

JANUARY, 1955



Vol. V. No. 3.

PRICE 6¹/₂

TABLE
TENNIS
DIGEST

Official Magazine

OF THE

AMERICAN TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Table Tennis Digest

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

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

EDITORIAL BOARD:

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Vol. V

January, 1955.

No. 3

COMMENT

WE were vastly intrigued the other day to hear of a League match which was completed around 8.0 p.m. without any recourse to claiming of sets, or anything of that nature. Closer inquiry revealed a novel idea, which possibly might be carried out by others in similar circumstances.

Two clubs situated in the city centre, by mutual agreement, started the match about 5.30, their players going straight from work. As a result the night was still young at the conclusion, and several of the players were able to take in a show as well as their evening's sport!

We can think of a few 'table tennis widows' who might find the idea extremely attractive. It will be interesting to see if, the way having been shown, other clubs who are able to make similar plans will follow suit.

In view of the furore caused at the World Championships, we have been awaiting with interest to see what result, if any, the sponge bat might have on our own League this season. One of us has given an extended trial to such a bat, with entirely satisfactory results, and it is somewhat surprising that a few of our leading players have not experimented as well.

It would be very interesting to know how many players are using the sponge bat regularly. The impression is that there are very few, but the Second Division at least have a reasonable number.

So much controversy has raged over these bats, we feel it is high time that the First Division produced an expert. If an individual might be mentioned in this respect, we should like to see what Les Davies, of Balfour, could do with a "Jap bat". We have an idea that his style, fiendish enough now, might become even more so with such an aid!

At the same time these new surfaces do present a problem to the youngsters who are just learning the game, and being coached along orthodox lines, for with the spin and speed these bats impart they must appear very difficult and rather unfair. Nevertheless, and in defiance of some very expert opinions, dare we suggest to some ambitious youngster who may read these lines, that a serious attempt be made to achieve proficiency by the use of a sponge bat.

You never know, it might be a short cut to the top of the tree, and it would be a grand boost to the League if a youngster could start beating the top notchers, even by such unorthodox methods.

OUR WITHDRAWAL FROM LANCASHIRE LEAGUE—AND WHY

By W. STAMP.



THE Management Committee have asked me to give the reasons why we withdrew our three teams from the Lancashire League, and to dispel the rumours that it was because it cost us money. Of course it did, and always will, while there is such lack of interest in the matches.

We looked upon this as a natural hazard, although it has cost us up to £40 in a season to maintain our teams, and this season the money is being applied to coaching and is, therefore, not lying idle, and in my personal opinion is being put to much better use.

Many of the competing leagues throughout the two counties have been complaining for some time of the difficulties of travelling, which are not always under the best climatic conditions. The train in most instances is useless because of having to leave too early for the return journey.

There were complaints of insufficient interest in the matches and that often enough the number of spectators was less than the teams.

We had three requests last season from Leagues wanting matches to count for four points to save travelling for the return fixture, but as it was against the rules, we refused to be a party to it. Their reason was finance, plus the difficulty in finding venues.

We had every sympathy with the latter, because we had to find 15 venues for three teams, and our choice was somewhat restricted as we could not be going to the same clubs over and over again.

Our players were often as strange to their surroundings as the visitors, so that home advantage was nullified. A League headquarters is the answer to this, and many other problems, but the

League members turned this project down over six years ago when I had the option on a building in the city capable of accommodating ten tables, plus other amenities, where we could have held tournaments in addition to inter-city matches, cup finals, etc. (the cost was to be *threepence* per week).

When I hear all this glib talk about obtaining venues for tournaments, matches, coaching and practice, I can be pardoned for saying: "I told you so."

Having in mind all these problems, the Lancashire and Cheshire County Executive Committee framed an amendment to the rule governing matches so that Leagues played one another *once* per season (as in the National County Championships viz:—home and away in alternate seasons).

We felt this to be a happy solution as it would cut down by half the travelling expenses and the number of home venues to be found.

Mr. Farrell and I informed our committee that we were confident this amendment would be carried, but much to our surprise Blackpool spoke strongly against the amendment, as did the representatives from Stockport and Wirral.

I endeavoured to stem the tide by pointing out that while some of the smaller leagues had a limited programme, others had a fairly heavy one, and that in Liverpool, in addition to weekly league matches, we had an Open, Closed and Regional Tournaments, Wilmott Cup and Rose Bowl matches, Maxwell Fyfe and Foulis handicap singles, plus Readman, Hyde, Rumjahn, Bartholomew and Stamp cup competitions, and that our programme

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Funny Things Do Happen

THIS season has so far been as variable as the weather. Some remarkable things have happened.

We started by finding teams a man short, and now we have "walk-overs" awarded for teams not turning up. The same team was twice involved—once in a league match and the other in a cup match.

On the amusing side we find that one league match was completed by 8.30 p.m. after the clubs had mutually agreed to start at 5.30 p.m.

There is still an interest in the league events, both at the top of the division and down in the shadows of relegation.

At present Balfour lead the race "on points" and have still a fixture outstanding, which could increase their lead above Crosby, who also have one match outstanding which might give them two points. This would leave Rafters in third place, and Anfield, a healthy fourth, with only one defeat to mar their record.

