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Vol. V

February, 1955.

No. 4

COMMENT

WHEN the important changes were made in the League rules at the end of last season, few imagined that we had achieved a perfect constitution and there would be no more complaints.

Sure enough, though it has taken a little time, controversy is starting again, this time on the question of the team order. In previous years it was a comparatively rare thing for reserves to play at No. 1, but the practice has certainly grown considerably this season, so much so that a player can seriously argue he is more certain of getting two reasonable sets at No. 3 than at one or two.

Another slant on the same question, is the numbering of players lower than their current form would seem to warrant, this of course in order to gain tactical advantage against the opposition.

We maintain an open mind on the question which really resolves itself into the old problem of which comes first, the team or the player, and raises just two points for consideration.

Firstly, there can be no denying that it is not particularly enjoyable for a good class player to be frequently opposed to "rabbits," especially when he knows that a player of equal calibre is playing further down the list.

Secondly, we feel very strongly that the up and coming players should not be the victims of this latest piece of tactical play. It is all wrong than an improving youngster should be denied the opportunity of meeting better opponents as the result of steady improvement because of a desire to be sure of two sets. This goes against the League's primary policy of the moment, which is to bring to the fore as many potential challengers to the 'old guard' as possible.

This is certainly happening at present and in our opinion is something which should be stopped at once.

The answer to order switching is obvious, and there have been some rare examples already with top-class players appearing at three, four or even five, *on both sides*. Given time there is little question that the present cult will even itself out, as with every club doing it, there would be no point, and that seems to be the likely end.

For the moment, however, the exchanging of team lists becomes a matter of some importance, even to the extent of writing names out in full, initials will not do as they may be queried, as actually happened in a league match very recently.

STANLEY COMING FOR WEEK-END COACHING COURSE

By W. STAMP.

YOU will have noticed in the Diary of

Events on page six of your handbook, that the Closed Championships take place at the end of the season and that there will be no Saturday play. The entry forms will be in your secretary's hands with the next issue of the *Digest* on March 17 and the closing date for entries will be March 29.

The programme is as follows:— Wednesday and Thursday, April 13-14: Men's Singles and Consolation; Monday, April 18: Women's Singles and Consolation, Women's Doubles and Junior Singles; Tuesday, April 19: Men's and Mixed Doubles, with the finals on April 20 in the large hall at Liverpool Y.M.C.A., Mount Pleasant.

While we have five tables under one roof, we have arranged for Ken Stanley to come here for a coaching week-end, and while the actual class will be confined to twenty pupils, there will be a public session on Friday, April 15, 7.30 to 10.0 p.m., when Mr. Stanley will give a talk and practical demonstrations which will be of interest to enthusiasts who wish to improve their game or to older players who have ambitions to embark on some club coaching of their younger members.

You will find it an evening well spent. Full details will appear on this page in the next issue.

Consideration is now being given to the twenty players who will take part in this intensive week-end course, but it should be pointed out that the Management are casting their net as wide as possible and not just confining themselves to the Nomads.

Seven players were taken to Burnley on Sunday, February 6, where they had

coaching and practice for six hours at the Ken Stanley Academy, and although we know Rome was not built in a day I feel sure that all concerned learned sufficient to show a decided improvement in their game between now and the end of the season provided they *practice* (and this is the operative word) what they have been taught.

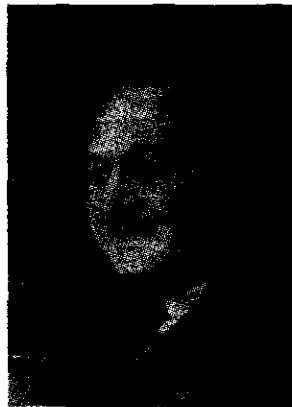
When youngsters with ambitions realise that there is no easy way to the top, and that they have to practice, practice, practice—then we might get somewhere on the long long trail to further international honours for the city.

The players taking part in this our first visit to Burnley, were Julie Roberts and Les Mulholland (Balfour), Brian Pardy (Linnets), Ian Rogerson (Bootle Y.M.C.A.), Fred Cuff (Anfield), Peter Turtle (Everton Y.M.C.A.) and Eric Anderson (Litherland).

The last of the open tournaments in the North-West is the Lancashire Open on Saturday, March 19, which is being staged at the De Haviland works at Lostock, Bolton. I have been informed that the conditions are first class, and there will be 15 tables with a runback of 15 feet and a side distance of 8 feet, and play commences at 10.0 a.m.

I will send entry forms to those interested, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, and a coach will be booked provided there are sufficient applications—return fare, 7/-.

We would leave St. John's Lane at 9.0 a.m. and bookings should be sent to me, accompanied by a 5/- deposit. The entries close on Saturday, March 11, and the draw will take place in Bolton on March 13.



LOYALTY MEANS SUCCESS

WE have now reached the last lap in the fight for league positions. Some of our clubs are finding the pace a little killing. Some have lost players through business reasons and sickness and others have suffered by disloyalty.

How easy a club's secretary's job can be if he has in his teams keen, loyal and club-spirited members who rarely let him down. The success of a team is usually measured by its loyalty and team spirit, and in this sphere I commend Oakhill, who, having players of no exceptional skill, have only called on six and lie sixth in the table.

Anfield's first team, too, though possessed of more potential ability, are in the same category.

