



Table Tennis DIGEST

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

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EDITORIAL

The recent loss of Wavertree Labour Club as a venue has highlighted yet again the need for us to seriously approach the question of having our own T.T. Centre. As a League, we do not even own a net or table, let alone have our own venue. Most sports accept the principle of pay to play and Councils provide the facilities. Not so T.T. players who show a marked reluctance towards paying for the most important aspect of all, that of a venue with in-built playing conditions.

If our sport is to flourish and bring in new blood, then we need to devote our time and effort to raising sufficient funds to back a bid for lottery money. Your Management Committee have supported Lottery bids for a multi-purpose Centre, incorporating a T.T. Centre but to date such bids have not been successful. For too long we have bumbled along with making do and moaning of the many shortcomings of existing venues but doing nothing about overcoming this problem. It won't happen overnight but if we continue to do nothing towards making it happen, we will continue to face uncertainty and eventual extinction as a League.

Much smaller Leagues than our own have addressed this problem and are now enjoying the benefits of having their own Centre. In some cases there is a need to expand, such has been the demand. The answer does not lie with the few, it lies with all of us. Everyone needs to get involved in a serious fund raising effort to secure for ourselves and our sport a real future. Think about it, it really does make sense.

In my last Editorial I referred to the increasing use of unacceptable language and was pleased to note that in a 1st div. match a player was penalised for this. Sylvia Graham has also raised the subject in her Notes and I always draw the attention of members of my teams to this if they indulge in it. After one match I spoke to all the players. The answer to this problem lies in our hands in that if we don't tackle this problem firmly, it will become accepted practice. Don't be afraid of speaking up or using the penalties available to you, as was done at the match referred to, for it is the lack of objection which has resulted in its spread. Frustration and annoyance as to your own play or progress is no rare thing but it should not be expressed by the use of bad language.

Ken Armson

MATCH SECRETARY'S ROUND UP by Don Davies



Welsh number one Junior, Adam Robertson, made a sensational debut for the Liverpool Men's team in their Lancashire and Cheshire League match against Burnley, and was the only player to remain unbeaten in the singles combat. The 12 year old from Caergrwle, standing in for Kevin Dolder, set the match alight with an astonishing display of top class play. Experienced players were simply swept aside by the pocket dynamo, who also enjoys a superb temperament.

To put it into perspective, after the visitors went one up via a Dave Newton victory over Keith Williams, the youngster demolished Newton, 21/14, 21/8, to add to his earlier dismissal of Howard Whewell in straight games. With Liverpool leading 4-2, Richards went down to Whewell which completed the Burnley's coring. The champions sealed the points when Robertson completed his hat-trick before Williams got the better of Whewell.

MATCH RESULT Liverpool 7 Burnley 3

K. Williams lost to D. Newton 23/25, 21/12, 18/21

A. Robertson beat H. Whewell 21/15, 21/18

S. Richards beat D. Watmough 18/21, 21/13, 21/19

Robertson beat Newton 21/14, 21/18

Williams beat Watmough 21/10, 21/14

Richards/Robertson lost to Whewell/Newton 17/21, 21/18, 7/21

Richards lost to Whewell 15/21, 14/21

Robertson beat Watmough 21/8, 21/14

Williams beat Whewell 21/19, 21/12

Richards beat Newton 21/16, 21/12

On Sunday, Liverpool faced a daunting task when they visited holders, Huddersfield, in round two of the Wilmott Cup, hoping to improve on their 5-0 drubbing of last season. Kevin Dolder opened his account with a splendid victory over Richard Smith, who stands 30 places above him in the English rankings. Keith Williams maintained his fine form of late to overcome England number 48, Tim Dyson, to open up a 2-1 lead. Liverpool then had a great opportunity to increase their advantage when Dolder led England number 10, Michael O'Driscoll 14/16, 16/9 and 19/16 in the third but failed to return any of the Yorkshireman's serves to lose 21/19.

The holders then forged to a 4-2 advantage to stand within one set of victory.

Williams, 39 last month, had other ideas, when he took on O'Driscoll. The English international eased his way through the first game, 21/10, but was stunned when Williams hit back to snatch the second, 21/18. The odds were still on the Yorkshireman but the seven times Liverpool Champion pulled off his career best result to take the decider 21/16, for a sensational victory. Dolder had to beat Dyson to stretch the tie to the ninth set, but was beaten in three games, to give the home side a 5-3 victory.

The Men's and Ladies teams have maintained their 100% records, both now having chalked up eleven successive victories since the start of last season. Keith Williams, Kevin Dolder and Stuart Richards form the regular team but with Kevin now working in the St Helens Superbowl, a replacement was required. Adam Robertson, with league victories over Paul Hutchings and Chris Ford to his credit, was the logical choice. He and his dad, Barry, agreed instantly, although the following two days, he was involved in the Tameside tournament. How long shall we see this rapidly rising star in the League?

The Ladies team are also on a winning run. Brenda Buoey, Paula French and Denise McEvoy are the regular trio and hopefully will be for the rest of the season.

Two wins and a defeat has more than likely ensured the Veterans remain in division one next season, Dave Roberts, Michael Tierney and Phil Luxon are all ever-presents.

The Veterans' 'A' team are struggling in division two, Alan Chase and Ted Birch being responsible for all of their points. Mick Allen has found the going tough and although he has played in every match for three years, has given way to Alan Timewell for the next match away to Halton.

The Junior team lost their last two matches, the most recent being away to Barrow. The Cumbrian town, situated in Lancashire for table tennis purposes, is a hotbed of table tennis and they proved too experienced for our trio, the boys going down, 8-2. Thanks to Tony Harris, who, after agreeing to skipper the side, found out from Paula that the match was in Barrow! I've done that trip and Millom as well, so I know what it's like. Well done, Tony.

LIVERPOOL CLOSED TOURNAMENT 1997

Our annual Tournament will be held at the Everton Park Sports Centre on Sunday 16th February and I thought it would be useful to outline the proposed schedule of play to help intending participants to decide which events to enter.

Play will start at 9 a.m. on the Sunday morning with the four Divisional Championships events, played in groups, with the Men's Singles event, also in groups, being introduced at about 10.30 a.m. Finals of the Divisional events will be staged at 2 p.m. immediately after the lunch break. I hope that the players in Divisions 5, 4, 3 and 2 will make every effort to enter their particular divisional event and make their own competitions real successes.