The wooden spoonists are Livex, Anfield A and Nomads, with the Y.M.C.A. hovering close by. The Y.M.C.A. did well to draw with a full-strength Linnets, each player gaining one set and three of the events going the full distance in favour of the Y.M.C.A. players.

Nomads also did well to hold Crosby, with one reserve playing, to a 4-6 defeat, both A. C. Taylor and Ian Rogerson beating Chris Coogan, the latter in straight games. Anfield fought hard to force Rafters to a draw, thanks to T. Killip and A. Lawson both beating me.

A pointer to the league championship was the 7-3 victory of Balfour over Crosby, despite the fact that N. R. Jones was replaced by L. Mulholland. Reg. Hetherington is right back into form, having lost only two initial sets in league matches and being the only one to have upset Bill Pierce.

Bill Harris, too, has only once been beaten and can be described as Balfour's sheet anchor.

Second Division

by J. Coveney

LATENT DANGER OF C.L.C.

THERE have been no sensational results from the few matches played since the last issue, though Bohemians' recent victory over their close rivals from Bootle Y.M.C.A. have put them in a strong position for leaving us for higher spheres next season in company with, perhaps, Victoria Park.

Maybe Bootle Y.M.C.A. will catch up again, and certainly Cheshire Lines, recently strengthened at No. 1 and 2, could set the pussy among the birds when they play the other three leading clubs in their return matches.

How playing conditions do vary from club to club—more's the pity I feel—but at least the days of cold receptions to visiting teams are becoming exceptions to the rule. Deadly enemies they may be on the table, but off it the best of good friends and this happier state of affairs did not always prevail.

So many of the players in our division have been in table tennis for a long time and a match becomes the place for meeting old friends without detriment to the standards of play in the serious business of gaining league points.

On the other hand, up and coming players are not overmuch in evidence in this division, but then, in my humble opinion, the league was not originated so much to discover latent talent, to produce stars, as to provide organised table tennis for those interested enough and proficient enough to participate in regular inter-club trials of strength.

From experience, personal and otherwise, since the current season opened, I feel compelled to campaign for yet another amendment to League rules.

I contend that it should be a rule that any teams changing their home match nights, as well as notifying all other teams in the same division of this fact, *must* send with each notification, an acknowledgment slip, together with a stamped addressed envelope for return of the acknowledgment, so that, in fact, the home team must have had written proof of receipt from the visiting team not less than seven days before the match concerned.

I feel that this rule, properly enforced by authority, is a logical one and would serve, I think, as a deterrent to clubs who may change their match night without much prior consideration.

Strengthened Cheshire Lines

MOST noticeable feature of the Division this season has been the steady improvement of those clubs which started badly and the deterioration of those clubs which started so well.

Team changes have, of course, influenced these changes. Bohemians, the division leaders, have lost Holdsworth to their first team. So far they have kept on the winning track and I rather fancy other club's failings will keep Bohemians at the top.

Panto have lost twice since Christmas, once against Balfour B in the Cup and also in the league against Cheshire Lines. In the latter game they did their usual minus Bert Harkness. In the Cup they did well against the favourites, but Panto are not the team they were.

At the other end, Cheshire Lines are strengthened to such an extent that they will give the best a good run, certainly they will not go down.

Waterloo Park are also playing well and it could well be that one of those teams complacently holding a mid-table position at the moment, will be doomed to the big drop.

Poor old I.C.I. have had such a bad start that their chances of surviving are very limited. Whether the new league rules are responsible I am not sure, but without doubt the two bottom teams this term will be the strongest pair to have the misfortune to finish last.

In the Rumjahn Cup we have two representatives in the semi-final. Victoria Park play Balfour B and Bootle Y.M.C.A. play Beauclair. We usually provide the winner from our Division, but this year we face the strongest outside challenge ever.

I hear that Miss Joyce Lloyd (Police) may be leaving us in a few months. It is hoped that success in the National Police Championships will crown the short career of one of the strongest women to have graced our Division.

Fourth Division

by Jim Green

TWO NEW SIGNINGS BY LINNETS

HOLIDAYS having taken such a slice out of the matches since our last issue, we have been left with little to report.

Chief event, as the only one which might affect the promotion issue, was the clash between Maghull and Linnets A. The 5-5 result was fair enough on the night's showing, but Joe Lovelady was not up to his usual form and to the surprise of everyone (except his opponent) went down 17 and 10 to R. Hulme.

Make no mistake though, even at his best Joe would have had to pull out all the stops to beat this lad Hulme, who, with K. Rawlinson, appeared the two strong men of Maghull.

Secretary Owen obviously needs more practice than he can get at the moment, but even so, don't think him easy. He's far from that.

I was disappointed in young Tobin, and R. Whalley needs to curb his tendency towards a somewhat wild

forehand slash, but taken all round this Maghull team is good.

This is a good time to do a little summing up. At the top are the only three really strong teams, Beauclair, Maghull and Linnets A. It is obvious that the two for promotion are among these, but results have been so close between them that you can guess for yourselves.

It appears equally obvious that Domestic Mission and Livex A are doomed to apply for re-election—incidentally there is *no* automatic relegation from this division—read the rules!

In the Cups, Beauclair have reached the semi-final of the Rumjahn, and have a real chance to win the Cup.

