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Vol. VII

November, 1956

No. 1

COMMENT

THIS season the *Digest* appears rather in the guise of a criminal under sentence of death but granted a reprieve for a final chance to justify his existence. It is no secret that at the end of last season the feeling was strong that it was failing—failing to arouse interest, failing to provide controversy, and above all becoming extremely dull. That this could not go was certain, and the first decision was to terminate publication, but then came second thoughts.

The results of those second thoughts are now before you and it is up to our readers to decide if the effort has been worth while, and if the *Digest*, tottering on the verge of extinction, is after all to justify its existence. Speaking as Editors we have once again felt some of the enthusiasm of the early days, and while we are certainly not anticipating some of the teething troubles of last time, we are, nevertheless, awaiting the opinion of readers on the new features with a modicum of trepidation.

Only time will tell if we, and the contributors, have been successful. No doubt we will have to rely on verbal reports, the days of the correspondent appear to have gone, to our regret, but it is only right that all should realise that if this venture is a failure then the days of the *Digest* are almost certainly numbered.

Turning to League affairs, there must be disappointment at the very unfortunate partial collapse of the Ladies' Division 1, more particularly as the section is experimenting with a method of play which could, if successful, play an even bigger part in League matches in the future. It is early yet to come to any firm conclusions on this last point, but if any extension of the new order of play is envisaged, the problem of space at many clubs will speedily become more important, and it may be that in the long run, this could be the main bar to further divisions being included.

Apart from this matter which certainly has been a topic arousing discussion, one is struck by the amount of argument that the 5th Division with its 'B' and 'C' teams is causing. Some of the cup results suggest most strongly that many 5th Division sides are still far stronger than others with more imposing status. Again it is early to come to any firm conclusions, but there is an impression that this is due, not so much to 5th Division strength being maintained, but that some divisions, and particularly the 2nd, are, in the main, weaker than at any time since the war, a position which if true, can hardly be to the advantage of the League generally.

From the Secretary's Desk

Women Players Like Their New Style Matches

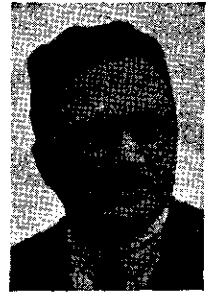
I AM glad to report that we now have four regions again, although they are not up to full strength. It was unfortunate that, although we commenced the season with two complete women's divisions, within a fortnight the first division had lost four of its teams. This was going to leave many blank weeks but Des Loughrey drew out a supplementary fixture list whereby three matches were played instead of two, which should prove satisfactory under the circumstances.

The new system of play in the women's divisions appears to be quite popular, with every player having three matches instead of two and giving them some experience of doubles play which they otherwise only obtain in doubles tournaments. I don't know whether the men favour this method of play, but, as only four players are required, it would present some difficulties to the larger clubs as they would require at least one extra team to accommodate the same number of players as at present.

We extend a warm welcome to seven new clubs, Bootle Nalگو, Huntley & Palmers, Merseyside Artists, Liverpool Nalگو, Stoneycroft Church Army Y.C., University of Liverpool and West Derby Y.H.A. and, in addition, St. Michael's have returned after a few years' absence. We hope their association with us will be a long and happy one.

I mentioned at the handbook meeting that we were unable to obtain a suitable venue for the Merseyside Open this year, but that we were bringing the Closed Championships forward to the New Year as Easter was very late next year and the season would have been finished nearly a month and members would be turning their thoughts to outdoor sports.

The venue will once again be Dingle Vale School on Thursday and Friday, January 3 and 4, and Monday and Tuesday, January 7 and 8, with the finals at the Liver-



by
W. STAMP

pool Y.M.C.A., Mount Pleasant, on Wednesday, January 9. It will be noticed that we have left the Saturday clear to avoid clashes with other sports, although it means an extra night's play.

In previous years we have not worried about this increased cost, but due to the new scale of charges operated by the Corporation, we are faced with an increase of £15 in the hire charges, to which must be added increased costs of printing, prizes and cartage of tables.

We are not making any increase in the entry fees or spectators' admission, either to the preliminary rounds or the finals at the Y.M.C.A. but are relying on the support of our members and their friends, either as competitors or spectators. The admission to Dingle Vale is 1/- each session and 2/- to the finals, which commence at 7.30 p.m.

