



Table Tennis DIGEST

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

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VOL 52

DECEMBER 1997

NO. 1

EDITORIAL

This season our League has been presented with three exciting opportunities which if grasped firmly will provide us with the opportunity to ensure a strong and flourishing Table Tennis league in Liverpool into the 21st century. In the Match Secretary's Report you will read a glowing account of the current strength of our Men's and Ladies teams in the Lancashire and Cheshire League which reflects the overall strength of our League. This is today, the tomorrow's may well be different as we lack young players, indeed, they are almost non existent and many of our top players are into their 30's.

Firstly, with the backing and expertise of the ETTA and financial assistance from the City Leisure Services, the Merseyside Open was resurrected as part of the ETTA Grand Prix Series. There was a strong entry and the Tournament was a tremendous success. Many members went along to watch and were very impressed, one of our own members, Keith Williams, winning the Men's Band 2 event. The ETTA will assist in organising and promoting this prestigious event for a further two years before handing it back to us. To succeed in this venture we need sponsorship and plenty of willing bodies to form a strong working committee, there being more to a tournament than just a Control Table and competitors.

Next, Coaching. Your Management Committee have obtained a £7,000 grant from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts to purchase the equipment needed to help improve and extend our coaching of newcomers to our sport. We have been bumbling along with poor and inadequate equipment and have now been able to replace this with 14 top class tables and associated equipment. Again, we have been assisted by the City Leisure Services who will also provide further assistance by way of funding a venue to run our Woolwich Junior League, which will form the bridge for these youngsters to gain the necessary experience to prepare them for full League play. What we need now is more players to assist with these two ventures. Just a few hours of your time on a Friday will help with this work. It is rewarding and the youngsters do appreciate it. You will enjoy it and also enjoy being part of our sport's future in this City. It will also give you the opportunity to put back into our sport some of that which you have received from it. (continued over page)

EDITORIAL (continued)

The third and possibly most vital opportunity presented to us is that of Sport Development. The City Council Leisure Services are preparing a Sport and Recreation Strategy entitled, 'On the Right Track', the aim being to provide a strategic planning framework for the development of sport and recreation in our City over the next five years. This will cover all the sports activities recognised by the English Sports Council. Many of these are already well catered for with strong development programmes and ample facilities. Our sport is not but we have been invited to take part in setting up a strategy for the development of table tennis. If we play a full and active part it will enable us to have a positive input and help ensure our sport has a prominent place within sports development in Liverpool which will be vital to the future of our League.

The role of the City Council Leisure Services Directorate is not just one of lip service. Other more prominent sports have made full use of Council backing to the benefit of many youngsters in their chosen sport. We need to do likewise and if the development of table tennis is to succeed our input has to be positive and backed up by YOU, the members, getting involved in tournament duties, and coaching and assisting with the running of the Woolwich Junior league. There is a limit to what your Management Committee can do and for too many years members have sat back and done nothing to advance their sport. The ball is in your court! If you want table tennis to flourish in this City then now is the time to make known your availability to assist in its development and promotion. Don't, as has been all too often the case, leave it to the few.

Are our ranking rules too lax or our Clubs too eager to take advantages of loopholes? This is a question players in the 4th Division in particular must be asking themselves. Your Management Committee, with the support of Clubs at AGM's have tried to ensure that the rules are watertight but all too often loopholes are exploited by Clubs seeking to gain an advantage. It is the responsibility of all members to ensure that the full spirit of our rules are adhered to and that players are grouped in the team in which Clubs intends to play them, not, as unfortunately happens from time to time, the team a Club wants to make use of them in. Playing up is one thing,

playing down is something very different. Seeking to win sets is every players rightful and acceptable aim. Seeking to win points by team manipulation is rightfully unacceptable and should not be any team's aim. For many reasons we do not operate a ranking by merit and this enables Clubs to group together players who, for various reasons, wish to play together. No problem with that but it allows other Clubs to exploit what is an obvious loophole!

Ken Armson

100 Club Report

We are struggling for members at this time and we really do need your support. I have not been able to write to our out of town members, past members of our League, so if you are one of these and have not yet sent in your £12.00 for this season, I would greatly appreciate hearing from you. Membership is open to past and present members, just send me your £12.00 and your name and address. If you would like to pay in the future by direct debit, just write and request our bank details. I look forward to receiving a flood of previous and new memberships. A more comprehensive 100 Club Report, including names of winners, will appear in the next issue.

Ken Armson

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SECRETARY'S COLUMN



It seems such a long time ago but I must start with mention of the Merseyside Open Tournament which took place in August at the Wavertree Tennis Centre. With the help of the ETTA, in particular Mike Johns and Martin Ireland, the tournament was a tremendous success. Almost 250 competitors, from all parts of the U.K. and further afield flocked to Liverpool and enjoyed an excellent weekend of top class table tennis.

Members of your Committee were kept very busy, especially on the Sunday, with the last final being played after 10.00 p.m. but it was well worth it and I am looking forward to the next one. Many of our own members entered the event and those spectators who came along really enjoyed themselves. We intend to make the 'Open' an annual event and I know we can rely on the support of LDDTL members to make it a continued success. Thank you to everyone. Officials, Umpires, Helpers, Players and Spectators for putting Liverpool back on the tournament map after a gap of 14 years!

It really is an exciting time for our sport locally. The Editorial contains details of our successful application to the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, which has allowed us to purchase necessary equipment for the junior coaching and the Woolwich Junior League. Our involvement with the City Council Leisure Services Directorate is mutually beneficial to both parties, as we are both striving to raise the profile of our sport. Many local TT initiatives are taking place and we can look forward with confidence to a bright future for table tennis in Liverpool.