Linnets have signed up Jimmy Clewert (Port Sunlight and ex-Acacia) and Alan Edkins (ex-No. 2 for Westfield), so maybe the top of the table will yet take on a new look. As a loyal Linnet I sincerely hope so.

PROMOTION FOR ANFIELD PAIR

HERE we are at the start of yet another year. And first let me wish all my friends throughout the table tennis world a very happy New Year.

I would suggest a couple of New Year resolutions. Perhaps we could resolve to turn up to league matches on time; to try and make each match one that can be remembered as a pleasant evening and a good hard fought match.

Perhaps one of the most important resolutions should be to turn up with a complete team. There have been far too many instances of teams playing short.

The most recent case was that of Bootle Y.M.C.A. B who played two short against Victoria Park B. The match had reached the stage where Bootle were leading 4-2, and when the next set was due to be played there was no one available. Thus, Victoria Park B were awarded four sets to come from being 4-2 down to an unsatisfactory win by six sets to four.

I often feel sorry for the lads left in the unfortunate position of Don Cameron. He is a keen player who looks forward to and really enjoys his table tennis. He made the long trek to Bootle and found himself without a game.

I am certain that Bootle will have to pay up in the form of a fine but what a poor show it makes and what a blank and dreary thing their score card looks.

Now we turn to brighter things. A little bit of promotion has come the way of two of Anfield's up and coming youngsters. Fifteen years old Goldson and sixteen-year-old Overend have been regrouped to join us in Division 5. Best of luck, boys, and may you soon be knocking at the door of the First Division teams.

Congratulations to Ian Rogerson (Bootle Y.M.C.A. and Nomads) in beating J. Stoddart (Anfield) in the fifth round of the *Daily Mirror* Junior Singles. Rogerson was playing on his club table and it was a very keen struggle as is indicated by the scores:—19-21, 21-15, 9-21, 21-15, 21-17.

Cadwa Missed Johnston

A SHORT month of table tennis this, but it produced one very interesting and to my mind pleasing result, with no reflection on the losers. This was the defeat of the division leaders, Cadwa A, by Everton Y.M., who until then had dropped only one point. It has thrown the title race open and added considerable interest to our division. Cadwa had the misfortune to be without H. Johnston their No. 1—quite a blow for such a vital match. They are a solid team all through, more than individually brilliant. Johnston takes the brunt of the attack, assisted by Brackley, who has seen service in higher divisions with the first team. They are ably backed by Ireland, C. Jones and D. Johnston.

The cricketing table tennis players from Aigburth, while not likely to be in the honours, are likely to surprise the top team if a little more bite is brought into their play. They are the only team to have taken a point from Everton Y.M., and appear to thoroughly enjoy their game. I have been told that when they are playing cricket they sometimes look like table tennis players and *vice-versa*! Donnelly and Wass have put up some outstanding performances, with Ken Hughes and Ray White not far behind.

Anfield D continue to improve, gathering a few points during the month and holding Warbreck Moor to 6-4. It is most unusual to see a Bootle Y.M. team so far down a league table.

Warbreck was the last of our clubs with a cup interest. They went out to Bootle Y.M.C.A. A after an unavailing fight.

Lucky at love, unlucky at table tennis seems to be the motto at English Electric, with Fane, Kitchen and Jane getting engaged. They have failed to win a match during the month. Our congratulations however—on the engagements!

Congratulations to Joyce Richardson and Gordon Randall, to whom the Christmas holiday brought the added chime of wedding bells. Their friends throughout the League will all wish to add their good wishes to those of their own Balfour Club.

LEAGUE TABLES

to 15th January, 1955

First Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Rafters	13	10	1	2	95	35	22
Balfour	11	9	0	2	80	30	20
Anfield	13	7	1	5	86	44	19
15 Crosby	12	9	2	1	77	43	19
Balfour A	12	6	3	3	69	51	15
Oakhill	13	4	4	5	68	62	13
Linnets	13	4	5	4	61	69	12
Lucem	13	4	6	3	57	73	11
Rafters A	12	4	5	3	51	69	11
L'pool Y.M.	13	1	8	4	48	82	6
Livex	13	2	9	2	40	90	6
Nomads	10	1	7	2	38	62	4
Anfield A	13	0	9	4	36	94	4

Fifth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour B	12	12	0	0	102	18	24
Victoria Park B ..	11	9	1	1	66	44	19
Rafters B	12	8	2	2	70	50	18
Oakhill B	12	5	3	4	71	49	14
Bootle Y.M. B	11	5	2	4	61	49	14
Bohemians B	12	6	5	1	70	50	13
Anfield B	12	4	5	3	56	64	11
Balfour C	12	4	6	2	60	60	10
Victoria Park C ..	12	3	8	1	50	70	7
African Oil A	11	3	7	1	47	63	7
Balfour D	11	0	9	2	24	86	2
Anfield C	12	0	11	1	23	97	1

Second Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians	12	10	1	1	84	36	21
Bootle Y.M.	11	8	1	2	73	37	18
Victoria Park	10	8	1	1	72	28	17
Cheshire Lines ..	12	7	4	1	74	46	15
Cadwa	11	6	4	1	67	43	13
Bath Street	12	5	4	3	64	56	13
Oakhill A	12	4	7	1	47	73	9
L'pool Y.M. A	12	3	7	2	45	75	8
Waterloo Dock	12	3	7	2	45	75	8
African Oil	12	2	6	3	47	63	7
Wavertree C.C. ..	12	1	8	3	36	84	5
Litherland	11	0	7	4	36	74	4