Linnetts have lost the services of Bill Pierce, gone on a course until the end of March, and S. Wooding has missed a game playing elsewhere. Balfour A have lost N. McKechnie, who has moved south and Lucem have suffered through a shoulder injury to Don Foulis, who is likely to be out for the rest of the season. With Don Hobbs' loyalties divided, they are finding the going difficult.

Second Division

Defeat was Bad Blow

THE championship and promotion race has increased in tempo recently. Victoria Park's game in hand over Bootle Y.M.C.A. and the two games in hand of Bohemians, allied to a good set average, may keep them near the top but their visit lately to Bootle Y.M., and defeat there by 6-4, was a blow to their promotion aspirations.

Bohemians, however, show little loosening of the tight hold they have had from some time on the leading league position, but, playing a reserve, they all but fell to lowly African Oil Mills, playing two reserves.

Bohs only managed to salvage one point from this match thanks (or otherwise!) to Frank Varty's two-straight victories over both D. Bruce and R. Keddie and A. Irwin's narrow but deserved defeat in "the third" of Keddie.

Varty's league record must be one of the best in all the divisions as, to date, he has failed to win only once and his command of the table is improving rather than otherwise.

The Oil Mills bid fair to earn the doubtful honour of becoming the

Difficulties of playing a regular team have jeopardised 15th Crosby's chances. Each match must be a headache for skipper Joe Watts. It's a pity, too, that the Nomads have not always played their "selected" team to collect valuable points from the weaker sides.

It is interesting to watch the advent of sponge rubber into the first division. It is, I think, a retrograde step and only suitable for the half volley type of player. What I've seen of it convinces me that the orthodox player cannot obtain the same control of the ball as he would with a standard bat. Hobbs, J. Lancaster and E. Wall have made the attempt, but the first-named is nothing like so effective with his sponge.

Livex and Anfield A on present showing are both worthy of Division I status. It must be disheartening to Vic Chesham and Cliff Fay when their personal efforts are not materially rewarded.

I think that Balfour have the most improved player of the season in L. Mulholland, who possessing patience, a sound game and an equitable temperament, should be at the top in a couple of years.

by J. Coveney

champion "drawists," as we followed the Bohs match with another division of the points with Cadwa, at their headquarters the next week.

Set averages has always counted during the last few years in deciding final league placings, and this season it seems quite probable that the sets may settle both promotion and relegation.

Even if Des Loughrey is not the first local player to use a sponge rubber "Jap-style" bat in regular match play, I think that his exploitation of its advantages must have boosted considerably the sales of this semi-oriental weapon to members of this division alone. My own team once included no fewer than three crepe bat performers, to the ultimate detriment of the Waterloo Dock team, who might have expected refreshments served with chop-sticks in the circumstances.

Cyril Jones (Cadwa) now performs very well with an all wood bat—we had thought Elec Gould (Bath Street), now happily playing again, the only "dead" bat merchant in our division.

This Win at All Costs

HOW important is a victory? Is it more important than a match?

Reminiscing with a few old timers recently, we agreed that the spirit prevailing in the league to-day is different. Twenty years ago the results in our sphere (never the toppers, mind you!) were secondary to the game. We think we enjoyed our games better then. Teams were played in order of strength, not by law but by common agreement.

Balfour asked for teams in order of strength to be the rule. We did not accept that view as a League. Mr. J. H. C. Hughes, vice-chairman, led the attack in favour of team-switching as tactics.

Take a few examples. Bohemians, at home to Lofters, find their regular No. 5 is not available, and to avoid the possibility of losing a point their reserve is sacrificed at No. 1 and all move down.

Cheshire Lines have been strengthened by two ex-first team players since the season began. Are they Nos. 1 and 2? No, sir! Down the list they go for strength.

I.C.I., at home to Panto, promote two tail-enders to give their tail strength to gain a point.

What of those who play in order of strength—English Electric, for instance, struggling away. Should they play Smitton No. 5? And should Linacre play Larkin in the same position? They would probably increase their chances of winning. Or should both sides put the names in the hat and draw them out?

The opportunity exists for English Electric and Linacre to do just that, but I rather feel those players think the game more important than the result.

To be beaten by a better player can be exhilarating, particularly if it is touch and go. To swamp someone far below one's level gives little satisfaction. Ask Balfour B banished to Division 5. Do they feel good or would they rather have to struggle for existence in Division 1?

What do you think? Should we all try to "arrange" our teams or should we play in order of strength and let the best team win?

Fourth Division

by Jim Green

MATCH OF MUFFED SERVICES

DURING the month I took a trip to

Panto to watch their game against Litherland A. In the course of the first set, I noticed five services out of eight put into the net by one player. After this I counted carefully, and found that during the evening no fewer than 39 services were put into the net or off the table.

To my mind this is carelessness bordering on the criminal for teams claiming fourth division status, and while I will not name the chief offenders I will absolve R. Fowler (Panto) since he only "muffed" one service all night, and that can happen to anyone.

Apart from this, it was an enjoyable night's play between two evenly-matched teams. I was impressed with the improvement of Keith Anderson since I saw him last. But watch those services boys!

Police A show peculiar form. They earn full marks for taking the first point of the season from Beauclair and running Maghull to 6-4, but then they lose to R.A.F.A. by 6-4, with the same five men out each time.