Mr. Montgomery is looking after the publicity and you will be hearing from him through your secretary in the near future. Entry forms will be sent out next week to your club and once again I ask you to **POST YOUR ENTRY EARLY.**

Members who are interested in becoming subscribers to *Table Tennis*, the official magazine of the English Association, should contact Miss M. Linder, 4 Hilltop Road, Liverpool 16, who is the magazine secretary. There are eight issues and the cost is 7/6, which includes postage.

Some players are of the opinion that the centre line in doubles play has been abolished. It should be pointed out that this only applies to the Lancashire and Cheshire League and certain leagues who are trying this out as an experiment on behalf of the E.T.T.A. to find out players' views. It does not apply in the Liverpool League and will not operate during the Closed Championships.

Gone- Enthusiasm of Yore

"Unless the majority of registered players request action to the contrary the Management Committee propose to cease functioning at the end of December, 1956. The balance of matches may be played if clubs so desire. Written notification against this proposed action must be in the hands of the organising secretary by November 30th, 1956."

WE wonder what YOUR reaction to the above notice would be; how many of you would write in and how many would ignore it. We do not, of course, intend to wind up the affairs of the League—not yet anyway—but we do honestly believe that apathy is so rife that such a notice would not bring a majority response.

You may say that this is a ridiculous opening for notes regarding league matches played thus far—but is it? Let us move from realms of fantasy to facts, hard facts about you, your club and your fellow players.

Within the first few weeks of the season we have gone through the whole gamut of infringements of league rules and etiquette.

We have had teams short, players arriving at ten o'clock, ineligible players playing, cup teams not advising their opponents, some advising the wrong dates, and, of course, countless other offences which escape official notice.

The Management Committee are, of course, a bunch of pugnacious blood suckers, Civil Service examination failed. They seem nothing short of would-be income tax collectors and Government snoopers. They delight in catching offenders and gleefully administer and hand out disreputable decisions and fines on innocent offenders.

These misled folk are trying to follow rules laid down by the rank and file. But, of course, this leads us back to our opening—no one really wants rules and if we must have them there seems little or no reason to keep them. There is certainly no need for a bunch of halfwits to put their queer interpretations on these rules. The last summary of the Management Committee was "A body of people willing if not able to serve".

What does all this mean? To the older brigade, or the over 35's as they are sometimes called, it appears that enthusiasm for the game is dying out. Of course, older folk never give the youngsters credit. What do you think?

Let us look at the League and its playing strength. Included in the first Liverpool team this season were two players who play No. 3 for their clubs. "Old" Reg. Hetherington was one of this pair. When did Reg first play for Liverpool—1930-something. The result of the game shows how near his young challengers are.

★ ★ ★

MOVING on to league warfare it is apparent that playing standards have taken a further downward plunge. Just study, for instance, the second division, where teams such as Panto and I.C.I. are holding their own comfortably. Panto have much the same team that carried them up from the regions to Division 3, where they appeared to find their level.

I.C.I. have been an average Division 3 side for many years and yet here they are, both very comfortable in Division 2. Many more instances could be quoted to prove this point, but what is your opinion? Do you agree that standards generally are down?

One of the faults of competitive table tennis is that teams run too true to form. There are not sufficient surprises, consequently we can see fairly well at a very early stage just how things are going.

Almost lining up for medals right now is the new Dunlop team of Oakes, Killip, Mason, Williamson and Cashin. The fourth division is theirs, and so probably is the Rumjahn Cup. If the wanderlust does not strike again, these boys will be lining up for two more sets of medals again in 1958—the Third Division and, of course, the Rumjahn Cup again—the very thought of success often keeps teams together.

Anfield, the team which suddenly felt the draft when Oakes and Killip moved from north to south, are now "under new management". Gone is Reg Gray as secretary and in steps Bill Jones, full of enthus-

A Plan for Division 5

iasm to keep the flag flying. It looks to me as if it will be at half-mast at the end of the season as I forecast the relegation of their first team to Division 2, their A team to Division 3 and their C team from Division 6.

Only for the fact that Oakhill B and Wavertree C.C. A are equally as bad, or worse, the forecast would probably have included Anfield B in Division 5.

The "big two" big clubs, Balfour and Rafters, appear fairly solid. They will in all probability take Division 1 and the Readman Cup honours as usual.

The strength of these clubs rests with their old timers and, of course, the solidarity of their reserves. These successful clubs have excellent records of freedom from infringements, and both appoint match secretaries in addition to club secretaries, and idea which may well catch on.