If possible, some Vets matches and Junior matches will be played during the morning, as most of these players will already be available, having played in the Divisionals and/or Men's Singles. The Women's Singles can also be fitted in, depending on the number of entries, either as a round robin, if only three enter as last year, or in groups, if more ladies can be persuaded to take part.

The Vets over 55 event will be completed on Sunday afternoon this year, but the final of the over 40 Vets will take place with the other finals at the Police Club as usual during the Finals Night.

It will be scheduled to start the Open Doubles event at 3 p.m. at the earliest as many players will still be involved in other singles events, but the possibility of playing some doubles earlier will be carefully monitored.

Finals Night at the Police Club, on Tuesday 25th February, will commence at 7 p.m. with the first of the Men's Singles semi-finals. I can also announce that there is a very strong possibility that T.V. cameras will be there to record some of the evenings play, for showing at a later date, so it is likely to be an historic occasion. Make sure, therefore that you enter your Tournament and certainly, at the Police Club on the 25th February, BE THERE!!

Entry forms will be distributed to Club Secretaries SOON, but please remember that the closing date for entries is Saturday 1st February. Please make every effort to get your entry to me promptly, with the correct fees and a stamped self-addressed envelope. If entering the doubles, please check that

your nominated partner is also sending in a form with your name as his/her partner, not with someone else as sometimes happens. Good Luck!

Brian Leeson. Tournament Secretary and Referee

SECRETARY'S COLUMN

I recently had the pleasure (thanks Paula) of taking the League's Junior team to an away game at Barrow in Furness, Cumbria. I was surprised to find that the Barrow & District League have their own purpose built T.T. centre, housing six tables, which they use for competition and coaching, throughout the year. It made me realise how far behind we are in Liverpool with regards facilities and the development of the sport and made me even more determined to do something about it. Your committee are making the right moves, with two bids into the National Lottery at the moment, which may result in a dedicated T.T. Centre in Liverpool (fingers crossed). We have also submitted a bid to the Foundation for Sport and Arts, which if successful, will provide us with ten T.T. tables, and nets etc. for use at the junior coaching sessions and the Woolwich Junior league.

Where have all our cups gone? I have written to recent winners but we are still missing a number of divisional and Cup competition trophies. No doubt they are languishing on someones mantelpiece so can I ask all members to check, and, if they find anything that resembles a LD TTL cup, can they contact me or any member of the Committee.

You will soon be getting entry forms for the Closed Tournament, which is to take place at Everton Park Sports centre on Sunday 16th February. Many individuals put a lot of time into organising the tournament so please support it. There is a possibility that T.V. cameras will be recording the tournament, both at Everton Park and at the Finals Night at the Police Club, on Tuesday 25th February, so let's provide a good crowd on both dates.

I am in the process of compiling a data base of members details, so that you can be sent ET TA newsletters and circulations direct. If you don't wish to receive such circulations, please contact me and I will delete your name

That's all for now. Have a good Christmas and I hope to see you at the 'Closed'

Tony Harris



DIVISION ONE by Paul Gittins

Well, what a start to the season! A team drops out of the league. An established club loses it's premises and a player, who has yet to start shaving and still wears 'Power Ranges' underpants, has taken the division by storm.

Bootle JC, within several weeks of the season starting have withdrawn the 1st team from THE division. The reasons behind their departure are not yet clear but in hindsight, a few cancelled home fixtures was perhaps the writing on the wall and I would imagine that the final blow was when Mick Miller, whilst playing against Colonsay, had a point awarded against him for continued bad language, a procedure previously echoed by the Editor. It is inevitable that their departure will be significant in the relegation battle.

The Wav. Labour club could now be considered as the 'vagabonds' of the league due to the unfortunate closure of the social club. I have always felt that the Wav. Lab. room itself, together with other venues such as Bath St, YMCA and the late English Electric room, have or had a special ambience (that doesn't mean smelly and damp) which was symbolic of the table tennis scene within Liverpool. It's a sad loss but I'm sure that Ken and the lads will find an alternative venue and that other clubs, in the meantime, will oblige by offering their assistance throughout the remaining fixtures.

The arrival of twelve year old Adam Robertson has certainly added a buzz to the division. His winning debut for Wav. Labour against GPT made league history (youngest player to win in 1st div.) and was the start of a list of creditable wins including superb results against Paul Hutchings and Chris Ford. All the more impressive was that these two wins were achieved in front of T.V. cameras. I believe that Stuart Richards played brilliantly the same night, preventing Adam from collecting all three points. It is also good to hear that Adam's talent is also compatible with being a nice lad from a nice family, combination not always guaranteed in talented youngsters. Remember Andrew Eden? If Prima-Donnas could fly he would have been squadron leader! Well done, Adam, enjoy the rest of the season.

On the playing front the season has got off to its usual start and it's no surprise that Colonsay, Cadwa

and Wav. Labour are the teams leading the way. Neither of these teams have yet, according to my score cards, played each other, so it's difficult to formulate true league positions at the top, you'll just have to wait for the next Digest.

The rest of the division has yet to settle down. A few surprise team and individual results have added an element of unpredictability within the middle and lower sectors of the division.

Bath St's 9-1 win against GPT is a good example of this. Paul Price's win against Fred Bainbridge saved the whitewash and incidentally was the only game to go to three. Bath St. then travelled to Wav. Lab 'A', who were still riding high, having previously beaten YMCA 7-3, the man of the match being Gary Watson who won his three. Wav. Lab's winning habit continued, beating Bath St' 6-4. Roy Smith taking over as the hat-trick man.

The YMCA 'A' squad of Jeff Huntington, Ahmed Thabet, Ming Liu and Kevin Lau have started the season well. Ahmed had a good win against Dave Roberts and then went on to partner Ming for a great doubles win against Rob Bevan and Bernie Wentworth in the same match. Ming has yet to find last season's form but the team collectively have been quite consistent. Jeff took his three to secure a 7-3 win against GPT and repeated the task against Bath St. 'A' for a 6-4 win. The latter result, I would argue, were four good points for Bath St 'A', Ian McElwee beating Ahmed and Colin Owens beating Ming.

Newly promoted Bath St. 'A' are undoubtedly going to find the going tough and many will consider them as the natural team to occupy the one relegation place at the end of the season. However, you won't find an ounce of pessimism amongst the Bath St. players, who, on the day, are all capable of collecting points. Claire News and in particular, Ian McElwee have started well. Both players beat Rob Bevan and Ian went on to beat Dave Roberts in the same match. Both were also successful against Cadwas Dele Olyumbo, collecting two vital points against one of the top teams.