Sixth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Everton Y.M.	12	11	0	1	92	28	23
Cadwa A	11	10	1	0	80	30	20
Brenka	12	9	2	1	84	36	19
Aigburth	12	8	3	1	81	39	17
Warbreck Moor ..	12	7	3	2	71	49	16
Linnets B	12	5	6	1	59	61	11
W'loo Park A	12	4	5	3	55	65	11
English Elec. A ..	12	4	8	0	49	71	8
Cadwa B	11	3	6	2	43	67	8
Anfield D	11	2	8	1	39	71	5
Bootle Y.M. C	11	1	10	0	24	86	2
Osterley A	12	0	12	0	23	97	0

Third Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians A	11	9	0	2	81	29	20
Bootle Y.M. A	12	7	0	5	79	41	19
Victoria Park A ..	12	8	2	2	72	48	18
Panto	12	7	3	2	69	51	16
Lofters	12	7	3	2	65	55	16
Cheshire Lines A ..	12	3	4	5	55	65	11
Osterley	11	4	6	1	46	64	9
L.P.A.S.	12	3	8	1	48	72	7
Linacre	11	3	7	1	45	65	7
English Electric ..	11	2	7	2	46	64	6
Waterloo Park	12	2	8	2	44	76	6
I.C.I.	12	1	8	3	50	70	5

Fourth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Beauchair	10	10	0	0	82	18	20
Maghull	11	9	1	1	81	29	19
Linnets A	12	8	2	2	79	41	18
Littlewoods	12	7	4	1	62	58	15
L.P.A.S. A	10	5	3	2	58	42	12
Panto A	11	6	5	0	56	54	12
W'tree C.C. A	12	5	6	1	54	66	11
Tech. Students ..	12	5	7	0	57	63	10
R.A.F.A.	12	4	7	1	60	60	9
Litherland A	12	4	8	0	52	68	8
Dom. Mission	12	2	10	0	35	85	4
Eivex A	12	0	12	0	14	106	0

Women's Division I

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians	12	11	1	0	101	19	22
Rafters	12	11	1	0	87	33	22
Balfour	12	8	3	1	85	35	17
Cheshire Lines ..	11	6	3	2	51	59	14
Linnets	11	6	4	1	55	55	13
Oakhill	12	5	6	1	56	64	11
Anfield	11	5	5	1	52	58	11
Waterloo Park	12	4	7	1	54	66	9
Littlewoods	12	4	7	1	51	69	9
Bibbys	11	3	7	1	43	67	7
Osterley	12	2	9	1	42	78	5
Beauchair	12	0	12	0	23	97	0

Women's Division II

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians A	10	7	1	2	68	32	16
Cadwa	9	7	0	2	66	24	16
Aigburth	9	6	2	1	69	21	13
Dunlop	9	4	3	2	62	38	10
Wavertree C.C.	8	4	3	1	46	34	9
Brenka	8	4	3	1	43	37	9
Leyfield	8	4	4	0	47	33	8
Beauchair A	9	2	6	1	24	66	5
Oakhill A	9	1	8	0	18	72	2
Linnets A	9	0	9	0	7	83	0

LEAGUE TABLES

North Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bath Street A	10	10	0	0	83	17	20
15 Crosby A	9	7	1	1	64	26	15
Lofters A	10	7	3	0	57	43	14
Co-op	10	5	3	2	59	41	12
Bath Street B	10	5	4	1	45	55	11
Maghull A	10	3	5	2	46	54	8
Litherland B	10	2	8	0	44	56	4
W'loo Park B	10	2	8	0	36	64	4
English Elec. C	8	2	6	0	23	57	4
W'loo Park C	9	2	7	0	23	67	4
Bootle Police	...	Expelled					

South Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Dunlop	11	11	0	0	86	24	22
Earle	12	7	3	2	74	46	16
Florence Oxtou	11	8	3	0	68	42	16
Lucem A	12	6	3	3	72	48	15
L'pool Y.M. B	12	6	4	2	63	57	14
Rankin O.B.	8	6	0	2	57	23	14
W'tree C.C. B	12	4	5	3	57	63	11
Cadwa C	12	5	6	1	58	62	11
Peel Hall	12	4	7	1	55	65	9
Cheshire Lines B	11	2	9	0	36	74	4
Sefton General	11	1	10	0	31	79	2
Linnets C	12	1	11	0	23	97	2

Central Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Oakhill C	12	11	0	1	97	23	23
Fairlawn	12	10	1	1	87	33	21
Beauchair A	12	8	1	3	89	31	19
L.P.A.S. B	12	7	4	1	75	45	15
G.L.S.C.	12	7	4	1	68	52	15
Leyfield	10	6	4	0	51	49	12
R.A.F. Mov.	11	5	5	1	53	57	11
R.A.F.A. A	12	3	8	1	42	78	7
W'tree Labour	12	3	9	0	52	68	6
Stanley House	10	3	7	0	35	65	6
Tech. Stud. A	12	0	10	2	23	97	2
Parcels	11	0	10	1	18	92	1

MANAGEMENT NOTES

THE Management Committee have imposed fines for fielding short teams, in two cases only 3 players, on the following clubs:—Beauchair, Leyfield, Bootle Y.M.C.A., Cheshire Lines, 15th Crosby, Domestic Mission, Linnets, Oakhill, Wavertree Labour.