The Liverpool Closed Tournament will take place at Everton Park Sports Centre on Sunday 8th March, 1998, with the finals at the Police Club on Tuesday 10th March. Please Support

it! It is your competition and it is not just for the superstars. The Divisional and Veterans events ensure that you can have a good days table tennis, whatever your standard of play, and if you're like me, you should enjoy having a crack at the 'big boys' even if, like me, you end up getting thrashed! Entry forms will be available from all Club Secretaries from early January so you know who to see for yours.

I am looking forward to a successful tournament and I hope to see you there, and for a feast of table tennis, why not come along to the Finals Night at the Police Club.

In closing I would like to wish every one of you a Happy New Year and whatever you wish for in 1998, may it come true! Enjoy the rest of the season.

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Tony Harris

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DIVISION ONE

by Paul Gittins

"Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My". A grim reminder that not only has Christmas come and gone, but so too has that awful, nauseating film which I'm sure would have graced our screens, yet again over the festive period.

This is also an apt time to welcome the two newly promoted teams of Harold House and CADWA 'A' to the Div. Both teams have brought along new faces as well as familiar old faces (some older than others) and will no doubt hope to make their mark. Harold House's debut display certainly made the YM first team take note when HH ended 6-4 winners. Ray Jackson's defeat of Pat McLoughlin was emulated by Alex Bryce's win over Peter Lee. This was followed by a tremendous win by Eddie Clein over Peter Lee 23-21 in the 3rd. However, I can only assume that Eddie received a hand injury during this game, which prevented him from shaking the hand of his next opponent, Deli Olyumbo, who had turned the tables by beating Eddie 22-20 in the 3rd. Could this be an old recurring injury?

CADWA 'A's start to the season has not been as favourable. However, having said that, the players are still managing to produce some good individual performances. Ken Connor should have won his three against YM having beaten Peter Lee and Deli but he was 20-14 up against Pat and lost. YM were eventual 7-3 victors. An equally good performance was by Ken Hartley who saved a derby whitewash by beating Mike Mahoney. To date CADWA 'A' have used 6 different players and although a squad system is advisable, it would appear that they are struggling to field their strongest team regularly and unless this is rectified, it may affect their 1st Div. status for next season.

This is perhaps a fate which Waterloo may also have to accept, however, they are notorious for 'coming good' late on in the season and Alan Chase's wins over Peter Lee

and Rob Bevan (WSM) are perhaps a sign of things to come. The Waterloo lads have actually assured me that they will fight on regardless, whether it be in the trenches, on the beach or at sea. Basically, anywhere they can get a pint!

Moving on to the Police. We are happy to have moved away from the annual relegation battle and hopefully we can establish a good mid-table position, and although it's early days, the prospect is promising when one considers our 7-3 victories over GPT and WSM 'A'. We were also very pleased to take 3 points from Colonsay with Steve, John and I making it a miserable night for Stuart Richards.

Having lost the first game of the season to Police, GPT have knuckled down to collecting some points. John Coysh's hat trick against HH earned him the 'man of the match' vote and also helped GPT to a draw. Paul Price 'kept the match ball' when he too completed a trio of wins against the Bath St. gang of Ken, Mike and Fred, again this ending in a draw.

Perhaps the most intriguing team in this Div. is that of YMCA 'A'. The departure of Pat McLoughlin to the first team has automatically appointed Ahmed Thabet to no.1 which appears to suit Ahmed as he has taken up the gauntlet. Ahmed's defeat of Bob Edwards, Deli Olyumbo and co-incidentally Pat McLoughlin, is evidence of that. Notwithstanding Ahmed's performance, what is also interesting is the introduction of Trevor Jones and the Junior player, Chris Dunne. Neither have been perturbed by the Div. and both have recorded some fine wins, namely Trevor over Ken Jackson and Mike Keane, Chris being successful against YMCA first team, Pat, Peter and Deli. I'm sure other scalps will follow as the season progresses.

I have also saw the card which shows George Smith, YMCA 'A' playing for the first time in 16 years agst his brother, Roy, WSM. Roy eventually took the honours but M.O.T.M.

went to Ming Liu, YM 'A', who won all 3 sets.

Was it the luck of the draw which resulted in CADWA and WSM meeting each other for the first match of the season? If so, then WSM must have thought that they were cursed to have their second match against Colonsay. Thankfully, neither teams gained or lost much ground as it would have been a shame for any team to inflict a heavy defeat upon its rivals, as it would have prematurely sealed the Championship. As it happened, WSM, Adam Robertson, Bernie Wentworth and Rob Bevan, came out 6-4 winners over CADWA, Keith, Kevin and Mike. Adam took his three, Bernie beat Keith and Mike and Rob beat Mike.

The WSM v Colonsay, (Paul, Stuart and Chris), saw the points shared. Paul won his 3 beating Adam, 22-20 in the 3rd. Stuart lost 3 and Chris bt Rob. The doubles went to Paul/Chris over Bernie/Rob. If my calculations are correct then only Paul Hutchings and Gary Watson have 100% records.

Co-incidentally, it's very nice to see that the date of this season's Presentation Night is printed in the handbook. Therefore, there's no excuse for not attending and one can hope that this will avoid last year's embarrassment when Colonsay, 1st Div. Champions, were presented their trophies, courtesy of D.H.L.

Anyway, time to close. I'll leave you with a New Year 'Toast'.

'May you drink with a good friend.

May you eat with a good friend

and may you sleep with a

contented mind'.

Happy New Year

DIVISION TWO

The Editor apologises for the absence of these notes which had not been submitted when this issue was prepared. Cards were sent out to Divisional correspondents on 19th November and they were given until 13th December to return their notes. A further week was allowed to cover postal delays at this time of year.

DIVISION THREE

by Ken Armson

I groaned when I realised I was left with these Notes to do as in the early stages the Div. appeared very strong - it still is - and forecasting was a minefield - it still is. Only an idiot or a masochist would have ventured to make a forecast and as I am neither, well, I hope I am not, and don't all rush to tell me I am, I don't intend at this stage to stick my neck out.