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THE days of the single-team clubs appear to be numbered. The first and second divisions are becoming dominated with first and A teams. Tom Larkin of Linacre, will say "Nonsense". His is the ideal one-team club of six playing members which stick it year in year out on a ration of one night a week only for use of the clubroom.

More forecasts, this time Beauclair and Technical Students for the big drop to Division 5, and in all probability they will go right through in a season to Division 6. Such is the sad state of affairs which allows Division 5 to be stronger all round than Division 4, and with teams which would hold

their own in Divisions 2 and 3, condemned to play what are now considered friendly matches among themselves.

Warbreck Moor, third from bottom of Division 5 last season, are now comfortable in Division 4. Poor Waterloo Park A—three points worse only than Warbreck were relegated to Division 6. Little wonder they lost heart!

This is your fault—more apathy of course. Mr. Stamp asked clubs to air their views before the end of last season, to give a mandate for Management action. The response? About four clubs wrote in and the Committee did not feel empowered to act.

The women's divisions appear to be laid on for Bohemians in Division 1 and Linnets in Division 2. We must not be quite so certain in this sphere—lots of things can happen to unbalance women's teams.

There appears to be a fair amount of approval for the women's new style team formation of four aside. No adverse comments have been received regarding lack of space which has always been the main objection to a similar introduction within the main divisions.

The formation of an Alliance or different form of organisation for B and C teams, utilising the "four aside with doubles" plan, could be an answer to the Division 5 problem, and also a way of trying out the new formation with the men.

To wind up, may I say that these notes reflect only my own ideas and are not intended as official Management Committee views. If you have any form views, please write in and express them.

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BATH STREET'S BIG TEST

(By Frank Varty)

On Tuesday, October 23, I journeyed to the stately mansions of Bentley Road to see whether this Bath Street team, one of the best ever to come out of the Second Division, could hold its own amongst the "elite", without the signing on of a "star" or two, which has been the custom with promoted teams in recent years.

After some little delay in deciding the opening match (No. 3), Cyril Smith, was put in against the home captain, Jack McCaig No. 4)—Smith's entire game appeared to consist of looking one way and hitting the ball the other, with a wristy forehand that did not have McCaig in trouble at all and Jack had no bother in taking the first game 21-9.

In the second game McCaig defended solidly to Smith's well-placed forehand attack which was becoming more consistent. With the score at 10-6 in Smith's favour, McCaig quickened the game up and with a mixture of half-volley defence and forehand counter-hitting, passed Smith at 18 and took the game at 21-19.

Against Ron Rumjahn, "Spider" Aspinall could not weave his web, despite covering a terrific amount of floor space to churn out his consistent forehand drive. Ron's steady defence, with an occasional counter-hit, took him from 7-9 to 21-11. The second game produced some lively counter hitting. Aspinall's total lack of a back-hand found him out of position at the vital point in the rallies and only by sheer hard graft and enthusiasm struggled to 16-21, aided by some of Ron's big hits going off.

Ted Rumjahn v Arthur Taylor—could the new Liverpool champion hand out the same treatment to Ted as he had done the previous week to Pierce and Roy Jones, of Linnets. The first game was conducted very carefully, with Rumjahn getting the better of the exchanges, although Taylor scored with some good backhand flashes, the tight defence gave Rumjahn the game at 21-13.

Taylor relied on his attack to get him there in the second and it didn't let him down. Rumjahn troubled him with his heavy chop but he held on to take the game 21-18. Ted had to dig in with his heavy chopper against some good stroke play by Taylor, to go from 1-4 to 8-7, and from then was never behind. At 13-11, a critical stage, the game was interrupted by an inmate from the "Big house", Taylor went off the boil and Ted ran out 21-14.

Rafters now led 3-0 and David Ferguson made it 4-0 by beating old stager Joe Delamere 21-15, 16-21 21-12. Joe always endeavoured to play a good open attacking game from both wings, but David's defence was too good for him.

Alec Gould, the Bath Street No. 4, a penholder who plays with a thin sponge, had Peter Rumjahn going in the first game by the use of one of the sponge player's best attacking gambits—a fast angled service, the return of which is summarily despatched. Game to Gould at 21-8. Peter speeded up in the next two games and once his attack began to function, abandoned defence for judicious placing, which had Alec zooming them back for Peter to put away at his leisure. Oh where, where was the sponge man's half-volley (a much neglected stroke). Set to Rumjahn 8-21, 21-11, 21-16.