I saw them early on in the season, and thought then that they would do well, but who can predict with three matches like that.

Wavertree A need a little watching since the "holidays." Always after Christmas they do shake up the leaders in one division or another, and this season they have elected to draw with Linnets A, beat Panto 10-0, and Litherland A 6-4 away. Anything can happen in this division yet. Let us see a few more results such as have come along this month.

Incidentally I am pleased to see that at last a captain has had the courage to claim sets from latecomers. Police's J. Conroy earns my gratitude for claiming three sets from Domestic Mission. Domestic's No. 2, A. Moore, did not bother to turn up at all, and J. McVey, No. 3, arranged after 8.20 to find that one of his sets had just gone by default. I wonder that players bother to register when they let their own teams down like that.

DAN POWER'S NEW "POWER"

AT the start of the season I thought it would be nice to hear from a few of you and perhaps air a few of your views in this column. I gave my address and sat back waiting to be inundated. What happened? I have had as many letters as Everton got goals in their F.A. Cup-tie against Liverpool—nil.

This has led me to believe that maybe nobody ever reads this column, or maybe none of you ever read the magazine at all. But that does not let me out as the monthly contributor for the division and I have to find something.

The division table will show you just how the teams are sorting themselves out at the top and bottom. Balfour B are way out on top and are certain to stay there. The wooden spoon will go to either Balfour D or Anfield C.

The other nine teams have little to choose between them, as witness the victory of Victoria Park C over Rasters B. This should do much to encourage the more lowly team next season.

African Oil A seem to have improved somewhat and Danny Power has "sponged" his way to victory over most of his opponents in recent weeks. Bootle Y.M.C.A. B would be a greater force if only they could keep their team together and not have to chop and change so much.

The aged gentlemen of Oakhill B have also improved considerably and are becoming an increasingly more difficult team to beat.

It is hard to believe that we shall be up against the same Balfour B team next season. Surely two or three of their players must be playing in Division I when next season opens.

Congratulations to Anfield on their much improved clubroom, now so warm and comfortable. I have only one word of warning. Coming down the stairs last week I felt that they might give way under my sylph-like bulk, so perhaps a little strengthening for next season might serve to give me a little peace of mind.

Brenka Fall To Everton

EVERTON Y.M. have disposed of another rival by beating Brenka 7-3. One game now stands between them and the championship—their match at home with Cadwa A. Peter Turtle crashed Kevin Fenerty's 100 per cent. record 17-21 21-13 21-15 and this was quickly followed by a two-straight win by Kilshaw (Warbreck) over Kevin.

The local derby between Cadwa A and B ended in an 8-2 win for the A team, with Challiner and Malcolm stealing the honours with two sets off the senior string.

Most improved team of the season are Waterloo Park, who come into the limelight with five out of six points during the month. Hearle has won the most sets closely followed by Lacey, Raynard and Lorimer. Raynard has certainly brought stability to the side.

Osterley tried hard for a win this month, only losing 4-6 to Cadwa B, and the best performance of the month, 3-7 v Everton Y.M., Hawitt, whose resigning will considerably strengthen the team; Mounsey and Barton winning the sets. Barton is top set scorer.

B. Jones and Ashcroft are among George Burgoyne's "babes" who strive for their first victory. George deserves special mention as one of the table tennis backroom boys who get plenty of kicks but little thanks, and without whom there would be no table tennis. He has chalked up more than a few sets this season.

Cadwa A had a close game with Aigburth, Jones and Ireland, with two sets each, pulling them out of the fire to a 6-4 win, with Hughes outstanding for the losers with two sets.

By the same rule Cadwa B had hard luck against Aigburth only losing 4-6, with Challinor scoring two good sets.

At the half-way stage the following are leading set winners of their teams: Redmond (Everton Y.M.) leads the way, followed by K. Fenerty (Brenka), S. Donnolly (Aigburth), Baldwin (Warbreck), Ireland (Cadwa A), Kitchen (English Electric), Hearle (Waterloo Park), Hornby (Linnets), Challinor (Cadwa B), Barton (Osterley), Goldson, Overend and Butterworth (Anfield) and Beattie (Bootle Y.M.).

LEAGUE TABLES

to 12th February, 1955

First Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour	16	14	0	2	122	38	30
Rafters	17	13	2	2	119	51	28
15 Crosby	15	11	3	1	93	57	23
Anfield	16	8	3	5	97	63	21
Oakhill	17	7	5	5	95	75	19
Balfour A	15	8	4	3	86	64	19
Linnets	17	6	6	5	83	87	17
Rafters A	15	5	7	3	61	89	13
Lucem	16	4	9	3	65	95	11
L'pool Y.M.	17	2	10	5	64	106	9
Nomads	15	1	10	4	55	95	6
Anfield A	16	1	11	4	48	112	6
Livex	15	2	11	2	48	102	6

Fifth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour B	15	15	0	0	128	22	30
Vic. Park B	14	11	2	1	86	54	23
Rafters B	15	10	3	2	89	61	22
Bootle Y.M. B	15	8	3	4	86	64	20
Bohemians B	15	8	6	1	85	65	17
Oakhill B	14	6	4	4	81	59	16
Balfour C	14	5	7	2	73	67	12
Vic. Park C	15	5	9	1	66	84	11
Anfield B	15	4	8	3	65	85	11
African Oil A	14	4	9	1	57	83	9
Balfour D	14	0	12	2	27	113	2
Anfield C	14	0	13	1	27	113	1