However, as the weeks have passed the picture has become a little clearer and at least one strong possibility has started to fade from the scene. This being Manweb 'A' who on paper looked a good prospect but they appear to be having team problems and this has been reflected in their results and led to their dropping back into the second half of the table. Surprisingly, this problem has been even greater in respect of CADWA 'B' who to date have used eleven players and never turned the same team out twice in their first six matches. However, their results have not been affected, possibly even improved them, and on only one occasion has one of their players won no sets in a match, this dubious honour falling to Rob Peverall when losing his two against WSM 'D'. At present lying a comfortable third with 54 from 8 and with the playing strength available, they look good for promotion. I don't know if it is some sort of record but their 'C' team have used nine players in five matches and also not turned out the same team twice. Their results have not been as good as they possibly would have liked but they do have 41 points and don't appear at this stage to have any relegation worries. They are at the lower end of the table but have that points cushion to give them confidence and their players are good enough to improve on that placing.

The current front runners, WSM 'B' and GPT 'B' have only just got their noses in front with GPT having been more consistent.

WSM are, as are all club's teams, operating on a group basis and this has sometimes caused a hiccup, but they are strong enough overall to carry this and should be able to keep themselves well in the hunt for a speedy return to the 2nd Div. GPT 'B' have also been inoculated with the 'player' virus having used eight players already and this has cost them points. I hear on the 'grapevine' that they may have lost the services of their best player, John Coysh, to their first team and one has to wonder how a player, ranked in a club's 'B' team, can, after only a few weeks, merit promotion to the first team. Anyway, good luck to John who, I hear, has already made his mark in the exalted ranks of the first Div. Back to GPT 'B' who, I am certain will have the in-strength capacity to weather his departure and keep themselves in the promotion battle.

The team I really fancied as being in the hunt were Bootle YM. They have hung around the fringes for a few seasons and never quite made it to the top and looked a good bat to improve on that this season. Their early results reflected this when they beat Bath St. 'C' 7-3, narrowly lost to a strong GPT 6-4, beat Manweb 'A' 7-3, drew with CADWA 'B' - had a reserve out - beat WSM 'D' 8-2 and the they hiccuped and lost 6-4 to YM 'B' again having to use a reserve. Against WSM 'B', in what was an important match, they floundered and were defeated 9-1. They are still in with a good chance of gaining promotion but will need to ensure a regular turnout and raise their game when the 'biggies' come along. They currently lie in fourth place with 51 from 8, any current positions quoted referring to the period when these notes were written.

WSM 'C' and Waterloo 'C', two teams you need to beat if you want promotion, are currently on the fringe of the race and for one of them, WSM 'C', this must come as a pleasant surprise. They did scrape into the

top half last season but having lost Bobby Owen to a lower team due to his feelings the effects of a serious back problem, life must have looked grim in this Div. However, help was at hand, I don't know still if they had faith in their brilliant Secretary who assured them he would find a replacement, but if they weren't sure then, they are now, for Delyth Davies, the young Welsh International, has strongly made her presence felt, and her return match against one of Liverpool's strongest female players was one hell of a set to watch. Delyth just scraped home 23 in the 3rd, or was it 22, to avenge her defeat by Julie Prince in a cup match. Few male players, even fewer female, get the better of Julie and she remains a player you need to beat if you want a high average. Far be it for me to rake over old coals but it is a great pity she never went on to make her mark more boldly in TT in Liverpool.

Back to WSM 'C', currently narrowly holding down fifth place, they gave their 'B' team a fright by snatching a draw, with Delyth beating no. 1 Mark Miles. Having a young lady playing at no.1 appears to have boosted the team's morale; either that or they are still trying to impress her. Whatever it is, it is working and this has been reflected in their results.

I pencilled in Waterloo 'C' as a possible outsider in the race and against the lower teams, their results have been consistent, but not so against the higher teams, this being reflected in their current position, just one point behind WSM 'C'. They remain a team the others will approach with caution and any points wrestled from them will be hard won, and in Roly Craddock they have a player who appears not to know the meaning of the word, defeat. He is an aggressive, forceful player, very competitive and very supportive of his team-mates. In short, the ideal team player. So treat them with contempt at your peril and be prepared to have to raise your game if you want a good win. Where will they finish?

Higher, I believe, than they are at present. Now I am sticking my neck out when there is not the need to!

The biggest problem faced by teams in this Div. Is that of multi club teams and with 3 from WSM's, 2 from CADWA and Manweb, the others will suffer, in that any good result from a multi-team club must also be of benefit to their other teams either in promotional terms or relegation aspects. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to find Manweb 'B' firmly locked on the bottom, but not so surprising when you total up how many players their two teams have used, 20 so far recorded from six matches each. I do not feel they will stay at the bottom for, overall, they have the ability and strength in depth to improve on this.

YM 'B' have struggled all season and only look like causing upsets when Louis Arnould is in the team. Louis, apparently, is a whirlwind player, capable of smashing anyone off the table and is over here to improve his English and now finds himself also improving his chosen team's League position. In his two matches recorded he took two against CADWA 'B' and two against Bootle YM, sweeping aside in the process, Steve Graham, George Higham, Tom Killip and John Higham. Only once have they had the benefit of Tim Ternent, who, ironically is now somewhere in France. They are fighting back and we may yet see a revival if Louis becomes a permanent fixture and such as Jimmy, Russell and Francis turning the results we know they are capable of. Russell had one of his best wins when in their match against WSM 'C' he beat Richie Jones 13 in the 3rd.