Half-time Rafters 5-0, and Taylor began against Ron Rumjahn by missing two kills and found himself 7-3 down. By well placed defensive shots Rumjahn maintained this lead to 20-16; some careful attacking play by Taylor took him to 20-20 and a well deserved game at 23-21. In the second Taylor made the most of his opportunities to go to 12-8 Ron's steady defence pulled him up to 12-12 and 18-17 and then going over to attack to take the game 21-17.

In the third Ron hung on to his initial 3-0 lead with Arthur overhitting and making mistakes in an effort to pull them back, when Ron

(Continued on page 9, column 2)

LEAGUE TABLES

(Including November 10th, 1956)

Division 1

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Rafters	5	5	0	0	44	6	10
Balfour	5	4	0	1	42	8	9
Linnets	5	4	0	1	36	14	9
Anfield	5	2	2	1	25	25	5
Bath Street	5	2	2	1	22	28	5
Victoria Park	5	2	3	0	23	27	4
Oakhill	5	1	2	2	22	28	4
Liverpool Y.M.	5	2	3	0	17	33	4
Bohemians	5	1	3	1	21	29	3
Litherland	5	0	2	3	18	32	3
Balfour A.	5	0	3	2	15	35	2
Bootle Y.M.	5	1	4	0	15	35	2

Division 5

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Rafters B.	5	5	0	0	44	6	10
L'pool Y.M. B.	4	4	0	0	29	11	8
Bohemians B.	4	3	1	0	30	10	6
Fairlawn	4	3	1	0	26	14	6
Bootle Y.M. B.	5	3	2	0	29	21	6
Balfour B.	5	2	2	1	25	25	5
Victoria Pk B.	5	1	3	1	22	28	3
Victoria Pk. C.	5	1	3	1	18	32	3
Anfield B.	4	1	2	1	15	25	3
Oakhill B.	4	0	4	0	8	32	0
Wavertree A.	5	0	5	0	4	46	0

Division 2

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
L'pool Y.M. A.	5	4	1	0	37	13	8
Rafters A.	5	4	1	0	37	13	8
Bohemians A.	5	3	1	1	29	21	7
Panto	5	2	0	3	28	22	7
Bootle Y.M. A.	5	3	2	0	28	22	6
Cadwa	5	2	1	2	27	23	6
I.C.I.	5	2	1	2	27	23	6
L.P.A.S.	5	1	2	2	17	33	4
Lucem	5	1	3	1	27	23	3
Oakhill A.	5	1	3	1	13	37	3
Victoria Pk. A.	5	1	4	0	19	31	2
Anfield A.	5	0	5	0	11	39	0

Division 6

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
G.L.S.C.	4	4	0	0	34	6	8
Harold House	5	4	1	0	34	16	8
Litherland B.	5	4	1	0	34	16	8
Rankin A.	4	4	0	0	26	14	8
Waterloo Pk. A.	5	3	2	0	29	21	6
Rafters C.	4	2	1	1	28	12	5
Cadwa B.	4	2	2	0	23	17	4
Bootle Y.M. C.	3	1	2	0	14	16	2
Balfour C.	5	1	4	0	11	39	2
Rankin	4	0	3	1	12	28	1
Domestis Mis.	4	0	4	0	9	31	0
Anfield C.	5	0	5	0	6	44	0

Division 3

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Linnets A.	5	5	0	0	42	8	10
Waterloo Dk.	5	4	0	1	41	9	9
Waterloo Pk.	5	4	1	0	31	19	8
Linacre	5	3	2	0	28	22	6
English Elec.	5	2	2	1	24	26	5
Maghull	5	2	2	1	24	26	5
Lofters	5	2	3	0	22	28	4
Litherland A.	4	2	2	0	17	23	4
African Oil	5	1	4	0	16	34	2
Cadwa A.	4	1	3	0	12	28	2
Everton Y.M.	4	0	3	1	16	24	1
Osterley	4	0	4	0	7	33	0

North Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bath St. B.	4	3	0	1	26	14	7
Co-op.	4	3	0	1	24	16	7
Bath St. C.	4	2	1	1	23	17	5
Lofters A.	4	2	1	1	23	17	5
Waterloo Pk. B.	3	2	1	0	19	11	4
Litherland C.	3	2	1	0	17	13	4
Brenka A.	4	1	2	1	22	18	3
Warbreck A.	4	1	3	0	19	21	2
Bootle Nalgo.	4	0	3	1	13	27	1
Orrell	4	0	4	0	4	36	0