Second Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians	15	11	1	3	103	47	25
Bootle Y.M.	15	11	1	3	97	53	25
Victoria Park	14	11	2	1	99	41	23
Cheshire Lines	15	10	4	1	101	49	21
Cadwa	15	7	6	2	84	66	16
Bath Street	15	5	5	5	75	75	15
Oakhill A	15	5	8	2	63	87	12
African Oil	14	2	6	6	62	78	10
L'pool Y.M. A	15	3	8	4	55	95	10
Litherland	15	1	8	6	56	94	8
Waterloo Dock	15	3	10	2	52	98	8
Wavertree C.C.	15	1	11	3	43	107	5

Sixth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Everton Y.M.	15	14	0	1	116	34	29
Cadwa A	15	14	1	0	112	38	28
Brenka	14	11	2	1	101	39	23
Aigburth	15	10	3	2	102	48	22
W'breck Moor	15	8	5	2	83	67	18
W'loo Park A	15	5	6	4	68	82	14
Linnets B	14	6	7	1	70	70	13
Eng. Electric A	14	5	9	0	61	79	10
Cadwa B	14	3	9	2	50	90	8
Anfield D	15	3	11	1	49	101	7
Bootle Y.M. C	14	1	13	0	32	108	2
Osterley A	14	0	14	0	26	114	0

Third Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians A	15	13	0	2	111	39	28
Bootle Y.M. A	15	10	0	5	102	48	25
Victoria Park A	15	9	3	3	90	60	21
Panto	15	9	3	3	87	63	21
Lofters	14	7	5	2	72	68	16
Chesh. Lines A	15	5	4	6	73	77	16
L.P.A.S.	15	5	8	2	66	84	12
Osterley	15	5	9	1	63	87	11
Linacre	14	4	9	1	55	85	9
English Electric	15	2	10	3	61	89	7
I.C.I.	15	1	10	4	61	89	6
Waterloo Park	15	2	11	2	49	101	6

Women's First Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians	15	13	1	1	122	28	27
Rafters	15	12	2	1	101	49	25
Balfour	14	8	4	2	94	46	18
Anfield	15	8	5	2	77	73	18
Linnets	15	8	6	1	78	72	17
Cheshire Lines	15	7	6	2	67	83	16
Littlewoods	15	6	7	2	69	81	14
Bibbys	15	6	8	1	64	86	13
Waterloo Park	15	5	8	2	68	82	12
Oakhill	15	5	9	1	67	83	11
Osterley	15	3	11	1	54	96	7
Beauchair	14	0	14	0	29	111	0

Fourth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Beauchair	15	13	0	2	115	35	28
Maghull	15	12	1	2	109	41	26
Linnets A	15	9	4	2	96	54	20
Littlewoods	15	8	5	2	79	71	18
L.P.A.S. A	15	7	5	3	84	66	17
Panto A	15	7	8	0	72	78	14
Tech. Students	15	7	8	0	72	78	14
W'tree C.C. A	15	6	7	2	69	81	14
R.A.F.A.	15	6	8	1	74	76	13
Litherland A	15	5	10	0	68	82	10
Dom. Mission	15	3	12	0	45	105	6
Livex A	15	0	15	0	17	133	0

Women's Second Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Cadwa	13	10	0	3	93	37	23
Bohemians A	13	10	1	2	93	37	22
Aigburth	12	9	2	1	92	28	19
Dunlop	12	6	4	2	72	48	14
Wavertree C.C.	12	6	4	2	69	51	14
Brenka	11	5	5	1	59	51	11
Leyfield	12	4	8	0	60	60	8
Beauchair A	11	3	7	1	35	75	7
Oakhill A	13	1	12	0	20	110	2
Linnets A	11	0	11	0	7	103	0

LEAGUE TABLES

North Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bath Street A...	12	12	0	0	98	22	24
Lofters A	12	9	3	0	72	48	18
15 Crosby A ...	11	8	2	1	76	34	17
Co-op	13	7	4	2	74	56	16
Bath Street B	12	6	5	1	57	63	13
Maghull A ...	12	5	5	2	60	60	12
Litherland B ...	12	3	9	0	56	64	6
W'loo Park C	11	3	8	0	31	79	6
W'loo Park B	13	2	11	0	42	88	4
Eng. Electric C	12	2	10	0	34	86	4
Boolte Police ...					Expelled		

South Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Dunlop	13	13	0	0	104	26	26
Rankin O.B.	13	8	1	4	84	46	20
Lucem A	15	8	4	3	92	58	19
Florence Oxton	15	9	5	1	87	63	19
Earle	15	8	4	3	86	64	19
L'pool Y.M. B	14	8	4	2	80	60	18
W'tree C.C. B	15	6	6	3	74	76	15
Cadwa C	14	6	7	1	66	74	13
Peel Hall.....	14	5	8	1	65	75	11
Chesh. Lines B	15	3	10	2	55	95	8
Sefton General	14	1	13	0	35	105	2
Linnets C	15	1	14	0	32	118	2

