelled a distance to see the game. Miss Royal, of Anfield, was to have made her debut for Liverpool in this game.

Miss E. Mansell, Mrs. L. Rumjahn and Mrs. M. Jones represented Liverpool in the return match against Blackpool when we were beaten 8-2. The match was much closer than the

score suggests for several sets were lost by our ladies by the narrowest of margins in the third game.

Miss Mansell and Mrs. Jones were Liverpool's set winners, each beating K. Benson. The doubles was won comfortably by Blackpool.

Out of Cup

Liverpool has no further active interest in the Wilmott Cup for our team were beaten by five sets to four by the Potteries at Hanley. The Potteries' No. 1, P. Burchell, a hard-hitting penholder, was in great form and his winning of his three sets was the basis of their victory.

The match was very keenly fought and was only decided in the last set of the evening when the respective Nos. 1, Hand and Burchell met. Burchell's win by 21-18 in the third game kept the Potteries in the Cup and put us out.

Liverpool's four sets were won by Hand (2) and Ron Rumjahn and Bill Pierce one each.

Cup Draws

The following are the draws for the semi-finals of the Readman, Bartholomew, Rumjahn and Stamp Cups and for the third round of the Hyde Cup.

The semi-finals will, of course, be played on neutral tables, the venues and the dates to be announced.

Readman Cup

Anfield v. Balfour A.
Bootle Y.M.C.A. v. 15th Crosby.

Bartholomew Cup

Linnets v. Lofters.
Bibby's v. Rafters.

Rumjahn Cup

Bath Street v. Osterley v. Bootle Y.M.C.A. A.
Panto v. Liverpool Y.M.C.A. A.

Stamp Cup

15th Crosby v. Balfour or Livex.
Anfield v. Rafters.

Hyde Cup

C.L.C. A v. Beauclair or Anfield C.
R.A.F.A. v. R.A.F. Movements.
Vagabonds v. Litherland B.
Waterloo Dock A or Liverpool
Police A v. Liverpool Y.M. B.