Division 4

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Dunlop	5	5	0	0	45	5	10
University	5	5	0	0	35	15	10
Bath St. A.	5	4	0	1	35	15	9
Wavertree C.C.	5	4	1	0	38	12	8
R.A.F.A.	5	2	3	0	25	25	4
Aigburth	5	2	3	0	21	29	4
Warbreck	5	2	3	0	21	29	4
Brenka	5	2	3	0	19	31	4
L.P.A.S. A.	4	1	3	0	14	26	2
Panto A.	5	1	4	0	18	32	2
Beauclair	4	0	3	1	12	28	1
Tech. Studs.	5	0	5	0	7	43	0

South Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Sefton	4	4	0	0	34	6	8
Linnets B.	4	3	0	1	30	10	7
Florence Oxtton	5	2	0	3	28	22	7
Stanley House	5	2	1	2	28	22	6
Dunlop A.	4	2	2	0	21	19	4
Linnets C.	3	1	1	1	13	17	3
Aigburth A.	4	1	2	1	19	21	2
Bedford	3	1	2	0	11	19	2
Wavertree Lab.	4	0	3	1	9	31	1
St. Michaels	4	0	4	0	7	33	0

LEAGUE TABLES

Central Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
L'pool Y.M. C.	4	4	0	0	29	11	8
Lussac	4	4	0	0	27	13	8
Lucem A.	4	3	0	1	24	16	7
Tech. Stds. A.	5	2	2	1	27	23	5
R.A.F. (Movs)	4	2	2	0	22	18	4
WtloodDock A.	4	1	2	1	22	18	3
Panto B.	5	1	3	1	19	31	3
Ebani	4	1	3	0	20	20	2
Tech. Stds. B.	4	1	3	0	13	27	2
Aigburth B. . .	4	0	4	0	7	33	0

East Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians C. .	5	5	0	0	40	10	10
Huntley & P. .	5	4	1	0	39	11	8
Nalgo	5	4	1	0	33	17	8
West Derby . .	5	3	1	1	30	20	7
Cadwa C.	5	3	2	0	30	20	6
Bohemians D. .	5	2	2	1	30	20	5
Artistes	5	2	2	1	28	22	5
L.P.A.S. B. . . .	5	2	2	1	26	24	5
Beauclair A. . .	5	1	4	0	14	36	2
Stoneycroft . .	5	1	4	0	13	37	2
Eng. Elec. A. . .	5	1	4	0	11	39	2
Huntley & P. A.	5	0	5	0	6	44	0

Women's Division 1

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians . . .	5	5	0	0	40	10	10
Rafters	4	3	1	0	26	14	6
Balfour	3	2	1	0	15	15	4
Oakhill	4	1	1	2	19	21	4
Bath St.	4	1	2	1	19	21	3
Cadwa	6	1	4	1	19	41	3
Waterloo Pk. . .	3	1	2	0	14	16	2
Bibbys	4	0	2	2	15	25	2

Women's Division 2

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Linnets	5	5	0	0	42	8	10
Waterloo Dock	5	3	1	1	30	20	7
Cadwa A.	4	3	1	0	23	17	6
African Oil . . .	4	2	0	2	22	18	6
Rafters A.	5	3	2	0	25	25	6
Domestic Miss.	4	2	2	0	25	15	4
Linnets A.	4	1	1	2	21	19	4
Bohemians A. . .	5	2	3	0	20	30	4
Waterloo Pk. A.	5	1	3	1	19	31	3
Bibby's A.	4	1	3	0	22	18	2
Dunlop	5	0	4	1	12	38	1
Oakhill A.	4	0	3	1	9	31	1

HANDBOOK CHANGES

The following alterations should be noted in handbooks by secretaries and players:—

Huntley & Palmer 'A', page 26, have taken over the B team fixtures in the East Region, p. 46.

L.P.A.S., page 27. The private phone number of Mr. A. Heague should read HUY 4017.

Bohemians, page 23. Club telephone STO 3712.

Continued from page 6

got an edge at 18-15 and Arthur missed a sitter, Ron quietly played out time for 21-15.

Cyril Smith didn't really trouble Ted Rumjahn and to the accompaniment of Mrs. Ted's knitting needles, garnered a grand total of four points in the first game. He shot into a 4-0 lead in the second, at which Mrs. Ted stopped knitting to witness the phenomena. Ted took the hint and paddled home 21-15. Not one of Cyril's best nights.