Central Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Oakhill C	15	14	0	1	122	28	29
Beauchair A ...	15	10	1	4	107	43	24
Fairlawn	15	11	2	2	102	48	24
G.L.S.C.	15	10	4	1	92	58	21
L.P.A.S. B	14	8	5	2	88	62	18
Leyfield	14	8	6	0	68	72	16
R.A.F. Mov. ...	14	5	7	2	64	76	12
Stanley House	15	5	10	0	55	95	10
R.A.F.A. A ...	15	4	10	1	55	95	9
W'tree Labour	15	4	11	0	65	85	8
Tech. Stud. A	15	1	11	3	39	111	5
Parcels	15	0	13	2	33	117	2

MANAGEMENT NOTES

Short Teams

At the Management Committee meeting on February 11, fines for fielding short teams were imposed on the following clubs:— Anfield, Balfour, Bath Street, 15 Crosby, Litherland, Lucem and Panto.

Cup Semi-Finals

Hyde Cup

Lofters A v Liverpool Y.M. B at Panto on Tuesday 15 February.

G.L.S.C. v Bath Street A at Anfield on Friday 18 February.

Bartholomew Cup

Anfield v Balfour at Bohemians on Monday, 21 February.

Aigburth v Bohemians at Beauclair on Friday, 25 February.

Readman Cup

Oakhill A v Balfour at Rafters on Monday, 28 February.

15 Crosby v Rafters at Oakhill on Friday, 4 March.

Stamp Cup

Balfour v 15 Crosby at Linnets on Monday, 14 March.

Linnets v Rafters at Lucem on Friday, 18 March.

STOP PRESS

In addition to coaches from Liverpool and Wirral going to the Lancashire Open, parties are travelling from Burnley, Blackpool, Huddersfield, Manchester, Macclesfield and Stockport so there is every indication that entries may have to be restricted.

Intending competitors should apply for forms immediately to the League Secretary so that they can return them well in advance of the closing date.

No Mad Scheme Here

By BILL BENT

AS one who expressed early season doubts as to the ability of the Nomads to present any serious difficulty to the average first division side, I was interested to watch their league match with the centrally-positioned Linnets. And I came away with a high impression of the efficiency of this method of increasing good match experience for the up-and-coming junior players of the league.

Admittedly Linnets were without Pierce and Wooding, but the side Nomads fielded was far from their strongest, and they were fully worth the point which they picked up in an always exciting draw.

Three of the Linnets' sets were secured by reserves. Clewett, an extremely good No. 5, refused to allow Eric Anderson to get into gear and showed a delightful propensity to hit the ball past an opponent whose main idea of defence was to seek the first opportunity to counter-hit.

Advantages Vanished

Both Clewett and Pardy—a very useful prospect — defeated Don Rodrigues, a last-minute Nomads choice. Rodrigues seemed hypnotised by the prospect of tight games—all his six games were decided by two points—and to be constitutionally incapable of increasing any lead he may earn.

Against the heavy-footed Clewett he used the table skilfully while his opponent seemed undecided whether he should hit or not. Eventually Clewett became the aggressor and Rodrigues' strong defence held him well so that Clewett could only win 24-22, 19-21, 21-19.

Against Pardy, Rodrigues' consistent pushing cut down the hitting opportunities of a player good on both wings, but the Nomads' reserve most irritatingly allowed his second—and third—game lead to vanish so that Pardy scraped home 19-21, 22-20, 21-19.

Pardy, who is sane enough not to build his game on the aggressiveness he favours, was occasionally close to penetrating Ian Rogerson's excellent defence, but Rogerson summed up the situation fairly quickly and showed sufficient confidence in an effective two-wing attack to win in straight games.

Against a cold-ridden Jim Green, Rogerson remained aggressive when he realised that his opponent's defence was below its usual standard, although Green flicked well to pull back a deficit and take a second game from a Rogerson a trifle too ponderous to change his style at speed. Rogerson has improved greatly, but he was good last season.

Mulholland had also come on immensely. His defence was more than sufficient for Green's hit. But Mulholland is a little inclined to have a go with a spectacular but unsteady backhand. Against Thomas he used a long reach, quick footwork and excellent chop to contain the hard forehand drives of his opponent, who, however, "typhooned" his way to victory in the second game when Mulholland's defence hit a sticky patch.

In the third game, Thomas' hitting became erratic and Mulholland built himself a lead sufficient to allow him to experiment with a flick now timed to the table and sufficiently steadied to give him the decision.

Utilitarian

One of the evening's best sets concerned Eric Anderson and Ted Morris. The latter has a utilitarian type of attack—serve, return, smash—and uses a steady defence when required. The strength of his kill and the excellence of his retrieving curbed Anderson's game.

But this youngster has something more than the steady forehand attack and average defence which are apparent. Slowly his use of the table contrived to give him more hitting opportunities, which he grasped to place his shots well. His refusal to allow Morris the initiative gave him the set.

McKechnie was well below his normal form. Thomas' hitting of service returns unnerved him and although he played better against Morris, using a fairly good flick, he is short of strokes and must tighten his defence if he is to improve his game, as I feel sure he will.

Not only did Nomads deserve their point, but they proved, at any rate to my satisfaction, their worthiness of a first division place and a niche in league history.

MONTH OF MANY SURPRISES

IT seems no time at all since our last issue and until a few days ago nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Then came the news that Balfour, with a reserve in their side, had held Bohemians to a draw.