The Waterloo team of Alan, Ted and Mick (sounds like a kiddies book) are determined to have at least two consecutive seasons in the division and there performances to date have emphasised this. Alan's wins against YMCA's Peter Taylor, Pat McEloughlin

and Ahmed were instrumental in obtaining a memorable draw. Ted Birch has used his years and years of experience to raise his game and take a few early scalps, namely, mine, John Rankin and a great win against Ken Jackson. Can you picture the scene? Bath St. v Waterloo, a teetotallers nightmare! It's obvious that Mick Keane, had had the least to drink, because he won all his three to ensure a 7-3 win.

It's good to see Dave Tagg's name back on a score card. It will probably take Dave a while to get back into the swing of things but I'm sure he'll succeed. Pat McLoughlin has established himself as a YMCA 1st team player and rightly so, although Mick Keane did spoil a hat-trick celebration for Pat, who had already comfortably beaten Ken and Fred, in a match which ended all square and saw Ken revenge last season's defeat to Peter Lee.

Only time will tell as to whether Mike Mahoney's departure from GPT will have a detrimental effect on the team. Bob Edwards and Paul Price have yet to produce last season's form and Paul has had the added burden of having to recover from a whiplash injury, sustained in a car crash. Trevor Owens has been brought in and has already had an impressive win against John Rankin, although the Police ended the match 8-2- winners.

John Rankin is now playing on a regular basis and his return has coincided with Justine Thomas being committed to police training, having recently joined the Welsh Police force. Remember, Justine, a sheep is for life, not just for Christmas! John is not the player of old but now and again you'll see flashes of the talent which put him in the top five players in Liverpool in the 80's. Also playing well for the Police is my twin (yes, we're twins. Believe me, I was there when he was born, ever seen the film 'Alien') Steve. His wins against Dele Olyumbo, Andy Taylor and in the same match Ming, Ahmed and Kevin Lau (promising player) indicates that a good season may be in store for him.

Anyway, time for me to pinch a verse from a Christmas card but before I do please remember that if you're socialising over the Xmas period, consider getting a taxi, and for those players who are going to practice over the holiday, please consider getting a life!!

As promised, 'Seasonal Greetings to One and All'. See you next year.

DIVISION TWO by Sylvia Graham

The season is well under way and I believe I'm right in saying that there isn't a single player with a perfect 100 % record, which shows how strong the division is. The majority of matches seem to be 6-4's and 7-3's.

Two side in particular are hungry for that short lived experience in the first. I am of course referring to Cadwa 'A' and Maghull. Cadwa have been there before and Maghull are aiming for their first appearance. Of the two, Maghull appear to be the more anxious, panicking over their league position....but after only three matches!! and I believe Cadwa have linked up to the Internet to ensure they have all the up to the minute results. I do, however, think these two teams will do it and sadly, Trevor Jones' shorts will no longer bring a smile to the face and a tear to the eyes of his opponents in this division. The first match between the two ended 5 all but Maghull did have home advantage so I await the return with bated breath.

Waterloo 'A', GPT 'A' and Harold House are in the chasing group and although they are three good sides I don't think they can catch the other two. Mind you, I have been wrong before, so, GO FOR IT!! Rumour has it that Frank Brady won't be available for some games which will weaken Waterloo somewhat but they could have a good reserve from their 'B' team.

Anyway, who would want to leave such a friendly and family division? Paula has had Alan and Jay playing for Colonsay, I've had Cherith turn out with me and we must not forget Steve and dad Richie at Wavertree. Their well kept secret slipped out during our match in much the same way as Peter Wass's banana at GPT. It's also nice to see Bill Harris and Julie Prince in this division playing for Colonsay and Waterloo 'B' respectively.

Colonsay would appear pretty safe this year even after the loss of Brenda Buocy and Claire News to Bath St, whereas Waterloo 'B' are counting points to avoid the drop. Cadwa 'B' I feel are gaining valuable experience but are destined to the third for a season and Bootle JC 'A' and Wav. Labour 'B' are both striving to be ahead of Waterloo 'B' at the end. Bootle JC 'B' and Fords are just doing enough to stay up but shouldn't be too *complacent.* Well, that's roughly how the division

looks at presents & lets go on with the cards. Comments have improved so perhaps there are a few budding authors about after all. Congratulations to Mattie Wilson on the birth of his first child, Benjamin. Let's hope we'll see him in the league in about 2010 - the baby that is, not Mattie!! An excellent match between Bootle JC 'A' and Wav. Labour 'B' apparently ended in a draw but could have gone either way. I'm told the high spots were Ken Strahan's shorts. Ken is planning legal action (against the shorts' manufacturers!). Ken Hartley it appears is still invincible - played 12 won 12, but a little birdy tells me this is no longer the case and finally Wav. Labour 'B' got their first win under their belts at the expense of Waterloo 'B'. After being 4-1 up, Waterloo pulled back to 4-4. Richie Jones then won the battle of the two Richies and Roy Adams won the match beating Al Reid 22/14. The match was played in an excellent manner apart from RJ losing his 'cool' over Alan's numerous nets and edges.

I have noticed that this year has shown an increase in the expletives players mutter (?) under their breaths. I know they are not directed at their opponents, but honestly, is there any need for it? Perhaps we should have a word that everyone in the division can use such as 'SHUCKS' or 'SUGAR' to show annoyance. Think about it! Anyway, must close. Have a nice Christmas and see you in the New Year.

Roles of Honour:

Good Wins: J. Gratton (W. Lab 'B') bt H. Johnson (Fords), 18, -18, 18. M. Miles (W. Lab 'B') bt Paula French (Colonay 'A') 14, 17. T. Weardon (Fords) bt I. Wensley (GPT 'A') 10, 15. S. Graham (Cadwa 'B') bt K. Strahan (Bootle JC 'B') -18, 19, 13. P. French (Colonsay 'A') bt old (?) team mate I. Wensley (GPT 'A') -17, 19, 16. E. Clein (H. House) by R. Hargreaves (Cadwa 'A') 15, 15. K. Strahan (Bootle JC 'B') bt R. Adams (W. Lab 'B') 11, 18.