Ferguson v Gould could be a consolation prize for the North end boys, but David would not be intimidated by Gould's big hits, his adequate defence causing Alec to net many times. Ferguson took the set 21-14, 21-18.

Peter Rumjahn v G. Aspinall—both players stood up to the table and treated the onlookers to a display of counter hitting. Peter's greater repertoire of strokes gave him the set at 22-20, 21-13, but this man "Spider" certainly puts his all into the game.

McCaig and Delamere had a good three-game tussle, with Joe unwinning a stream of back- and forehand shots and Jack using his favourite forehand counter-hit. An enjoyable set to watch and with Joe running out of steam, set to McCaig 16-21, 21-19, 21-11.

A fair result to a good match. Perhaps if Arthur Taylor borrowed Aspinall's running pumps he'd be twice the player, but then so would "Spider" if he had Arthur's backhand.

Find in Cellar Began It By J. D. Loughrey

It was in August, 1925, that a young man arrived in Liverpool from South Wales, who was, by dint of tremendous enthusiasm and organising ability, to bring about the birth of the Liverpool and District Table Tennis League. No stranger to work of this kind, he had left behind him in Barry, a thriving league which he had played a big part in starting, and it was not long before he began to search for similar opportunity in the city.

At the now defunct North Liverpool Y.M.C.A., where his father was secretary, a table tennis table was unearthed in the cellar. It was soon cleaned up and put to good use and before long the desire for matches became keen.

At that time billiard matches against Birkenhead Y.M. were regular events and so it was that table tennis matches were introduced into the evening's programme and for the first time friendlies were played.

By now other clubs were being discovered by this pioneer, and a certain Mr. Townsend, of Florence Institute, produced the minute book of the Merseyside Ping-Pong League, which had been in operation at some time in the misty past.

Then there was a side known as Hatton, which had been in existence for quite a while, and they too began to play the North Liverpool in friendly matches. When Chester Y.M. made approaches and promised no fewer than six teams, the time had come for organised competition to be planned.

★ ★ ★
AND so it was that in 1926 the Liverpool and District League came into being, with the organising genius of the young man from Barry, Les Forrest, as the great pioneering spirit mainly responsible, a man to whom the League will always owe a huge debt. Aided by W. Miller, of Hatton, they got things on to a working basis, and so it was that on November 19, 1926, the very first league match took place between North Liverpool Y.M. and Hatton, won by the latter by 211 points!

The method of play was very different in those days, for although it was five-a-side, every player met each of the five opponents in one

game of 21 up, and the points were totalled up rather on the lines of a snooker match.

After all the promises, the final constitution of the League was one division of eight teams, two being 'A' teams, and to end all the arguments about the original members of the League, here they are in order: Birkenhead Y.M., Florence Inst., Florence Inst. 'A', Hatton, North Liverpool Y.M., North Liverpool Y.M. 'A', Liscard Cong. and Thingwall.

And what of Chester and its six teams? They all dropped out at the last moment, and another side with a familiar name, Gordon Inst. also defaulted, losing their claim to be an original member.

IT was not long before it became obvious that Hatton were out on their own, and they eventually finished as champions, winning all their 14 games; followed by Birkenhead Y.M. and North Liverpool with 10 wins each.

It must be realised that styles and equipment were very different to now, and typical were the Hatton side, described as having "unique grips and playing with wooden bats". In one respect, however, they were similar to the successful players of to-day, for they were renowned for their perpetual practice, which went on at lunch hours, and despite the fact they were by no means a team of youngsters, they were too strong for the rest of the League. This was shown when they played The Rest at the end of the season they triumphed by 65 points, a feat which would be almost impossible these days.

At the end of the season came the first Closed Championship, held at the North Liverpool, but how very different from those of to-day.

There was just one event, the men's singles, with 31 entrants, and a photograph shows how different was the concept of the game's status as an energetic sport. It seemed common practice to keep one's coat on, tennis shoes were far from being universal, to wear collar and tie, and to round off the picture the wearing of spats seemed to be quite definitely the thing to do!

One might be tempted to make some remarks about the appalling pullovers worn by those without

coats, were it not for the thought that in this respect Liverpool has not perhaps shown any great advance!

The first champion proved to be J. R. Bather, of Hatton, who beat his clubmate H. Turner in the final. It is a long time since these two left the game, but a description of the title-holder of 1927 remains: "a steady player, who played a game much more closely allied to ping-pong than the modern game, one who kept the ball low, and whose great speciality was angled shots which won him countless points".