North Region. Bootle Police have been expelled from the League and their record expunged.

Reserves. All reserves played must be marked (R) and this detail must be inserted when cards are exchanged before the match starts. This is in order that opposing captains may have a true perspective of opposition.

Courtesy. The Management Committee wish to state that they consider it is the duty of every team captain to be present throughout the match and the same attitude should be adopted by the rest of the team.

Walk-overs. The practice of clubs granting walk-overs to their opponents, without previously consulting the fixture secretary, cannot be allowed, and maximum fines will be imposed on offenders. Only in exceptional circumstances will walk-overs be allowed.

Short Teams. Two clubs have been fined for inserting scores against the names of players who in fact were not present, and any club found resorting to this practice in future is liable to severe disciplinary action and even expulsion.

Semi-Finals

The following are the draws for the semi-finals of the various cups, matches to be played on neutral tables and on dates to be arranged by the Management Committee.

Readman Cup
Oakhill 'A' v Balfour
15th Crosby v Rafters

Rumjahn Cup
Beauchair v Bootle Y.M.C.A. 'A'
Victoria Park 'A' v Balfour 'B'

Hyde Cup
15th Crosby 'A'/Lofters v
Liverpool Y.M.C.A. 'B'
G.L.S.C. v Bath Street 'A'

Bartholomew Cup
Anfield v Balfour
Aigburth v Bohemians

Stamp Cup
Balfour v 15th Crosby
Linnets v Rafters

Oh! What a Surprise

By BILL BENT

WHEN, in order to see this month's match, the mere man entered the domain of the ladies, it was not without a sense of foreboding, for in the entire post-war history of the league he has never seen a ladies' match.

The surprise which awaited him at the clash between the two leading sides of the second division, Cadwa and Bohemians A, was agreeable in the extreme, for an exciting game produced table tennis of quite good standard and a pleasantly sociable evening.

If minor points of general criticism are to be made, it seemed a pity that a little extra "last ditch effort" was not present. For example, few attempts were made to return net cord shots, and too often a player losing one tight game, made her opponent a present of the next.

The lower order players of one side might be called into question for unwillingness to alter their style of game, even when it seemed that the opponent had successfully countered the original weapon. But all in all it was a good game.

Attack Won

The stage was set by Mrs. Crafter's two-game victory over Miss E. Gleed, in which the Cadwa captain's forehand hit triumphed over her opponent's good tactical defensive play. Had Miss Gleed made more of the heavily chopped short ball she might have caused more concern to Mrs. Crafter, whose long range forehand was extremely accurate.

Miss P. McDonough levelled for Bohs with a victory over Miss Joyce Horsley, a win gained by good all round play allied to a desire to hit frequent forehands. Miss Horsley has a good backhand flick—which she over-uses considerably—a weak defence and not much fight.

In her second set Miss Horsley curbed the wildness of her hitting to a fair degree, but not sufficiently to worry an extremely steady opponent in Miss Barbara Tompkinson, at her best when the ball came over hard and fast.

One of the most level sets of the evening concerned Mesdames Black and Gee, the latter winning the first game after realising that the only way to overcome her opponent's disconcerting aggressiveness was to use her own extremely useful counter-hit. This

called forth further aggressive hitting which won the second game for Mrs. Black, whose ability to get first hit in won her a good decider by 21-16.

Miss V. Gray seems to hold part of the bat blade, an unorthodoxy which appears to necessitate the use of too much backhand play. But, despite this, she plays an extremely steady game, with a hard push which is difficult to return. Miss Maureen Robinson, a reserve for Cadwa, was content to return the ball. She could tighten up a quite respectable forehand hit which she does not use often enough.

Miss Gray won 21-12, 21-10, but Miss Robinson could conceivably have beaten Miss McDonough, in her second encounter, but she continued to return balls at even height and speed. Something more incisive was needed against a player with such a good forehand.

Captain Saved Point

The most interesting sets of the evening were those in which Mrs. Brackley was concerned. An open first game against Mrs. Gee saw the Cadwa player scrape home 25-23, despite some beautifully angled returns by her opponent. Mrs. Brackley's steadiness, combined with hard forehand hitting, saw her home in the second.

But the high spot was the interval set between Mrs. Brackley and Miss Tompkinson. The Bohs player was extremely steady and retrieved excellently, but unwillingness to hit made her put up several high easy kills, to an opponent with good footwork, positional sense and forehand power.

Mrs. Brackley showed she possessed other shots when called on to use them, and both players revealed good tactical sense in their placing of the ball. After two points had decided the first two games, Miss Tompkinson's magnificent retrieving and infrequent and unexpected use of topspin, gave her the third 21-17.

Mrs. Crafter saved Cadwa a point in the final set, her forehand proved too powerful for Miss Gray, who never quite looked a winner although her positioned defensive pushes kept Mrs. Crafter from all-round dictation of the game.

And so 5-5, a fair result, and *status quo* at the top of the table.