But this was not so surprising when we learned that the reserve was none other than Eileen Mansell. What was surprising, though, was the fact that Eileen won only one of her sets, losing quite comfortably to Muriel Willcox in straight games.

It was certainly a great achievement on the part of the Bohemians player and she must feel justly proud of her performance in the match.

The loss of the point must doubtless have upset Bohemians until they heard that Rafter's had also dropped a point to Anfield. Rafter's, who on that occasion were without Mrs. L. Rumjahn, have lost three points in the past month, suffering a 6-4 defeat at the hands of Littlewoods a few weeks ago when Mrs. L. Rumjahn lost to Miss A. Bell and Miss J. Lloyd, who also defeated Mrs. K. Rumjahn, also beaten by Miss Parkes.

Beaten in Cup

This great win by Littlewoods was all the more surprising when one realises that the week previous the second division team, Aigburth, had held them to a draw in the quarter-finals of the Bartholomew Cup and a few days later beat them in the replay.

Against Anfield, Rafter's set winners were Mrs. Casselman, who beat Ita Howley and Reg Royle; Mrs. K. Rumjahn, who beat Pauline Harbour and Mrs. E. Gray, Anfield's reserve that night in place of Olga Eagle; and Joan Brennand, who also beat Ita but was herself beaten quite decisively by Pauline Harbour.

Hard to Forecast

The dates and venues have now been fixed for the Bartholomew Cup semi-finals. Anfield and Balfour are paired

together at Bohemians on Monday, February 21.

One dare not forecast the result of the tie, although Anfield must feel quite confident as they have recently defeated Balfour at the Smithdown Road club. But will Balfour produce their trump card in the form of Eileen Mansell, or will she remain just the Balfour reserve?

The other semi-final will take place on Friday, February 25, at Beaulair between Bohemians and Aigburth. On paper the first division team look the obvious winners, but after Aigburth's aforementioned defeat of Littlewoods, I feel we may be in for a surprise. Who knows; after all David did kill Goliath.

Finally congratulations to Moya Jones, who, as back-marker, is in the semi-final of the Don Foulis Handicap Cup; not, of course, forgetting Joyce Richardson, the holder, who is still fighting and no doubt hopes to be the first player to win the cup in two successive years.

But there are also Pauline Harbour, who stands a very good chance of being the ultimate winner, and Mrs. E. Daniels, whose handicap of 20 should make her very confident of taking the cup to the north.

Editor's note:—The vital match between Rafter's and Bohemians was played after Miss Lamb's notes had been received and it resulted in a 7-3 win for Bohemians, who should have little difficulty in retaining the championship they won last season, but this time with a points advantage instead of sets.

It was a pity from Rafter's point of view that Mrs. L. Rumjahn was unable to play owing to indisposition for it weakened their side just sufficiently to make Bohemians somewhat easier than might have been. Previous meetings between the teams had shown them to be so evenly matched that neither could afford to concede the slightest chance to their opponents.

No Support for Tournament

IT was with considerable regret that I heard that the annual North Region tournament had had to be abandoned for this season owing to the want of better support.

Hitherto our region has been second to none in its wholehearted support and organisation for the finals.

It is deplorable that clubs with the largest membership were guilty of complete disloyalty and in more than one instance club secretaries had done nothing to bring the tournament to the notice of the players. The old excuse that the venue was too far away is unsound. Bath Street and Lofters, who supplied the largest number of entries, are geographically farther away from the English Electric than the majority of the clubs.

The abandonment of the tournament is rough justice for Miss Nan Lamb, who has done so well for the region administratively and particularly on the organisation side.

Now from the shadows into the sunshine. Bath Street and Lofters contest both semi-finals of the Hyde Cup and are quite capable of making it an all-North Region final. Here's the best of luck to both of them.

The Micklesfield Medals also look like coming to the North for the third season in succession, mainly through the merits of three old-timers, Joe Delamere, Cyril Smith and Alec Gould.

Liverpool will not be represented in area finals of the *Daily Mirror* tournament at Birmingham this season. Mrs. Beryl Watterson (Lofters), our last woman representative, was beaten by Miss W. Swift (Wigan) in the zone finals at Wigan, 21-19, 21-19, 24-22. Last year Beryl beat Miss Swift in the area finals at Birmingham.

MAKE IT A SUCCESS

WE are holding our annual tournament at the Florence Institute on Wednesday, February 23. Let's make it good. Try and arrive at the stated time given to you by your secretary so as to avoid any hold up. In this way you can help to make it a success.

Unfortunately we were beaten 6-4 at home by the North Region in what I thought was a very close fight. At the interval we led 3-2 and were full of confidence, but the North, being a strong team, fought back and withstood the strain better than our boys.

On February 10, however, we defeated the Central 7-3 for the second time. Now we still have to wait and see if we are the champions. Our team at present is L. Mason (Dunlop), W. Shepherd (Lucem), G. Linsler (Florence Oxton), R. Palmer (Cheshire Lines B) and R. McCrae (Rankin O.B.), with C. Grimes (Cheshire Lines) reserve. They are a mixture of youth and experience and have proved their worth.

It is a pity that Dunlops are winning the region hands down because if you look at the table you will see it would have been a great fight without them. Rankin, Florence Oxtton, Earle, Cadwa and Liverpool Y.M.C.A. would all have been battling for the honour and it would have been more interesting.