Bather belonged to the wooden bat brigade, and was attired in typical manner, spats and ordinary shoes, and except for really difficult matches, played with his coat on!

At this late period of the season came an unexpected development, for from a most surprising source came a request, which in the end resulted in Liverpool's first representative match being played. Carlisle were the league who wrote requesting a match, and on April 23, 1927, again at North Liverpool, following a trial match, the contest took place, with Liverpool triumphant by 100 points.

The system of scoring was even more bizarre than for league matches, eleven-a-side, each player to have one match—of 50 up!

THE eleven players who represented Liverpool on that historic occasion were W. Edwards, W. Smith and W. Miller (captain, Hatton), L. Forrest, T. Stone and H. Piper (N. Liverpool), E. Woodward, S. Bardgett and A. Davies (Birkenhead Y.M.), H. Kesler and A. Pickston (Florence Inst.), the champion Bather, being unavailable. Are any memories revived by these names among our older members?

In a year or two most of them had disappeared from the scene but to these and others goes the honour of lighting a flame which despite the curse of apathy and self-interest, burned even through the war years, and is to-day as strong as at any time in its 30 years of life.

Just one familiar name is spotted among the players, just outside the top flight but a leading player nevertheless—Sid Jackson. Though now out of the game, he is linked permanently with the league by being one of the very few life

members, and how interesting it is to discover that even in those far off days it was Sid who was responsible for the lighting at important events, a job which he carried out to perfection year after year until very recently.

So ended the first season, rounded off by a dance at which the champions received their trophy and the players their medals, noteworthy being that the donor of the trophy was that firm friend of the game locally, W. T. Lancashire, who thus early was already lending a helping hand.

And now the story must leave Liverpool for a moment to concentrate on Les Forrest, the pioneer. Such was the nature of the man that he needs must go out to the highways and by-ways to further the cause of the game. With a high degree of pleasure it is possible for me to place on record that one of the places in need of guidance was Manchester, for there no organisation had yet taken place.

That great-hearted enthusiast, H. M. Bunbury, wrote to Les telling of the signs of interest in his area, and appealing to him to come over to give a small band of would-be organisers the benefit of his advice and experience.

BUT this was just a single example. In the course of his work Les used to travel all over the country, and by keeping in touch with another great pioneer, Bill Pope, he was able to explore various localities with the aim of getting leagues started if at all possible.

This work went on continually, all over Lancashire and Cheshire and further afield, as far away as Sheerness and Hereford. In North Wales such was the gratefulness of the local leagues that they wanted to affiliate to Liverpool, and there was some trouble with the Welsh Association on the matter!

A small band was gathered together by Les to spread the gospel, and if it was not off to Hereford to give an exhibition, then it was away to some tiny open tournament to give it a much-needed boost.

All this work was going on either before the formation of the E.T.T.A. or while it was still finding its feet, but by 1929 many leagues were on their feet, almost entirely because of the help and burning enthusiasm of the young man from Barry.

Mr. Loughrey will continue the history of the League next month

GAME PUT BEFORE HONOURS

by J. D. PATTINSON

"The game's the thing" may a trite cliché but it might also have been chosen as the motto of the Oakhill club.

And how could it be otherwise, for to the man who virtually brought the club into existence, namely Les Forrest, nothing was more important than the game and its spirit.

It was in June, 1931, that Les Forrest, then playing in the old North Liverpool Y.M.C.A. in the rather young Liverpool League, which he had also founded, decided to spread the game in the Kensington area. He got together half-a-dozen others and between them they inaugurated the club.

One of that half dozen was Fred Farrell, the present vice-chairman of the League; another was Harry Nicholls, one-time League chairman and still associated with Oakhill as vice-president and life member.

They called the new club Fairfield and found a home for it at 17 Deane Road, just two doors away from its present abode. It was only natural that they should become members of the Liverpool League, a membership which was only broken by the war during which the club was in suspension and which was resumed as soon as hostilities ended.

And during its 25 years of life Oakhill has only been away from the Kensington area for a short time. In 1934 the mother of one of the members, Miss Florence Blanchfield, offered the club accommodation at a house in Oakhill Park, Broadgreen, with a request that the name be changed. So it became Oakhill but although they only stayed there a short time, returning to Deane Road in 1936, the new name stuck.

At Kensington the Club prospered and in 1939-40 had its most successful year, winning the League championship and reaching the final of the Readman Cup, only to be beaten by the star-studded Club-moor.