It appears that all teams are suffering from the missing player bug and this is also reflected in Bath St. 'C's results, using seven players in six matches, with only the redoubtable Billy Clayton ever present. Just as well, for it is Billy's results which form the backbone of their results and when Billy is off form, the team has a problem. Not that he has many off days

and a set involving Billy and Roly Craddock should be very entertaining. I would expect Billy to talk his way to victory. I played him in the LBH League but was overawed at playing someone so high in the Vets rankings and so felt I should let him win. That is my excuse, what is yours? A good team, just in the bottom four, but well capable of climbing out of danger and pushing others down.

WSM 'D' are down there with Bath St, but having defeated an almost unrecognisable Manweb 'A' 10-0 they must be feeling very confident, but I expect a lot of in and out results from them as the season progresses.

To sum it up, still a long way to go and with so many team changes it is difficult to fully assess the real strength or weaknesses of the teams. You could perm any one from the current top four and still get it wrong, likewise at the bottom. The players to beat are Mark Miles, Roy Adams, Peter Wass, Ray Lavin, Steve Graham, definitely Louis Arnould, John Higham, Danny Every, Billy (the Word) Clayton, Alan Biggs, Julie Prince, Ian Lunt, Delyth Davies - a nice scalp in more ways than one for what can be a better morale booster than to say you beat a current International. Delyth, incidentally, is at Hope University and is really enjoying her time in Liverpool, having discovered that our City and its inhabitants are not as black as we are sometimes painted. She comes from a T. T. family, her father being a Welsh Umpire, her two sisters also high in the rankings in Wales and of a similar nature to Delyth. Her mother, who is blessed with an eagle eye, rescued me from what could have been an embarrassment. In all, the ideal TT background. If I could get them all to Liverpool we could turn out a complete family team.

Hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year and will be making every effort to overturn any of my hinted at predictions. Whilst doing so, make certain you enjoy your table tennis and also that your opponents enjoy playing you. Courtesy and good sportsmanship cost nothing.

DIVISION FOUR

by Arthur Garnett

As you will all no doubt be aware, the last season ended in June, with a 'play off' between joint third placed Maghull, Bootle YMCA, and MANWEB 'B' for one extra promotion place into Division Three. This being won by the MANWEB team. This could have been decided in a simpler form. Bootle YMCA had won more games than the other two teams, or, the results between the teams in the league season could have been used. However, the rules of the league state that a 'Play off' shall take place, and unless a rule change is proposed and passed at the AGM, the 'play off' is the only solution.

My team, Police 'B' played hard for three quarters of the season in an effort to gain promotion before realising that, for last season, it was only a 'dream'. So another season in Division Four, or is it? This isn't the Division Four of 2 - 3 seasons ago. This is a very strong Division which for the past 2 years has been getting stronger. Our first match this season was against Maghull 'C', with Rod BULMER playing at number 1. Rod told me that he had come down to Division Four for an easier time. Hard luck Rod. This season he will find himself playing against -

Eddie CLEIN	Harold House
Bob OWEN	Wavertree St Mary's
Tony HARRIS	Police
Tony CONNOR	Wavertree St Mary's
John McCANN	Bath Street

along with strong Division Four stalwarts - Val FRANCO - Bath Street, Eddie PRESTON - Maghull 'A', Tom PURCELL - Police 'B', Chris McGUIRE & Bert RIVERS - Bootle YMCA, Ian LUNT & Ken NELSON - Waterloo, and Mabel NEARY - Wavertree St. Mary's. So no easy ride here. I've come to the conclusion that, if you stay in this Division long enough,

Division three will come down to you, although in some cases, that should be Division one/two will come down to you. I believe that Eddie CLEIN has already, this season, played and defeated Peter LEE in Division One. Is it that this division is becoming stronger because the top two divisions are now three player teams and should the remaining divisions go along this route ?

With the current season about 6 matches long, it would appear that four teams are "in with a shout" for the promotion places. They are - Maghull 'A', Bootle YMCA 'A', Wavertree St. Mary's 'E', and Police 'B'. No forecast from me this time because my team has yet to play against all those involved, but all the teams look particularly strong, and it may come down to the odd point at the end of the season.

Just behind these four I would place Bath Street 'D' who have had a good start. The signing of John McCANN could quite easily have swung it for them, but, unfortunately, they have lost the services of Reg EDWARDS, who has been in hospital for an operation which appears to have put him out for the rest of the season. May I take this opportunity, on behalf of everyone in our Division, to wish Reg a speedy and full recovery, and hope to see him playing again in the not too distant future.

In mid-table, Wavertree St Mary's 'F', CADWA 'D', and Maghull 'B' & 'C' would need to strengthen their teams to get up among the front runners. In the case of the two teams from Maghull I feel that, if they played their strongest 'four' as the 'B' team, then the club could have had a double celebration come April.

The big surprise for me at this stage, is the position of Waterloo 'D', who, only a couple of seasons ago were pressing for promotion. They need to play their strongest team each match if they are to avoid the 'drop'.

Aigburth, who avoided relegation last time by the narrowest of margins, have it all to do again, but this time I feel that their contenders may be too strong in depth. The final strugglers are Harold House 'A'. Their fate I feel is linked to Eddie CLEIN, and how long it takes him to play 6 games in a higher division. With him for the full season they stand a reasonable chance of avoiding relegation, but, without him for any number of games they will be doomed.

Performances of note so far include :-

Paul ROBINSON's (CADWA) win over Val FRANCO (Bath St) 21/15 in third. Ian LUNT (Waterloo) defeated Bert RIVERS (Bootle YM) in two 16/21 19/21. Peter WILLIAMS (APH) win over Richie WINCKLE (Police) 21/16 in third. Graham ROLLINSON (APH) over Eddie PRESTON (MCA) 15/21 14/21.

Close calls :-

Kathy HAYDEN (Bootle YM) defeated John HODGES (Harold Hse) 23/25 in 3rd. Wilf GIBSON (MCA 'C') losing to Eddie PRESTON (MCA 'A') 17/21 22/20 20/22. Arthur GARNETT (Police) winning against R. JONES (APH) 24/22 20/22 20/22. Steve PERRY (WSM 'F') beat Doug BAKER (CADWA 'D') 19/21 20/22.