Terry Smith, Wavertree's No. 1, has gone to Australia to join his parents and although we will miss him I know you will all join me in wishing him good luck.

J. Cashin (Dunlop No. 4) is still unbeaten, having played 20 sets. A fine achievement.

Police Set Tactical Example

CONGRATULATIONS to G.L.S.C. on reaching the semi-final of the Hyde Cup. I'm sure we all wish them the best of luck in their match against Bath Street to-morrow night. Let us hope they can eventually bring the cup to our region.

The two teams to watch at present are the Police and R.A.F. Movements. They are making a habit of taking a point from teams higher in the table than themselves.

R.A.F. Movements, I am pleased to see, are settling down again. No talk now of their withdrawing from the league. Their new player and secretary L.A.C. Hampson, is proving an acquisition to the club in his dual capacity and on Monday evenings when Anderson is also available to play, they become quite a useful side.

If you learn that a club you are due to play has a very slow table, the modern method is to arrange a friendly match just before the league match. Go along and get used to the table and the follow-

ing week proceed to take a point from your kind opponents.

That is how the Police came to draw with Fairlawn. At least it proves that some people read their *Digest*.

The two most unpredictable teams in the region would appear to be Waver-tree Labour and Leyfield. Some of their results are very surprising.

The team to have shown the most improvement in the second half of the season is R.A.F.A. A. I hope the rumour I heard about us losing them as a result of their premises closing, remains only a rumour and that they will find a new venue.

We cannot possibly win the Micklesfield Medals this year, but we can still upset things if we should beat the North. Unfortunately four players were unable to accept the invitation to play against the South. My thanks to Plat (Oakhill) and McKin (Beauclair) for stepping into the breach at short notice.

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The Handicap Tournaments

By J. D. LOUGHREY

ONE of the major things learnt from this season's matches, is that the standard of play in the fifth and sixth divisions is pretty low. During the week of the handicap tournaments players from those divisions with excellent records, fared badly.

To be honest their handicaps were too low in many cases, but it was not apparent that at the time of handicapping that a player with an 80 per cent. plus record in the fifth or sixth division would in all probability be much weaker than one with a negligible total of victories in the second or third.

The biggest surprise of the week probably was the success of E. Daniels (Waterloo Park) in the Foulis. Unable to gain a place in the women's side until Christmas, she gave a display of calm defence which quite overcame her opponents, and with her generous 20 allowance there is no reason why similar form could not lead to further successes in the finals.

Moya Jones, playing safely and very soundly, came through for the second year to the concluding stages, as also did Joyce Richardson. The form of the Balfour girl was such as to give rise to the thought that with a point or two less allowance she would still have been successful, though a desperate struggle with E. Cubley, who was excellent in defence, nearly brought about her downfall.

There was some high class table tennis at Lucern with four semi-finalists, Handley, Lawson, Stoddard and Clein, all playing excellently. The first-named quite belied his poor second division record by beating Stoddard in the final, his attack being consistently hard and accurate.

There was some more big hitting at Liverpool Y.M., where Peter Turle came through. His nearest squeak was against Morris (Linnets), who actually held a set point before being beaten. Powerful attack against a first-rate defence, made this a classical battle and was one of the best of the week.

Despite this it must be said at once that Ron Rumjahn, at Anfield, played in such form that if it is repeated he must have a big chance of coming out on top. The finalist with him was Gus Read, who, at the end, seemed to be on the verge of collapse. Ron had something to do with this, but Rawlinson

(Maghull) gave him such a hard time in the semi-final that he must be held to be primarily responsible. This was a wonderful struggle, Gus winning 32-34, 31-28 and 32-30.

Lofters, staging two evenings, provide two single-figure handicap players for the finals, A. Taylor and M. Lijinsky. On both evenings there was an astonishing number of two-game sets. Taylor actually never had to go to three and Lijinsky only once.

To complete the picture, two players on 13, F. Rooney and C. Jones (Cadwa), won at Victoria Park and Linnets, making a range of finalists which is largely representative of the various grades. Starting at scratch, we have Ron Rumjahn and Moya Jones, four in the six to ten group, six from twelve to fifteen, with O'Reilly nineteen, and E. Daniels twenty to represent the outsiders.

A good deal of confusion was caused by the absence of a rule with regard to the "change over" in the third game. An apology must be made for this but it led to some amusing situations.

At some places nothing was done at all; at others an arbitrary change round was made at varying scores; but at one centre there must have been an expert statistician, for it is reported that extremely complicated calculations were made before the correct answer was reached, although no one seemed to understand the mathematics apart from the afore-mentioned statistician!

My apologies for this. A definite ruling will be made for next season.

Finally a sincere word of thanks to clubs and secretaries who staged the matches. Without exception there was the greatest help and co-operation, and may this be taken as an official word of thanks from the Committee who are extremely grateful. Perhaps an especial word should be made about Bootle Y.M., who helped me out of a difficult position by providing facilities which made a big evening run very smoothly.

My own feeling is that we have the best bunch of finalists since the start of these tournaments, and a good evening is in store. One or two may possibly owe just a little to their handicap, but with such a big entry complete fairness is just about impossible. It's a difficult job and I promise to try and do better next time!

Is This The Answer?