BEAUCLAIR STILL WITHOUT A POINT

IT seems unbelievable that we should so quickly have played 50 per cent. of our matches and that the divisions are sorting themselves out.

In the first division Rafter's are still on top, with Bohemians a close second, while Beauclair remain at the bottom, still without a point.

In the second division, Cadwa and Bohemians A are fighting it out for top place, while Linnets A are struggling at bottom, without having won a match. In their recent match with Beauclair A they must have hoped to take a point from the Beauclair side who were then only two points above. Unfortunately they were a player short, thereby having to forfeit two sets. However, Beauclair won the match 9-1, so I think it is safe to say that they were still the better team.

Probably the best set of the match was that between I. Cottam and J. Lee, the former eventually winning 21-17 in the third. Joan Lee won her second set to give Linnets their only victory. She is, in my opinion, a vastly improved player this season and put up a very good show in that match.

More Effort Needed

Not so fortunate were Beauclair's first team in their away match on the following evening, for they lost 8-2 to Linnets' first team. However, the match was not so one-sided as the score suggests, and probably with a little extra effort on their part, Beauclair might have managed to force a draw.

Their only winners were E. Cubley, who played very steadily to beat B. Topping, and M. Patterson, who beat P. Abbott, which is quite a notable performance. Joyce Tippets played extremely well against Myra Murphy, only to lose in the third when Myra's forehand drive was devastating.

Myra won her second set of the evening in a very good game against Betty Cubley, while Audrey Brown, Linnets' left-handed player, and J. Benson won both their sets.

It was, on the whole, a very good match but I have one complaint—the late arrival of the home team, which made it almost eight o'clock before the match was started. This is rather late when matches are due to begin at 7.30.

Since the last issue of the *Digest*, the quarter-finals of the Bartholomew Cup have been played and three teams through to the semi-final are Balfour, with a 10-0 win over Beauclair; Bohemians, with a similar victory over Oakhill; and Anfield, who beat Osterley 7-3. The fourth semi-finalist will be either Littlewoods or Aigburth, who made a draw at Littlewoods, necessitating a replay.

North Region by J. E. Neill

A Loss All will Regret

THE further depletion of our region by the expulsion of the Bootle Police club does not tickle our sense of humour. To use a phrase which is most apt to the occasion: "Ignorance of the law is not an admissible defence."

The rules of the Liverpool League are very precise concerning the cancelling of matches and in the circumstances confronting the Police club they should have played safe. I along with others regret their absence from our region. Their sociability, generosity and enthusiasm won them considerable popularity, and I have no doubt that the players, if so desirous, will readily be accepted into neighbouring clubs.

The inter-regional Micklesfield Medals competition is proving much sterner for us this season and we are indebted to Joe Delamere for our draw with the South. A final victory in the present series would give the North its third successive triumph. Congratulations to Bath Street A, who remain our Hyde Cup hope and who continue to lead the region championship table.

Since Ian Macdonald changed over to a sponge bat, he has quite a run of success.

Strange that so many of our officials were ignorant of the fact that Peter Turtle was spotted by me and actually played in the successful North Region team last season.

Well Played, Eileen!

LIVERPOOL was well represented in the Flintshire Open at Rhyl on January 8, a number of players making their own way there by car in addition to the coachload organised by the League.

Their enthusiasm was rewarded when Miss Eileen Mansell won the women's singles, beating Mrs. J. Braddock (Manchester) in a three-game set in the final, and J. Stoddart (Anfield) reached the finals of the junior singles and the men's consolation singles.

Miss Mansell merited the congratulations of her fellow-Liverpudlians for her consistent play throughout the day which helped her to also defeat the holder of the women's title, Mrs. Hayward (Wolverhampton), in the semi-final.

Bernard Hand (15th Crosby) also did well in the men's doubles in partnership with W. Devine (Chester), reaching the final and only losing after a grand struggle.

The Liverpool successes were something of a surprise to a number of Manchester, Bolton and Stockport players, who had entered for the first time and who had confidently expected to carry off most of the honours.

The running of the tournament, unfortunately, left a lot to be desired and could not compare with the smooth running of those promoted by our League. For instance, the Liverpool coach arrived at 10.30 a.m., yet several of our players did not get a game before 2.15 and were then on and off the tables far too quickly. Others lucky to get an early game were then kept waiting two or three hours for their next.

The men's consolation singles became farcical. It was not started until 8 p.m. and was then restricted to one game until the final and any person still in other events was not allowed to take part. It would have been much better to have cancelled the event completely.

OUR SUCCESS CONTINUES

IN a terrific match at Beauclair, the South team defeated the Central 6-4, and the way in which our boys fought back after being 3-2 down at the interval was devastating. They won four sets on the run and when Terry Smith (Wavertree C.C.) went on for the last set of the evening, the score card read 6-3 in our favour.

Everybody played well and it would be hard to mention individuals, except maybe G. Linser (Florence Oxtou) who, playing at No. 2, beat F. Farrell (Beauclair), Central's No. 1, 21-19, 21-14. The team, E. Clain (Liverpool Y.M.C.A.), G. Linser (Florence Oxtou), L. Mason (Dunlop), W. Shepherd (Lucem) and T. Smith (Wavertree), are to be congratulated.

In the league table we are having fun, but only for second place as Dunlop seem to have made the top position their own and only an accident can stop them winning the championship. But don't forget that promotion is for two teams, so get as high as you can.