By the time you read this, Christmas/New Year will have come and gone. I hope it all went well for you. That your new bat is just the one you wanted, and that your New Year Resolutions are still intact. If you are a team captain try these two extra resolutions :-

1. When writing the teams in the scorecard, add every player's first name, and
2. Make use of the "Match Comments" section on the address side of the card.

This would help me considerably. Any further comments you would like to make regarding the division, just let me know. My phone number is in the Handbook.

So, enjoy the rest of the season, which should be an exiting one.

DIVISION FIVE

by Barry Meyer

Nice to be back - I think - after a six year absence from writing the notes. Not much has changed, still in the fifth, still getting thrashed, but who cares, except my captain!

These notes are for cards up to early November, but as the Digest is unlikely to be out until early January, may I say that I hope you all had a nice festive period.

Early results suggest a close battle for top spot between Bath St. 'E' and Harold House 'B' although the latter seem to be dropping points in games they would be expected to win convincingly.

If Colonsay string a few results together they may well run the others close and fulfil some of the promise they have been threatening for the last three or four years, especially as they now seem to have more strength in depth, although they did play short against HH 'C' (don't forget the fine, Paula!)

The wooden spoon position would appear to be a straight fight between Police 'C' and Hope, in the formers case mainly due to being unable to field a strongish team most weeks through shift work.

There is also something of a problem at Aigburth as three of the side work shifts and we also have Derek Traynor as a long term casualty. It gets so bad most weeks that they have to draft me into the side!

Of the mid-table teams, Linacre, on paper, are by far the strongest, in their first ever season in this Div. And whilst age may eventually be catching up with them, it is always a pleasure to play them. They were unlucky in the 5-5 draw at Maghull losing 3 sets 21-19 in the 3rd.

With the exception of games with walkovers, there have only been two 10-0 matches ; A.P.H. v Hope and HH 'B' against their 'C' team. Unfortunately there have been far too many walkovers so far. Let's hope for an improvement before the next Digest when the

guilty may well be named!

Maghull 'D' were unlucky in their home game against Bath St. 'E' losing 9-1 in a match of six 3 setters, sole winner here being Doug Christie 15-21, 21-13, 21-16 over Norman Lindsay.

The only other sole face-savers to date were John Letch, Bath St. 'F' versus Dave Batty, Bath St. 'E', 21-16, 21-18 and Neil Thomas, Police 21-13, 21-10 over Alan French, Colonsay.

A short selection of PHEW! Sets to close.

John Letch (yes, him again!) beat Denise Cox, Maghull 'D' 20-22, 22-20, 22-20; Ken Ainsworth, Linacre, overcame Norman Lindsay 23-21 in the 3rd; Paul Grugel, APH lost 23-21, 20-22, 21-23 to George Crowley, Bath St. 'E'. In the same match Barry Meyer defeated George 21-16 in the 3rd - not that close - but I don't win many so I just thought I'd mention it! Finally, in APH v Hope, Eric Wood beat Martin Hopwood 21-19, 19-21, 23-21 and strangely Billy Holmes overcame Martin 9-21, 21-15, 21-19.

VETS CUP HANDICAP COMMITTEE

Your Handicap Committee faced yet another difficult task when they met to decide player handicaps for this season. With no opinions, complaints etc. to consider, their task of deciding whether they had got it right became more difficult. After much discussion and the studying of a number of last season's score cards it was felt, in the absence of any suitable alternative method of handicapping, that the best way forward was to carry out a form of fine tuning by way of minor adjustment on a plus or minus basis.

No changes were made to team groups which will remain at a maximum of four. This aspect was considered by the Management Committee following the League Handbook meeting and as there was no evidence of this having caused serious problems to clubs, the figure should remain at four. We really would like to know your views and will give serious consideration to any suggestions received, be they adverse or complimentary. The members decided at an AGM that this was to be

an enjoyable competition with each player having an equal chance of winning irrespective of their own or their opponents ability. The Handicap Committee have attempted to ensure the aims and intentions of that AGM decision have been carried out, however we do need feedback to assist us in getting it right. We are not complacent and feel that more input is needed from those playing in this competition. Help us to help you!

M A I L B O X

Dear Editor,

Ex Police TT stalwart and League Vice President, Alan Wood, made a recent visit to these shores from Australia, where he has been living for the last five years. Looking as fit and healthy as ever, before he returned, Alan asked me to say, 'Hello' and pass on his best wishes to all his table tennis friends in Liverpool.

Still a keen player, Alan competes in the Victoria TT League in Melbourne, where the sport has a huge following, especially amongst Juniors. Table Tennis takes place for 12 months of the year, split into 4 seasons, and all League matches take place at a purpose built 26 table venue, on the same evenings, thus doing away with home and away advantage.

Alan's contribution to table tennis was recently acknowledged when he was unanimously voted a 'Life Member' of the Police TT Club and his ex team-mates named an award in his honour. **Tony Harris**

Dear Editor,

In an effort to increase participation in the Liverpool Closed may I suggest one or two handicaps. Perhaps a Veterans Handicap using the handicaps for the existing Frank Murphy Cup and an open one with each Division starting with a different handicap score, thus saving our hard working committee from too much extra work. If anyone sees me I'd be interested in their views. **Barry Meyer**

THE MERSEYSIDE OPEN TOURNAMENT 1997 by Don Davies

After a lapse of 14 years, one of the oldest tournaments on the international circuit was given a new lease of life, thanks to the ETTA's faith in both the players of the country and the Liverpool League. This, together with financial assistance from Liverpool City Council Leisure Services Directorate, and in particular, Norman Wilkinson and Dick Johnson. Without this generous gesture I'm sure the tournament would not have been approved.