Close Matches: B. Hargreaves (Cadwa 'A') bt T. Jones (Maghull) 20, 21 and in the same match S. Woods (Maghull) bt B. Hargreaves 20, 19. K. Hartley and B. Hargreaves (Cadwa 'A') bt R. Davies and G. Higham (Cadwa 'B') 18, -18, 20. G. Reid (Fords) bt P. Wass (GPT 'A') 23, 19 and P. Musgrove (Cadwa 'A') -21, 22, 18. M. Moran (Bootle JC 'B') bt S. Woods (Maghull) 19, 20.

21. E. Brady (Waterloo 'A') bt E. Crowley (GPT 'A') -20, 18, 19. G. Higham and S. Graham (Cadwa 'B') bt A. Reid and R. Cragg (Waterloo 'B') -20, 18, 21. R. Neal (Bootle JC 'B') bt R. Davies (Cadwa 'B') 19, 23.

Face Savers: Only one to date, R. Neal and S. Graham (Bootle JC 'B') bt I. Wensley and F. McCann (GPT 'A') in three

DIVISION THREE by Mike Power

After seven games played it looks as though any one of five teams could end up as champions. Only four points separate the top four teams, Police 'A', Manweb 'A', Bath Street 'B' and Bootle YMCA. Manweb's first team are down the table but with games in hand, if they maintain their current average per game, they would be placed third, only two points behind leaders, Police 'A'.

Manweb met Police 'A' in week three and after what looks like a ding dong battle the game ended in a draw. Gareth Jones became the first player to take newcomers, Mike Mahoney to three, losing 21/17 16/21 21/10. Mike is used to playing his table tennis in the first division and would normally achieve an average of 70 % so if anyone can beat him from the third, you're bound to get a mention. Len Dyson was the only other player on the night to win his two, overcoming Alun Evans and a close game with Alan Radcliffe 15/21 21/19 24/22.

Bootle YMCA had a shock return to the third division going down 7-3 to Bath St 'B'. John Watson appears to be in sparkling form beating John Higham and Tom Killip in straight sets. John Langton also had a good night claiming both his singles and his doubles. Danny Every had a good win against the evergreen Billy Clayton 21/19 17/21 21/15. Bootle YMCA won all of their next four matches, each one quite comfortably, but noticeably they were against teams in the lower half of the division, unlike leaders Police 'A' who have already met three of their main challengers and at present are my favourites for the title. Their only defeat came at the hands of Manweb 'A' 6-4, with Trevor Barraclough being the difference, beating Gareth Jones 21/18 21/11 and recording a narrow victory over league secretary, Tony Harris 21/23 21/13 21/19 (a game which apparently lasted 40 minutes, but did it go to expedite? Hard luck, Tony). Len Dyson won two,

including his first ever victory over Alan Biggs, who must have been on form as he recorded an excellent win over Gareth Jones 21/16 21/14. Len's son, Jon, lost out to Peter Carney but made amends over Rob Conley 21/10 9/21 22/20.

Just behind the leaders are Wav. Labour 'C', Waterloo 'C' and G.P.T. 'B'. Bobby Owen remains unbeaten after four games including a brace against Rob Peat and John Langton. In the same match, a 7-3 defeat, Ken Ray took a close game over Karen Gibson 21/15 17/21 22/20. In their first five matches, apart from Bath St. 'B', Labour have yet to meet a championship contender, unlike Waterloo 'C' who are close on the heels of Labour but have already met Police 'A', Manweb 'A' and Bath St. 'B'. I therefore expect that Waterloo 'C' will move ahead of Labour at the half way stage. Julie Prince is playing well and her team mates can be assured she won't lose any silly games. She always gives her all and cannot be taken lightly by anyone as both Rob Peat and Alan Biggs can lay testament to. It's nice to see guest appearances by John McLoughlin and Keith Miller, where have you both been?

G.P.T. 'B' have also met three of the top teams. They lost 9-1 at Police 'A', the much improved Eddie Crowley picking up their sole point against Len Dyson 21/13 19/21 21/19. Manweb beat them 8-2 with Graham Edwards defeating Neil Jennings 21/13 18/21 21/17. Bootle YMCA also defeated them 7-3 but again Eddie Crowley was the man of the match with victories over John Higham 21/17 10/21 21/12 and Tom Killip 21/19 21/15. Bobby Bell beat Roly Wright in the same match 11/21 21/19 21/19. G.P.T.'s only win in the first five games came against a below strength Harold House team who turned up with only two players. A pretty poor start for Harold House who subsequently lost the services of Paul Morgan to CADWA and as a consequence are now propping up the table with only 16 points from 6 games. Their best result so far came at Bath St. 'C' with Bob Hudson winning twice, one against Chris Foley and a close game against Dave Stodder 21/14 17/21 21/19. Ian Burrows and Mike Poole both recorded victories over Val Franco. The match ended 6-4 to Bath St.

Bath St. 'C' started the season in indifferent fashion losing their first game 8-2 at home to CADWA 'C'.

who only escaped relegation last season by three points. Karen Gibson defeated Jack Highton 21/14 21/19 and Dave Stodder combined with Alan Willis in the doubles to beat Ray Parkinson and Jack 22/20 14/21 25/23. For CADWA, Peter Roberts and new signing Rob Peverall both won two and also combined to win their doubles. Bath Streets second game was away to Maghull 'A', a match that could have gone either way with five games going to three. Tommy Downing and Rod Bulmer both won two for Maghull, Les Gee (Bath St.) defeated Giv Tummino 12/21 21/17 21/16 and also beat Wilf Gibson in the match of the night 21/13 19/21 25/23. As it stands at the moment I predict it will be Harold House for the chop and a toss up yet between CADWA 'C' and Maghull 'A' as to who will join them.

Finally, why am I writing these notes? If anyone currently playing in the third division would like to put their name up in lights please tell Ken Armson. Good luck for the rest of the season. Happy Christmas. Happy New Year. Bye for now.

DIVISION FOUR by Arthur Garnett

So we're off into a new season and I'm as surprised as anyone to find myself writing the notes again for this year. I was hoping that by stirring things up a bit last season - i.e. suggestions to start matches at 7 p.m. - and not starting the season until October - would have got me the 'sack'. I have to tell you that it nearly worked, although, only the Editor knows the full story. As for starting the season in October, this proposal lost in the vote at the A.G.M. If you were in favour, ask your Secretary how the vote for your club was cast!! Anyway, I'm claiming a moral victory, in that the start to the season was actually delayed by one whole week, so perhaps in three years time we may have an October starting date. It's a tough break - Wav. Labour with seven teams in the league, losing the use of their premises. As if Ken Armson didn't have a tough enough job as it is, he now has to start trying to find permanent accommodation for all seven teams. Best of luck, Ken.