Second place is anyone's guess. I fancy Rankin Old Boys, but Florence Oxtou and Eagle may not agree. Lucem A are out of the running as they have lost W. Shepherd, their No. 1. Cadwa C, Wavertree B, Liverpool Y.M.C.A. B and Peel Hall are leaving it late, while Sefton General, Cheshire Lines B and Linnets C have one consolation—there are no relegation worries for the foot of the table.

Two outstanding points are worth mentioning. Dunlop have won all their games and poor Linnets C have lost all theirs.

In the Hyde Cup, Liverpool Y.M.C.A. B beat Lucem A 6-4 and reached the semi-final. They are the only remaining South team, and while I wish them every success, I hear E. Clein, their No. 1 and mainstay, has been promoted to a higher team—a blow to the region side at this stage.

In the averages, we still have three 100 per cent. boys—L. Mason and J. Cashin (Dunlop) and R. McKrae (Rankin O.B.).

Before I close, remember the regional tournament is all set for Wednesday, February 23. Everyone must have a go.

February 24th is Important

FIRST, my apologies to the Panto boys for an error in last month's Digest. The department of the Post Office I visited was, of course, Parcels.

With reference to our two inter-regional matches, we have a tale of woe to tell. Two defeats, each 6-4—but what matches they were. The one against the North was a terrific struggle and could very easily have resulted in a draw. We won two sets in the second game and lost three sets in the third, and one of these was at 22-24.

We hoped to avenge ourselves against the South. But no, our team did not play nearly so well as previously. They went completely on the defensive in the second half, a policy that was useless. Only one set went to three games.

We will have to record two very convincing wins in the return matches if we are to be in the running at all.

The regional tournament will be held at the Florence Institute, Mill Street,

on Thursday, February 24. Men's singles and doubles will naturally be the main events, but a third men's event may be possible as it is practically certain we will not be able to run a women's singles under the new ruling.

Your secretary will be receiving entry forms fairly soon, so please contact him for full details of events, etc. Please enter and make this our best-ever tournament.

The match of the month was the clash between Oakhill and Fairlawn and the 8-2 result was far from indicative of its closeness. A prompt start was made and even without a refreshment break the close games resulted in a very late finish. Six sets went to three games.

Fairlawn dropped into third place as a result of the defeat and Beauclair took over second place on sets advantage. Oakhill, however, may not fare quite so well playing on Fairlawn's slow table at the end of the season.

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The Maxwell Fyfe and Foulis

By J. D. LOUGHREY

FROM the experience of the last two seasons it seems a fairly safe bet that at any centre chosen for the Don Foulis Handicap, roughly 25 per cent. of the women will not attend, and therefore the apparently excessively large number allocated to Oakhill and Bootle Y.M. should not present a particularly difficult problem to those in charge, especially as the last two players will be going on to "finals night."

Once again, however, it is important to request that the early starters, in nearly every case at 6.45, should make every effort to be on time.

Speaking generally, there are more competitors allocated to the centres than ever before, with two 20's at Bootle Y.M., 18 at Lucem, Anfield and Victoria Park, and the rest on the 17 mark, with the exception of the first Lofters night, which has 16. There was still a small margin to spare last year, and it should be possible to complete all the sets, *so long as each centre is away to a quick start.*

Lofters and Linnets competitors should note that there are two separate nights at each centre, denoted on the forms as (1) or (2). So take careful note of the evening indicated.

All directions to the various centres will be found in your handbooks, but those who have not visited Linnets this season should remember that the club has moved since last season, and are now round the corner in Lark Lane.

Once again apologies must be made to the unfortunate few who have to travel a good distance, despite the assurance that it would be minimal. Unfortunately, it is quite impossible to be fair to all, but the great majority should not have great cause for complaint. As always, there was the difficulty of fitting in with that slightly-remote locale inhabited by the Crosby Region clubs, and a few have to make a journey of some distance to that area to make up the desired number.

It would be greatly appreciated if those who, for various reasons, cannot attend, would let the secretary of club centre concerned know before the evening. It is a great help and avoids wasting time, as has occurred in the past, for this year more than ever before minutes are valuable.

The total entry of 214 is two down on last season, and is slightly disappointing when it is remembered that the week should have been far more suitable than a year ago. The explanation is actually very obvious, for whereas the men show an increase of 13, the women have dropped from 55 to 40. If the expected 25 per cent. fail to turn up, then an actual entry of 30 might well make one ponder if it is worth while running the tournament in future seasons.

This year 20 clubs have no entry as against 27 last time, but included in this list are nine who have had no entries in either year, viz. Aigburth, Domestic M, Fairlawn, Technical Students, Florence Oxtun, Leyfield, Liverpool Co-op, Peel Hall and Stanley House.

Panto have only one, the redoubtable R. Mason, who will be attempting to achieve the feat of winning his group for the third year in succession. This time he is at Beauclair and has a tough task in his first tie with F. Thomas, of Linnets. But several other opponents of merit, including Vic Chesham, will make him fight hard.

The winners and finalists of the last season's tournaments have all entered, together with a number of past holders, and there is a good sprinkling of the top class players.