By J. D. PATTISON

SUPPORT for what the Americans call the expedite rule is given in this month's *Table Tennis* by Richard Bergmann, who has seen something of its effect while touring the United States.

For some time the American Association has been urging the adoption of the rule by the International Table Tennis Federation as a substitute for the time limit rule to combat that merely negative type of game from which table tennis at times suffers.

In the United States where the rule is applied, its application is at the discretion of the referee who can use it when he considers the game is uninteresting. But Bergmann, in supporting the rule, would make its application automatic when a game has lasted 18 minutes.

Under the American plan when the rule is applied each subsequent point until the end of the game is limited to 12 strokes—six for the server and six for the receiver. If after those 12 strokes have been played the point is still undecided, it is awarded to the receiver.

In addition, instead of the normal rule of each player serving five times in succession, when the expedite rule comes into operation the services are taken alternately.

The American contention is that when their rule is used it compels the players, particularly when he or she is serving, to "have a go" at winning the point within six shots.

It is an interesting suggestion which the I.T.T.F. might do well to consider. The time limit rule has done little to stop negative pushers except to bring a dull game to the sudden end it deserves.

What the powers-that-be have to find is a way of discouraging such play from the first point of a set instead of waiting twenty minutes.

Whether the American rule is the answer I frankly don't know, but I do think that Bergmann's idea of bringing it into operation after 18 minutes is waiting too long. It seems to me that fifteen minutes pushing is a big enough meal for anyone to digest at one sitting.

At first glance the rule appears to favour the receiver to the disadvantage of the server, but as the position is reversed after each point that objection would appear to be well met.

It seems to me that it might be well worth while for the I.T.T.F. to give the rule a trial for an experimental period—say one or two seasons—to see whether it would have any effect. Something needs to be done if big time table tennis is not to chase away public support altogether.

And think what an interesting situation could arise if some of those well known pushers knew they had to hit a winner in the next two or three shots. An intriguing thought, my masters!

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PROVISO TO H.Q. APPROVAL

Sir:—Mr. Green's article on the headquarters scheme is interesting. The proposal to run it on billiard hall lines, making it self-supporting, meets with approval of most of those with whom I have discussed it. There is, however, one proviso—do not ask any of us to provide the financial backing.

Let us be honest about it. A headquarters would provide facilities to all registered players, but only a small number would be able to take advantage of them. Those few would be subsidised by the rest of us on the original proposal.

Should we grumble at 3d. per week to provide such a benefit to Liverpool table tennis? No, we should not, but there is no escaping the fact that most of us would. We have already indicated our unwillingness to pay another penny for this magazine, and those who try to raise money for club funds maybe less than 3d. a week know how difficult it is.

Have the headquarters by all means if it is run on business lines and is self-supporting. But it would be a brave body of people to enter into such a venture in lethargic Liverpool.

—E. CAMERON (Victoria Park)

Crosby Reply

Sir:—Mr. Fay has complained of bad sportsmanship, but what is worse than a bad loser? Surely if Anfield A. loses to a team containing two reserves, then not the opponents but Anfield A. deserves the threat of relegation.

Our complaining friend should hardly criticise the standard of play when he was No. 1 and was taken by a reserve to three long games. Unless supported by a new rule at the A.G.M., Mr. Fay cannot dictate the order of another club's players.—J. WATTS

(15th Crosby)

A Complaint

Sir:—While not wishing to be unduly critical, and fully realising that the space allowed to each contributor to the *Digest* is not unlimited, I would like to ask Mr. Green why several of the clubs in Division IV have been completely ignored in the past two issues.

No doubt it is of great interest to the top three clubs to know exactly what is happening among themselves, and also

to members of Linnets the news of new signings and the "doings" of their star players is of paramount importance.

Unfortunately the playing and signings of the mighty is of practically no interest to some of the middle of the table teams, who would like occasionally to hear something, good or bad about themselves, instead of being completely ostracised. Let us have a little about all, and not all about the few.—

J. ROBINSON (R.A.F.A.)

(*Editors' Note.*—We must point out to Mr. Robinson that Mr. Green, like all our contributors, is expected to report the highlights of his division each month. To cover each and every team would mean, with the space at his command, that each would be so slight as to be almost worthless.)

Comment "Unfair"

Sir:—In the most friendly spirit I would like to make one or two observations with regard to the remarks of Nan Lamb in the January issue.

First, regarding the "late start." This match actually started at ten to eight. I know, as does every other member of the League, that matches are due to commence at 7.30, but how many matches do, in fact start earlier than did this one. I admit that our team were not ready at 7.30, but I am at a loss to know why they have been singled out for this comment, when they were no later than has become customary.

Then I see that although Linnets won 8-2, the suggestion is that "with a little more effort Beauclair might have drawn." I did not see an equivalent statement that "with a little more effort Linnets might have made it 10-0." Now Nan, is this suggestion of yours quite fair. Surely 8-2 is reasonably decisive. I also was at this match, and I cannot remember that at any time did the ultimate result appear in doubt.—J. R. GREEN (Linnets).

Nan Lamb writes: Yes, Mr. Green, I was wrong when I stated that the match began shortly before eight o'clock. The actual time of starting was 8.5 p.m. As for your other point, opinions may differ but I think mine is supported by the fact that six of Linnets' eight sets were won in the third game.