The early season results have confirmed what most of us already know. Every game will be highly competitive, with several teams in with a 'shout' for the Divisional Championship. I'm really going

to stick my neck out and forecast the Champions and Runners up now. I expect Liverpool YMCA 'B' to return to Division three next season as Champions, but who will go with them? The number of teams capable of promotion at season's end is a large one, the two teams from Wav. Labour, Manweb 'B', Bootle YMCA 'B' and Waterloo 'D' being the most promising. But this is where I stick my neck out. I predict that the runner up spot in 1997 will be taken by Wav. Labour 'E'. If I'm proved wrong come next April I'll let you all throw table tennis balls at me at the Annual Social (so long as they're new ones). Don't let me down, Ken!!

Bath St. 'E', however are doomed to return from whence they came. This is a very strong division, with no easy victories and I think they are finding that out.

Linacre, I fear will take the drop with them, unless, 'Sailor stop your roaming, come home from the sea', Harry Reeve, an play more often and someone answers Frank Lacey's plea. 'If Linacre can only win in the third game they'll pick up more points'. Where can you get vitamins for the over 65's? Of the results I have to hand, Harry Reeve has only lost one point, to Mabel Neary of Wav. Labour 'E', Mabel coming from 16/19 down in the third to win 21/19. She then won in exactly the same way against Ken Ainsworth, 16/19 down in the third, to win 21/19. I think our division would be poorer for losing Linacre, the only team that stops play in the middle of the match, for tea and social discourse. Very pleasant.

And finally, a few anagrams, all players in Division 4 this season. If you find yourself here, it's just a bit of fun. No prizes, but if you spot them all give yourself a pat on the back.

1. LIKES MARM (Wav. Labour 'E')
2. FIFE ME LOGS (Manweb 'B')
3. STEEP N. RODDY (Bootle YMCA 'B')
4. SLIT BALLER (Maghull 'B')
5. AUNT LEN (Waterloo 'D')
6. G.A. DULL OX (Bath St 'D')
7. SAVED NAVE (Aigburth)
8. PERM L. CLOUT (Police 'B')
9. SAIL! ALL WIN (Bath St 'E')
10. N. MONK ARSE (Wav Labour 'E')

That's it for this issue. I'll go more deeply into the

matches and games in the next Digest when I have more information to go on.

DIVISION FIVE by Ken Armson

Promotion prospects these last few seasons have not been kind to those in this div. mainly due to new-comers sweeping the board or existing teams being strengthened due to internal team changes. This season things look much brighter in that only one team came down from the 4th div. and there are no strong new-comers to surprise the div. Obviously the team to beat are Maghull 'C' but forecasting who will join them in the 4th div. next season is much harder. Dark horses being H. House 'B' who have a strong team on paper which differs greatly from their mixed line-ups. This, I feel, will keep them out of the top four (they finished 3rd last season). My money (not that I have any) would go on CADWA 'D', W. Lab 'F', Police 'C' or Bootle YM 'B', with the latter two being the two outsiders. I rate CADWA 'D' as having the best chance of the No.2 spot because of their more regular line-up. They met W. Lab 'F' recently and went down 7-3 but don't read too much into what seems a convincing victory. If Lab 'F' want to build on this and some other good results then they too will have to have their best team out regularly. Worth noting that they have already called on 9 players and have no settled team due to the need to give everyone a game. CADWA have a more settled team and this shows in their results.

At the lower end Bath St. 'F' have been on the receiving end of most, if not all, of the 10-0's recorded but got a draw against companions in trouble, H. House 'C'. Ironically, Ron Georgeson, in a match comment, made reference to restoring strength to the team when he returned after injury, but ironically he has been re-ranked into the 'D' team due to having played up on more than five occasions. He also made the comment that several 'F' team players are newcomers and will improve as the season progresses.

I Hope, like H. House, started late and don't appear to pose any threat, but I hear that Darren Morgan's improved and they appear to have two useful players in Ian Purvis and Martin Hopgood. Ian beat Alan French and Kevin McNulty to record his teams only points against Colonsay and also had a

good win against Jim Gill to again be a lone winner. Martin beat Jack Power and Doug Baker to record two good wins in the match against CADWA. Darren made his mark with a good against Les Mullholland and whilst health problems have affected his game he is still a hard player to beat. The Maghull 'C' team of Brian Gregory, Jim Gill, Jeff Banks and Alan Smethurst are going to take some stopping and just in case, they have a strong reserve available in Steve McGanity. They will, I feel certain, record a comfortable League and Cup double and I cannot see any team defeating them. Their strength is in beating lower teams without dropping many sets where other contenders will have to be content with victory by lower margins. If percentage wins are anything to go by, CADWA 'D' must be favourites to go up with Maghull 'C' for they have a per match percentage of eight sets against six for Lab 'F' and Police 'C'. With a very strong No.1 also a newcomer in Steve Critchley, backed by Trevor Dolder, Jack Power and Doug Baker, they look a good bet at present but these are early days and no team problems have yet beset them. Against Police 'C' they slipped Paul Morgan in at No.1 which pushed everyone down one and helped them to a 6-4 win. Is Paul to be their secret weapon in the big matches? We must wait and see but if he plays regularly they just might turn my forecast upside down and pip Maghull 'C' for the title or the cup, or even both.

Police 'C' have the ever present problem of fielding a regular team and this problem found them 2 short against Colonsay 'B' and on the receiving end of an 8-2 defeat which did their prospects of promotion no good.

Good example of see-sawing results arising from team line-ups differing showed up in the matches between H. House 'B', Lab 'F' and Bootle YM 'B'. H. House 'b' losing to Bootle YM 8-2 and two weeks later beating Lab 'F' 6-4 Lab 'F' later beating Bootle YM 7-3 with no team having the same line-up for a match. Overall it was 11 sets to Bootle YM and Lab 'F' and 8 for H. House 'B'. Try reading something into those results.