T. Faneran, of G.L.S.C., has the job of disposing of Ron Rumjahn in his first match at Anfield, but has been given a useful handicap to help him along. Alan Lawson, Vic Chesham, M. Oakes, and Arthur Taylor are all competing, and it is nice to report that practically every player who has appeared for the Nomads is playing.

As usual the handicapping has been no easy matter, and it might be as well to point out that with only 20 points to play with, it is inevitable that the points allowance between one player and another may not in some circumstances be a true balance.

A genuine effort has been made to attain some reasonable assessment, and it is not a case of pulling numbers out of a hat, as one competitor, eliminated in an early round, suggested to me last season!

A final word, *please be prompt*, especially those timed for 6.45.

LANCS. LEAGUE WITHDRAWAL

Continued from page 3

was becoming overloaded, and this surfeit of table tennis might account for the lack of sustained interest and support.

The E.C. amendment received a simple majority, but as it was a change of rule which required a two-thirds majority, the amendment was lost. Three leagues said they would withdraw teams in protest. Your committee decided after a long discussion, not to enter any teams for the 1954-55 season, and then we would be in a stronger position to fight for the amendment next season, otherwise we laid ourselves open to the charge at the next Lancashire A.G.M. that we talked a lot, but still entered the same number of teams.

It is gratifying to find that there is some interest in the Lancashire League teams now that they have been withdrawn, because little has been displayed over the years, and if we cannot receive adequate support for a match against a Scottish team or the recent Merseyside Open, there appears little hope for inter-city matches. This has been proved even when the opposition has been Manchester.

We have also to take into consideration the number of players concerned in relation to our registered player strength of 1,000. Last year we called upon six players for the Liverpool team, eight for the "A" team and six for the women's team.

The idea of league and inter-city matches and tournaments is to try and improve standards of play and for them to be a stepping stone to county or international honours. That is how the present day stars reached the top.

During the last few years we have not had a player who has even reached county standards, and we are still depending on the "old guard" who served us so well before the war. You have only to look at the semi-finalists in the closed championships since the war to see what I mean.

The question of re-entering the Lancashire League will be reviewed at the end of this season, as the present decision is by no means irrevocable.

Meanwhile, the Management Committee are proceeding steadily with the Nomads scheme and the coaching of young players in an effort to try and restore the prestige of Liverpool to something like the position it held in 1939, and if the small minority who have got so hot under the collar about our withdrawal from these matches, will direct their talents into helping the management in this laudable object, Phoenix may once more rise from the ashes.

The organising of a special train to Wembley in April for the English Open Championships has had to be abandoned as there were only two applications. With reference to my article in the December issue, on the last line, please substitute 'tandem' for 'bike'.

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HEADQUARTERS—AND A PROPOSAL

Sir.—Some seven years ago the clubs turned down proposals for a League headquarters put forward by the Management Committee. The time has come to find out whether repeat of those proposals would meet with more success.

The failure of our inter-city teams shows a need for a central practice centre, and when it is realised that at Middleton Ken Stanley runs a table tennis hall (on billiard hall lines) as a private individual, I am sure that, here in Liverpool, the League could make a headquarters a financial success.

Seven years ago (I am told) the Committee submitted plans which were complete to the last detail, which meant a lot of hard work. Before they could be expected to do that work again they should be reasonably sure of success, so, I would offer the following suggestion:—

Indicate to the Management Committee, through these columns, the feelings of your members. If you are "for" such a scheme say so, if "against" say so. I am sure that if the clubs are favourably inclined, proposals can be put forward.

Remember this—in Liverpool there are people with equal business ability to Ken Stanley and several of the Committee have more than enough business acumen to make a headquarters financially stable.

The personnel and clubs in membership have changed a lot in the last seven years, so let us see whether the newcomers have different ideas from the old.—JAMES R. GREEN (Linnets)

Crosby Reply

Sir.—I must contradict the statement of P. U. Rumjahn that Crosby has discourteously played a man short on purpose, as each absence was unavoidable at the last minute and the player was expected to arrive.

Does he think we would deliberately go a player short to a Rafter's team

which included three Rumjahns? Even though we did win!—J. WATTS (15th Crosby).

Sportsmanship

Sir.—Much has been said recently regarding the standard of play in Liverpool. I would like to point out a few observations which may have some bearing on the matter.

I was competing in a First Division League match against a well known team. On looking at the match card I saw No. 1 and 2 were reserves. Most unfortunate I thought, but on looking further down the card I was surprised to see that 3, 4 and 5 consisted of their strongest players. Call this good captaincy if you will, but in my opinion it's downright bad sportsmanship.

The team in question were not doing this for the first time as on examining their score book, it appeared to be the normal procedure!

This sort of thing is just making a complete farce of the League, quite apart from ruining any competitive spirit which may have existed between the two teams. For a past international to be at No. 5 while a reserve attempts to hold the fort at No. 1 is ridiculous, to say the least.

If this is the only way a club can justify its existence in the First Division, I feel sure we would be better off without them.—C. FAY (Anfield).

All possible praise to Sid Barrett (Victoria Park) who, unknown to his club, defied his doctor's orders by playing in a match, when called upon a few minutes before the match was due to start. This shows real club spirit, and the complete reverse of that shown by the player whose place he filled, when the latter let the team down at the last minute. Bravo Sid, we could do with more like you all round.