Tournaments are usually on the calendar more than a year in advance but this event and a Grand Prix at that, was only put together in a few months and it's a tribute to all concerned that it passed off so successfully.

The tournament commenced on Saturday with the Band 1, 2, 3, and 4 singles. With an entry of more than 240, which included 30 local players, the Wavertree Tennis Centre was buzzing with activity just after 9 a.m. This group system is what the average player enters for, since the majority have no realistic chance of reaching the latter rounds. By the end of the day we had two local successes from Keith Williams and Alice Howard. The Lancashire Closed and seven times Liverpool champion won his group and then polished off three more opponents before overcoming Blackpool's Steve Bevan in the Band 2 final. Wirral Junior Alice, now 17, coached by John O'Sullivan, won the Band 2 and Band 3 Ladies Singles. Well Done Alice!

Saturday's play ended at a reasonable hour but the following day a backlog developed due mainly to certain players being involved in multiple events. It reminded me of the 'Closed' and of previous 'Merseyside's' when players complained that they hadn't knocked a ball for hours while others were playing almost non stop, particularly towards the end of the day. I may be wrong but I didn't hear any complaints and the players appeared to be happy just to be there.

There was no actual 'finals session' but instead events were concluded shortly after the semi-finals had been completed and this appeared to work quite well.. With the banded singles played on Saturday the main knock-out events started to take

place by early afternoon, and Liverpool had six players still in the Men's singles at the last 64 stage. Bernie Wentworth went out to finalist Darren Blake, Rob Bevan to Burnley number one, Dave Newton while Dave Roberts was ousted by Paul Hutchings 19/21, 24/22, 19/21 who then lost in the next round, as did Kevin Dolder, beaten by England number four Alex Perry. Also beaten in the last 16 was Adam Robertson, beaten by Gareth Herbert. I'm sure they'll have been pleased to have reached this stage and all will be happy to pick up the requisite ranking points.

The quarter finals produced a very strong line up with England number 4 and top seed Alex Perry against Chris Oldfield, Darren Blake, placed in Mathew Syed's position, England's top player who was on duty in Moscow, taking on Nicky Mason, while Nigel Eckersley faced under 21 winner Terry Young. The semi-finals pitted Perry with Young and Blake against Michael James, the runner up in the U21 singles. Both came through with straight games victories and although Blake took the opening game in the final, Perry raised his game to take the title.

The pair then teamed up after 10pm to contest the Doubles final and after Herbert and Young had snatched the first game 21/19, the top seeds knuckled down to claim the prize, winning the next two 21/12, 21/12.

Only ten locals entered the Veteran's singles but only two reached the last 16. Phil Luxon beat Geoff Rushton before departing against Dave Newton while Dave Roberts reached the same stage before bowing out to runner up, David Harvey. Fred Bainbridge lost to Mike Johns after taking the first game in the last 32. Ian Johns beat brother, Brian, who in turn lost to Harvey, while in the other half, Mike Johns was dismissed in the semis in straight games by Nigel Eckersley. The final was a disappointing affair. Harvey, who had earlier beaten Jonathon Taylor in the men's singles, couldn't do a thing right, losing to the former Commonwealth Games double gold medalist, Eckersley, 21/11, 21/5.

The tournament didn't finish until 10.45 pm and although it was a long day, the common opinion was that it a very satisfactory tournament and everybody seemed to enjoy themselves.

MATCH SECRETARY'S ROUND UP by Don Davies



Only four Leagues have managed to capture the respective Men's and Ladies division one titles in the same season. Stockport, Preston and Manchester all claim this distinction and of course Liverpool, who have collected the double in each of the past two seasons.

Liverpool, however, are the only Lancashire and Cheshire League team to lay claim to the treble, by adding the Norman Cooke Memorial trophy, a feat we achieved in 1989 and 1997. This is not meant to sound boastful but these are facts and should not be forgotten. When one considers the decline in registrations over the past few years, it is a tribute to all concerned in the League.

The Men have continued in the same vein as last season, winning their first three League matches, for the loss of just six sets. Kevin Dolder has started in fine form, returning a 100% winning record and appears to have improved his concentration, but I'm sure he will agree that he will have to strive even harder to match that of his team-mate, Keith Williams, particularly when he is not on top form.

Kevin and Keith were in Willmot Cup action in Blackpool in November and with Stuart Richards unavailable, Paul Hutchings kindly agreed to step in. In what must be one of the best performances in memory, the lads not only qualified for the zone final, but convincingly won all 3 matches, beating Bradford, Blackpool and 1996 Wilmott Cup winners, Huddersfield. With Adam Robertson also qualifying for selection, we have an excellent opportunity to make progress this season.

For the third season in succession, Liverpool and Wirral ladies shared the spoils, which may mean that the champions will require maximum points from all of their remaining fixtures if the title is to remain in the city. It must be said, however, that the point was gained in a rather

unsatisfactory manner. When Liverpool champion, Claire Newns, was late arriving from college in Worcestershire, it was decided to claim her opening singles set against Denise McEvoy. Although Liverpool led 4-2 and 5-3, Clare went on to beat Paula French and Brenda Buoey in the last set to level the scores. Alice Howard, a Colonsay club-mate of Paula and Denise, beat Paula and Brenda in the Merseyside Open and kept up her fine form, notching a brilliant treble, and the champions were fortunate to emerge with what may prove to be a valuable point.

The Veterans' 1st team won their opening two matches but suffered another loss to champions, Stockport, although we were without the injured Dave Roberts. Ken Jackson is now playing for the League on a regular basis and also returning to League action is Peter Lee, now in his third spell.

Ken and Peter gave the team a 2-1 lead before the Cheshire trio hit back, ably led by a tremendous all round player, Roger Hampson, to take the next seven sets.