Aighurth 'A' (7th last season) are not fairing much better this season but they were only narrowly beaten by H. House 'B' 6-4 with 7 sets going to three and captain, Eric Wood, recording a fine win against John Hodges and Jim O'Grady likewise

against Les Mullholland. For H.H. captain Eric Young won his two, Ted Cramsie also winning his two. Eric (H.H.) will never win any medals for stylish play but he wears his opponents down by his tenacity and panics them into going for what appear easy kills only to find them not to be so. H. House 'C' are still finding it hard going and will need to improve their results if they want to climb up the table. They got a draw against Bath St. 'F' (this must have been the start and finish of the revival R.G. wrote about). Ron played in this match and justified his comments by winning his 2 singles and a win in the doubles. Their best result was a 6-4 win against Aighurth 'A' with Steve Simpson overcoming Bill (Brickwall) Holmes to record a good win. Rumour has it that this is to be Bill's final season. I hope not, for Bill is a real team player who is tenacious and difficult to beat, as many have found out. Yet another lone win was recorded by Gary Abrams when he beat Jeff Banks. Like Billy Holmes, Jeff is a tenacious opponent and many have fell into the trap of under estimating him which makes any win against him being worth a mention.

Maghull 'D' will probably say, 'what about us', and rightly so for they have beaten H. House 'B', Bootle YM, and Bath St 'F' and recorded a draw with Police 'C' and Lab 'F'. They do have a strong No.1 in Phil Matland who has recorded wins over Jim Geddes, Les Higham, Ron Georgeson and Les Mullholland amongst others. Quite an impressive record and his team mates give good backing but they are in the shadow of their 'C' team and whilst they will give most teams a run for their money I don't really see them making it a promotion double for their club.

Must mention Colonsay 'B' for their team includes the full Liverpool Junior team which must be a first for any team. Of those three players, only Lee Farley poses a real threat and they lack strength in depth. They started well with a draw against Bootle YM and Lab 'F', an 8-2 win against Hope but came a cropper when they were soundly thrashed 8-2 by CADWA 'D'. They slipped in Stan (Kill Everything) Clarke against CADWA and he just scraped home against Jack Power to record a lone singles. I hear that Jack had run out of steam against his 'younger' opponent and let the game slip away 20/22 in the 3rd. They also brought in Zoey Evans

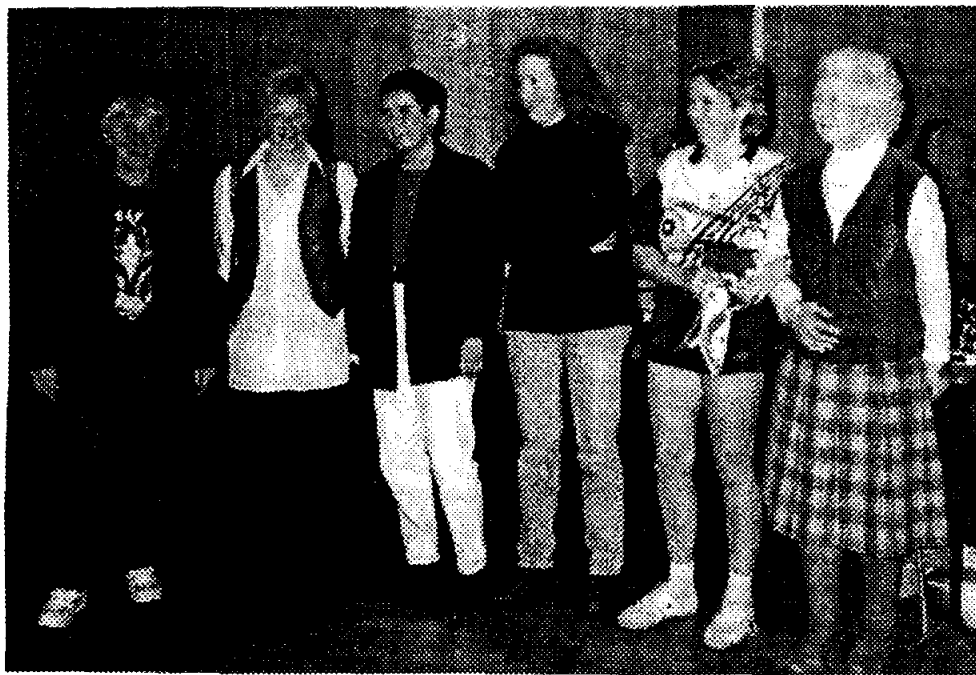
in their 1st match and clearly, if they could field their on paper strong team regularly, they could cause damage to the aspirations of teams above them.

Should prove to be an interesting second half with at least five teams fancying their chances of joining Maghull 'C' in the elevator ride back to the 4th. But for what it is worth, my money is on CADWA 'D' for they have the strength in depth to maintain a strong challenge. I expect General Perry will not be overly pleased with my summing up but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Lead on McDuff.

LADIES CHAMPIONS



Can any of you identify these two individuals. The youngster became one of the best players in Liverpool League history. The older player, I think, was a leading Manchester player. To give you a clue, the photo was taken in 1938 at the presentation ceremony for the Merseyside Open Championships.



This must be one for the scrapbook! Taken at last year's Closed Finals' night, pictured are six Liverpool Ladies Champions, spanning over five decades. From left to right :

Mabel Neary, Barbara Kirkman, Brenda Buocoy, Justine Thomas, and Eileen Mansell.

Eileen won her first title in 1946, and followed this up with with five more successes, the last being in 1955. Barbara was champion in successive years in 1975 and 76, and 1990, while Brenda was three times winner in 1972, 73 and 74. Mabel won twice in 1970 and 1987. Welsh international Justine won the title three times in 1988, 89 and 91, while Paula won it in 1985 and followed up with her second win in 1995.

THE NORTH WEST CHAMPIONS TOURNAMENT 1997

This seasons tournament will take place on Saturday and Sunday 25th/26th January, 1997, at the Hyndburn Table Tennis Centre, Henry Street, Church, Accrington. This is a superb, purpose built centre and is an ideal venue to hold the tournament.

The tournament is open to all North West Leagues' Closed Champions so the region's best players will be in action. Liverpool players will be hopeful of going one better than last year when, despite reaching every final, except the Juniors, our players failed to take any of the titles up for grabs. The Men's Singles holder is Paul Hutchings, (representing Wigan) while Claire News (representing Cheshire) hold the Ladies title.