The Veterans second string opened up the campaign with a couple of victories and face Rochdale in their next match where they should be able to take at least a point. With Michael Tierney unwell and Fred Bainbridge unavailable, a small piece of history, when a lady player turned out in what was a previously an all male preserve. Joining Alan Chase and Ted Birch in the away match at Bolton was, Brenda Buoey, appearing in her fifth different team for the League. She made a winning start, returning three victories against the all male trio.

Only three Juniors are available for the Liverpool team, regulars, Lee Farley and Jay French together with Robert Lee. Two defeats plus a walkover from Barrow is their record to date. Hopefully, with the acquisition of the new tables by the league, plus the ongoing coaching scheme, we can produce some youngsters for the future.

Victories in cup competitions have been achieved in the Norman Cooke Memorial Trophy, Wilmott Cup and Dennis Smith Memorial trophy. As holders of the Norman Cooke, we commenced our defence with a home success against twice winners, Bolton. With a record five victories since 1989, we required just 2 sets to qualify for the last eight when the visitors arrived with just 3 players.

Brenda Buoeu played in the semis and final last season but was on holiday for this match and since Denise McEvoy was unavailable and Paula declined to play, a debut was given to Wales no.3 Delyth Davies. The WSM player acquitted herself well against Julie Owen who also played in the Worlds' for the Isle of Man. With Bolton conceding the Men's Doubles set, Keith Williams was left idle, although he was suffering jet lag and wasn't too upset. This left Delyth and Adam to take the Mixed set, the 13 year old staying at the table to dismiss Glen Payne in straight games, the Bolton no.1 having earlier been crushed 21-7, 21-15 by Kevin.

The other cup success was recorded by the vets' trio of Ken Jackson, Alan Chase and Ted Birch, beating Witral, who enjoyed a six points start in every game, 5-2, in the newly formed Dennis Smith Memorial Trophy.



Although this picture isn't that clear, you may well recognise the 'flashing forehand' of this youngster as he is still flashing it around today

(answer - bottom of page 14)

ADVERTISEMENTS

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.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Do any of you recognise these pretty things? (no prizes for naming 'Humpty' at the front).

The girls, from Childwall Valley High School, and all Colonsay players, won the All England U13 Girls School title in 1972.

(answer - bottom of page 14)

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THE MERSEYSIDE OPEN TOURNAMENT

as printed in the 1977 'Open' Tournament programme

The first Merseyside Open Tournament was held in 1929 and was the first 'Open' tournament to be held in Lancashire. It attracted 205 entrants in its first year with several Internationals in the line up and the Men's Singles was won by S. Proffit of Manchester.



Our 'Open' was one of the major events in the country and a must for the top players. In 1946, the League was celebrating its 21st year and the 'Merseyside' took a special place in its celebrations. The event was spread over five days with the preliminaries at the Gordon Institute and the Finals at a packed Liverpool Stadium. Victor Barna again won the

The tournament was held over three days with the preliminaries on Thursday and Friday, and the Finals on Saturday night at Picton Hall. Admission to these first finals was one shilling and a programme cost 2d. In the programme foreword, the Chairman of the League described it as 'the greatest table tennis tournament ever held in Liverpool'. Also contained in the programme was an advertisement from Jack Sharp offering table tennis tables for sale from 57/- to £7.6s.0d.

The Ladies Doubles were introduced to the tournament in 1931/32 when Miss J. Barthomew and Miss A. Pollitt (both Liverpool) were the victors and the following year saw another home victory for Mrs A. Bartholomew and Miss J. Bartholomew.

1932 also saw the tournament's greatest personality, world champion, G. V. Barna, make his first visit to the 'Merseyside' and he brought with him French International, M. Haguener.

Together they won the Men's Doubles and Barna dominated the whole tournament also capturing the first of his Men's Singles titles. Mrs Scott-Hall of Manchester took the Women's Singles title away from Liverpool, becoming the first winner of 'Mac' Challenge Cup.

1934/35 was another important landmark, for the Junior Singles was introduced resulting in another 'home' winner, L. Berman, who became the first recipient of the W.S. Romain Cup. The entries reached a record 342 but more importantly, the Men's Singles was won by a Liverpool player when Ken Hyde defeated A.D. Brook in the final, after what was described as a 'wonderful battle'.

Men's Singles, defeating reigning champion, Johny Leach by 3 games to 2, after a great comeback, from being 2 games down.

Another world champion, the great Richard Bergman, was a regular visitor to Liverpool and he took the Men's title for the first time in 1947.

In 1951, the 'Open' was still being advertised as the largest tournament outside London, the finals now being played at the Philharmonic Hall. Victor Barna, Johny Leach, Jack Carrington, Geoff Harrower and the famous Rowe twins, Ladies Doubles world champions, amongst the host



of top players competing.

The 'Open' was a regular fixture in the ETTA calendar and with its resurgence in 1997, after a gap of 14 years, it will hopefully become so again.

TABLE EDGES, NETS & ECHOES OF THE PAST



Adam Robertson's continued improvement has resulted in a European club signing him on to play in about 14 League matches in Belgium. Charleroi, based in Antwerp, has given the 13 year old prodigy an excellent opportunity to improve his talents. Already he has made five visits and has registered some fine wins.

The Robertson household is a busy place on most weekends, with either Barry or Gaynor driving the star pupil to Manchester airport on Friday afternoons. There he is met by a special airline representative and chaperoned until his arrival in Belgium. A club car is waiting to collect him, his match being on Saturday night and he returns on Sunday. Barry has made the trip on a few occasions and says that the experience is tremendous.

Adam turns out in the club's second team but the first team attracts crowds of up to 5,000 and the match is covered by television.

Brenda Buoey reached number 7 in the November National veterans rankings, although inexplicably has dropped to 10 in the December list. She has recorded a victory over number 1 Helen Shields and 4th placed Doreen Schofield. Brenda became the first lady to represent the Liverpool League in a Lancashire and Cheshire League match.