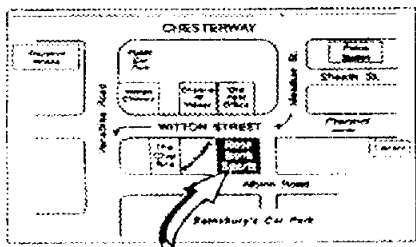
It's well worth the drive up to Hyndburn, just to see the kind of facility we are hoping to get in Liverpool, and I'm sure the players will appreciate your support. See you there!



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Saturday 18th January 1997

Hyndburn Table Tennis Centre

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The course is free to ETTA affiliated players. To make a booking contact Martin Ireland, Tel. 0161 736 9448, ext. 340.

Opportunity will be given to practice in the Table Tennis Centre at lunch time and after the course. Please bring suitable sports clothing, packed lunch and pen and note pad. Refreshments are available from the Sports Centre Cafeteria.

100 CLUB REPORT by Ken Armon

This important fund raising is in need of your support in that monies raised ensure your League is in a position to help keep Club costs down and also have funds available for coaching newcomers to our sport at an early age who will, hopefully, go on to become League members. We have recently purchased a T.T. Robot which is proving very popular with those being coached and we have provided financial assistance in support of our application to the Foundation for Sports for a grant to enable us to purchase equipment for our Woolwich Jnr League. Building up a strong W.J.L. will help ensure a steady influx of young players into our League. This will not happen overnight and will not happen at all without proper funding. The cost is only £12 yearly with the opportunity to recoup your outlay by way of our monthly prize draw. You can pay by way of a one off payment of £12 each year, or, more painlessly, by direct debit. This method enabling you to pay in whichever form suits you, i.e. £1 monthly, £6 each half year, £3 each quarter or £12 yearly. If you are interested and want to help your League then please contact me. Don't delay, do it today!

Winners to August :- Fords TTC, V. McCaig, D. Tagg, P. Carney, S. Richards, M. Poole.

If you have not yet paid as an existing member for 1996/97 please forward your cheque to me, made payable to 'L.D.T.T.L. 100 Club'. Due to my club not having a home venue at present I have not been in a position to meet up with 100 Club members to collect current membership fees. It would assist me if those who normally pay in cash would also forward their payment by cheque.

NOTE : Since 1991, Ken has willingly fulfilled the role of Administrator of the League's 100 Club and as a result of his dedicated commitment, the League's finances have derived considerable benefit. This has subsequently been reflected in the amounts charged to Clubs in respect of team fees.

At this years A.G.M. it was clearly stated that due to Ken's numerous other commitments on the League's behalf, he wished to relinquish the task of Administrator and an appeal was made for a volunteer to succeed him. This appeal was reiterated at the S.G.M. in August but to date there has been a negative response. Ken has, pending the appointment of a

successor, continued under difficult circumstances to fulfil this important role in the interests of the League. However, it has to be understood that unless someone can be found to assume these duties, this significant fund raising activity will come to an early conclusion.

There is currently a vacancy on the Management Committee for an Elected Member and I am making this personal appeal for someone to make it known that they are prepared to accept nomination as a candidate to fill this vacancy, with the undertaking that he/she would assume responsibility for administering the '100 Club'. Alternatively, if there is someone who prefers not to be part of the Management Team but is willing to be responsible for the '100 Club', then please let it be known.

I hope that from within the League's large membership, a volunteer for one of the two alternatives mentioned above will be forthcoming. A telephone call to the League's Hon. Secretary, Tony Harris, is all that is required.

Arthur E. Upton. President/Chairman

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Any member wishing to advertise in the Digest magazine is asked to contact the Editor. A quarter page advert in one issue costs £15.00, or if you wish an advert in all three issues, it will cost you £30.00. The revenue raised from these advertisements will help safeguard the magazine's future. Please support the advertisers and if you do use them tell them where you saw the advert.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

TO ALL CLUBS & PLAYERS


COACHING by Stan Clarke

The coaching sessions run by the League at Picton Sports Centre, between 4.00 p.m and 6.00 p.m. every Monday are continuing, with coaching available to a whole range of players, but aimed at introducing young people to the sport. Ken Armson has been mainly responsible for running the sessions, with help from others, notably, Frank Lacey and myself when work commitments allow, however, Ken needs more help from you!

Can you keep the ball on the table for a beginner to learn new shots? You can! In that case we need you, just come along any Monday and see Ken or myself. We are not looking for coaches, although if any are available, they are more than welcome.

Can't afford the time? Never mind, you can still help. If you have any rubbers you no longer need or any old blades to throw out, we would be glad to have them, to extend the limited supply available at present.

Remember, if the sport is to survive, we need young people showing interest and we need to help them learn how to play. If you can help, please do so. Contact either Ken or myself or come along at 4.00 p.m. on any Monday



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WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
24th APRIL - 5th MAY 1997

G Mex, Manchester's principle exhibition centre is to be the venue for the World Championships after all. The original plan, to use both Nynex, where the European qualifying rounds for the Olympic games were held, and the G Mex, was ditched by the organising committee. So the famous Manchester landmark will now house everything, with 30 practice tables in a temporary building alongside the centre, with changing facilities, hospitality suites, a large exhibition area and a room for drug testing facilities. The main hall will take 44 tables and provide seating for up to 5,000 spectators.

Tickets for the championships are available now and you can get yours by applying to the World Table Tennis Championship Office, Manchester City Council, Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester, M60 21A, Tel. 0161 831 9135. You can buy a season ticket at £65.00 which allows you admission into every session and includes a seat for the final. A large crowd is expected so you are advised to book early to avoid disappointment. Volunteer helpers are still required covering a wide range of jobs, such as, Arena stewards, computer inputters, enquiry stand officials, hotel liaison, airport liaison and drivers etc. All volunteers will be supplied with meal vouchers and reasonable travel expenses but not accommodation.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Karen Tongue, Director of Personnel, 1 Malpas Road, Kuncorn, WA7 4AD, Tel. 01928 564 569

Volunteers Wanted

Are you interested in taking a coaching course? How about an umpiring certificate? Or would you like to be a referee?

The League is desperately short of coaches and umpires who are willing to give their time to promote our sport.

If either of the above appeals to you, and you would like to put something back into table tennis, please contact Stan Clarke, Ken Arnison or Brian Leeson.

Your Help is Needed Now!!



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FROM THE FIXTURE SECRETARY

There are many, many outstanding matches, for all divisions, for which I have either not received a card, or been informed of an alternative date. Club Secretaries are reminded that all matches must be played within 8 weeks of the original match week number. Any match between 2 teams from the same club must be played within 14 days of the original match date. Any problems, please phone me and let me know - I won't bite - Paula

TABLE EDGES, NETS & ECHOES OF THE PAST



Television cameras were present at Bootle Stadium Sports Centre in October, which was almost certainly the first time that this has happened in a Liverpool League match. The reason was the appearance of 12 year old Adam Robertson, the Welsh number one Cadet. The youngster, playing for Wavertree labour against champions, Colonsay, scored victories over Paul Hutchings and Chris Ford, but was beaten by Stuart Richards. Clips from the match, including an interview with Adam, have been shown over the last few weeks on the Liverpool cable channel.

I found out what a busy schedule he has when I spoke to his dad, Barry, at 7.30 a.m. the morning after Adam had returned from Sweden where he had been playing in a Swedish tournament. He won the 12 year old singles and made progress in each category he entered. On Friday 6th December, he became the youngest ever player to appear in the Liverpool Men's team in division one of the Lancashire & Cheshire League against Burnley, and was a sensation.

CADWA's Ian Eaton experienced an eventful day when he played against Colonsay, for during the afternoon, the Liverpool University student was attacked in the city centre by three thugs, who stole his wallet. But he took it out on Paul Hutchings, Chris Ford and Stuart Richards, and, Kevin Dolder did likewise, to give CADWA a 7-3 victory. An amazing result, after Keith Williams was forced to drop out due to injury.

Keith has been featured many times in the local press over the years but he was shocked to see his name in Liverpool's programme for the Coca Cola cup tie against Arsenal. Keith and daughter, Jennie, celebrated birthdays just before the match and Lorraine presented them with tickets. When Jennie, now aged ten, opened the programme, she was amazed to see her photograph.

The Liverpool Men's team won all eight matches last season and have now won four in a row this term, which, hopefully, will ensure we remain on course for a second successive title.

Not to be outdone, the Ladies have won each of their League matches, although Justine Thomas, now in the Police, is not available, Denise McEvoy has signed on.

Stop Press from Tony Harris : After hearing so much about young Adam Robertson I attended at Cadwa on Monday 9th December, to watch him play for Wavertree Labour in a Readman Cup quarter final against CADWA. (who were in fact the away team). A confident first call from Keith brought Adam to the table to play Kevin Dolder. When the game started I was gob smacked at the skill, control and amazing power, especially the backhand, of Adam, as he beat Kevin 21/19, 21/19. The next call from Wav. Labour kept Adam at the table to face Keith Williams and what a match it was as both players played out of their skin to produce an exhilarating display of T.T. Adam took the first game 21/16 but Keith responded taking the second, 21/19. The final game kept the small crowd on their feet as it went first one way and then the other. At 17/19 down, Adam took three points on the run to lead 20/19. It really could have gone either way, but Keith's experience eventually told when he won 23/21. This was one of the best games of table tennis I've seen and a credit to both players. If you get the chance to see Adam in action, I highly recommend it. He certainly seems to be heading for the very top! (I had to leave early so I can't inform you of the eventual outcome of the match)

DIVISION 1	P	W	L	D	PTS
CADWA	8	8	0	0	63
WAV. LABOUR	6	6	0	0	50
COLONSAY	6	5	1	0	49
POLICE	9	3	4	2	44
LPOOL YMCA 'A'	9	4	3	2	43
BATH STREET	8	4	3	1	42
WAV LABOUR 'A'	9	4	4	1	42
LPOOL YMCA	7	2	3	2	34
WATERLOO	9	0	6	3	31
G.P.T.	8	1	6	1	22
BATH ST. 'A'	9	1	8	0	20
BOOTLE J.C.	Record Expunged				

DIVISION 4	P	W	L	D	PTS
WAV. LABOUR 'E'	10	9	0	1	77
LPOOL YMCA 'B'	10	8	0	2	75
MANWEB 'B'	10	5	3	2	59
MAGHULL 'B'	10	5	4	1	57
WATERLOO 'D'	9	6	1	2	56
POLICE 'B'	10	5	4	1	50
BOOTLE YMCA 'A'	8	5	3	0	48
WAV LABOUR 'D'	8	3	4	1	41
AIGBURTH	10	3	6	1	38
BATH ST. 'D'	11	1	8	2	34
LINACRE	8	0	7	1	22
BATH ST. 'E'	10	0	10	0	13

DIVISION 2	P	W	L	D	PTS
MAGHULL	9	8	0	1	72
CADWA 'A'	8	7	0	1	63
G.P.T. 'A'	10	5	4	1	58
HAROLD HOUSE	8	7	1	0	53
WATERLOO 'A'	7	6	1	0	47
COLONSAY 'A'	10	4	5	1	43
WATERLOO 'B'	10	2	8	1	38
FORDS	9	2	6	1	37
BOOTLE J.C. 'B'	7	3	4	0	33
WAV LABOUR 'B'	9	1	7	1	27
BOOTLE J.C. 'A'	7	2	4	1	26
CADWA 'B'	8	0	8	0	13

DIVISION 5	P	W	L	D	PTS
MAGHULL 'C'	9	7	0	2	75
WAV LABOUR 'F'	10	6	1	3	65
MAGHULL 'D'	11	6	3	2	65
CADWA 'D'	9	7	1	1	63
AIGBURTH 'A'	11	4	6	1	53
HAROLD HOUSE 'B'	8	6	2	0	51
BOOTLE YMCA 'B'	11	3	6	2	50
POLICE 'C'	9	2	5	2	39
COLONSAY 'B'	8	2	3	3	37
HOPE	9	3	6	0	36
HAROLD HOUSE 'C'	8	1	6	1	14
BATH ST. 'F'	9	0	8	1	12

DIVISION 3	P	W	L	D	PTS
POLICE 'A'	11	9	1	1	79
MANWEB 'A'	11	9	1	1	71
BATH ST. 'B'	10	7	2	1	67
MANWEB	8	7	0	1	61
BOOTLE YMCA	10	6	4	0	59
G.P.T. 'B'	11	1	6	4	42
WAV. LABOUR 'C'	9	4	4	1	41
WATERLOO 'C'	9	3	6	0	36
BATH ST. 'C'	9	2	6	1	36
CADWA 'C'	9	2	6	1	34
MAGHULL 'A'	10	2	7	1	32
HAROLD HOUSE 'A'	9	0	9	0	22