In the Men's list, Keith Williams stands at 109, Paul Hutchings at 116. Kevin Dolder 118. Bernie Wentworth 137, Ian Eaton 143 and Chris Ford 162. In the Ladies list, Brenda is at 50, which includes Vets' points and Paula is at a creditable 73. Adam is listed at number 4 Junior in England.

Congratulations to the boys at Linacre who will be celebrating the Clubs Golden Anniversary in 1998, having joined the League in 1948. Now playing in the fifth division, they remain as competitive as ever, and their sportsmanship and hospitality sets an example for all of us to follow! Long may they continue!

The Junior Coaching Sessions organised by Ken Armson will be resuming in the New Year at the Wavertree Tennis Centre, between the hours of 5.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. on a Friday evening. Volunteers are required to help out. You don't have to be a coach, just be capable of standing at the other end of the table and returning the ball to the youngsters is enough. Who knows, you may well enjoy yourself! If any member wants to bring any aspiring children along, you will be more than welcome. For further details, contact Ken Armson.

When Adam Robertson and Delyth Davies played for the League in the Norman Cooke Memorial Trophy match against Bolton it almost certainly was the first time that two Internationals turned out for the League in the same match since the days of the Rumjahn brothers. The records show that Tony Clayton was never in the same team as John McNee and neither was Natasha Williams and Justine Thomas.

The North West arm of the ETTA, led by our Development Officer, Martin Ireland, has won the regional governing body category of the first ever Sports Council Volunteer Investment Awards. Sponsored by Barclaycard, the award recognises the clubs and governing bodies who lead the way in the recruitment and management of volunteers - the backbone of the sport. The prize of £1,500 will no doubt be put to good use, and a further £3,000 is up for grabs when the North West competes in the national final.

Identities revealed : **Girls** - Gill Rowbottom, Brenda Buoey, Pauline Lane, Suzanne Manning and Ellie Astle. **Youngster** - New Veteran on the scene, Keith Williams.

DIVISION 1	P	W	L	D	PTS
WAV ST MARYS	9	8	0	1	71
COLONSAY	7	6	0	1	58
C.A.D.W.A.	8	7	1	0	57
LPOOL YMCA	9	4	2	3	51
WAV ST MARYS 'A'	9	3	4	2	43
BATH STREET	9	4	4	1	38
POLICE	7	3	4	0	35
G.P.T.	8	0	4	4	33
LPOOL YMCA 'A'	9	1	6	2	33
HAROLD HOUSE	8	2	5	1	31
WATERLOO	8	1	6	1	25
C.A.D.W.A. 'A'	9	3	6	0	25

DIVISION 2	P	W	L	D	PTS
WATERLOO 'A'	9	9	0	0	76
BATH STREET 'A'	8	6	2	0	57
G.P.T. 'A'	9	5	4	0	47
MAGHULL	8	5	2	1	44
FORDS	8	4	4	0	42
COLONSAY 'A'	8	4	4	0	41
BATH STREET 'B'	9	4	4	1	40
BOOTLE J.C.	9	2	6	1	34
BOOTLE J.C. 'A'	6	4	1	1	33
WATERLOO 'B'	9	2	7	0	31
MANWEB	8	1	6	1	30
POLICE 'A'	9	1	7	1	25

DIVISION 3	P	W	L	D	PTS
WAV ST MARYS 'B'	9	7	1	1	64
G.P.T. 'B'	9	6	2	1	61
C.A.D.W.A. 'B'	8	7	0	1	54
BOOTLE YMCA	9	5	3	1	52
WAV ST MARYS 'C'	8	4	1	3	45
MANWEB 'A'	9	4	2	3	44
WATERLOO 'C'	9	3	4	2	44
C.A.D.W.A. 'C'	9	2	6	1	41
WAV ST MARYS 'D'	9	3	5	1	40
BATH STREET 'C'	9	3	6	0	40
LPOOL YMCA 'B'	9	1	7	1	25
MANWEB 'B'	9	0	8	1	20

DIVISION 4	P	W	L	D	PTS
POLICE 'B'	9	6	2	1	62
MAGHULL 'A'	9	7	0	2	61
BATH STREET 'D'	9	6	1	2	61
BOOTLE YMCA 'A'	9	7	1	1	59
WAV ST MARYS 'E'	9	5	3	1	58
MAGHULL 'B'	9	2	5	2	41
MAGHULL 'C'	9	3	4	2	40
C.A.D.W.A. 'D'	8	3	4	1	35
WAV ST MARYS 'F'	9	2	5	2	32
AIGBURTH	9	0	5	4	32
HAROLD HOUSE 'A'	8	1	5	2	29
WATERLOO 'D'	9	1	8	0	20

DIVISION 5	P	W	L	D	PTS
BATH STREET 'E'	9	9	0	0	68
HAROLD HOUSE 'B'	8	6	1	1	52
LINACRE	8	4	3	1	48
AIGBURTH 'A'	9	3	4	2	45
BATH STREET 'F'	8	2	3	3	42
COLONSAY 'B'	6	4	1	1	37
MAGHULL 'D'	8	3	4	1	35
BOOTLE YMCA 'B'	8	2	6	0	32
HAROLD HOUSE 'C'	7	1	3	3	29
HOPE	6	0	4	2	18
POLICE 'C'	7	0	7	0	14

CLUB SECRETARYS ARE REMINDED OF M.R. 10 REGARDING THE CANCELLING AND RE-ARRANGING OF MATCHES. (see Rule Book). THE RULES WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED THIS SEASON. IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS PLEASE GIVE THE FIX. SECRETARY A RING.

LIVERPOOL CLOSED TOURNAMENT

on Sunday 8th March, 1998
at Everton Park Sports Centre
Finals at the Police Club
on Tuesday 10th March

Social / Presentation Evening
Friday 8th May
at the Police Club, Prescot Road
Put the date in your diaries NOW!