Twenty-five years is a long time but there are still at least two of the original Fairfield team playing in the league—Fred Farrell, now with Beauclair, and Frank Moore, still with his old love.

That one championship is the only major honour the club has ever won, although it has been touch and go several times in the cup competitions. For instance, their women's team twice reached the final of the Bartholomew Cup, only to be narrowly beaten on each occasion.

But honours have never worried Oakhill greatly—they have always been concerned more with the spirit of the game; good, keen sporting matches, hard fought and as happy in defeat as in victory.

Their membership of the League has been a notable one, both playing and administratively. They have contributed to representative teams by providing such players as Harry Nicholls, Alan Hutchinson, Cyril Deakin, Maurice Oakes, and Mrs. Edna Moore, and although it may not be generally known Reg Hetherington was for many post-war years a member.

In addition to the chairmanship of Harry Nicholls, Fred Farrell has been for years a hard worker in the smooth-running of the league, and Frank Moore for several years occupied that post which brings much hard work and many headaches—fixture secretary. Indeed, when in 1947 he appointed to the job, it was the second time he had held it, for he was match secretary in the comparatively quiet days of 1931.

It was he, too, together with his wife Edna, Rene and Ivy Crafer and Harold McKenzie and his wife, who got the club going again in 1945.

Oakhill's career has been in the main a placid one; their impact on the League has been of the good solid kind rather than the sensational, and one can offer no better wish than that the future should be a repetition of the past.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE NOTES

The Management Committee have dealt with the following matters at their recent meetings:

In a match between Domestic Mission and African Oil in the Women's Division, a misunderstanding arose regarding the order of service and players' attention is called to Rule 20. "The pair who have the right to serve the first five services in any game shall decide which partner shall do so, and the opposing pair shall then decide similarly which shall first be striker out."

The choice as to which partner can serve or receive can be made in each game, and the only time there can be any dictation is in the deciding game when THE PAIR WHO SERVED THE FIRST FIVE SERVICES have the right to alter their striking out (if they are receiving at the score of 10) or that of their opponents, if they happen to be serving at this point.

The following action was taken against clubs for breaches of the rules and it was deprecated that there should be short teams so early in the season.

Anfield 'B'—one short v Wavertree C.C. Warning.

Bohemians 'C'—one short v Merseyside Artistes. Warning.

Cadwa—one short v I.C.I. Warning.

Anfield 'B' v British Enka (cup)—Anfield 'B' did not notify the date of the match which was awarded to British Enka.

Oakhill v Bohemians. Oakhill

played an ineligible player. Warned and fined 7/6.

Lucem 'A' v Tech. Students. Lucem played an ineligible player. Warning.

The transfer of Reynard from Waterloo Park to Litherland was confirmed. It was reported that Reynard had played in the Rumjahn Cup for Waterloo Park on October 10 and in the same competition for Litherland on October 17. It was decided that Litherland should replay the cup match at Liverpool Y.M.C.A. without Reynard.

Lofters v Panto 'A'. Lofters did not appear; warned and the match awarded to Panto.

Litherland v Wavertree C.C. Wavertree did not appear; warned and match awarded to Litherland.

Wavertree C.C. v Liverpool Y.M. 'B'. Wavertree were one short and were fined 10/-.

In accordance with Rule 15 it was decided that the re-groupings would have to be in the Fixture Secretary's hands on November 19 and January 28, to take effect from November 26 and February 4 respectively.

The position of Match Secretary was rendered vacant by the resignation of Mr. W. Bent, due to business reasons, which the Committee accepted with regret. Mr. Bent was thanked for his work during the past season. Mr. J. D. Loughrey agreed to assume the duties of Match Secretary.

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WHAT I WOULD DO

By Kay Rumjahn

Having for quite a number of years "stood on the sidelines" voicing criticism of the actions of the Management—a very enviable position in which to find oneself, as it is the easiest thing in the world to be "agin the Government"—I now find myself in the less enviable position of being asked to say what I would do if I was on the Management Committee and consequently find myself, for this unique occasion, speechless! But this I do know, my husband would have to keep the home fires burning far more often than he does now, for I do not think, in all sincerity, the mass of Liverpool and District Table Tennis players realise just how much time is expended by the various committees, quite voluntarily, on their behalf.

DRESS

But I have one bee in my bonnet that I would pursue if I were on the Management and that is adherence to E.T.T.A. regulations on Dress. I have attended 2 inter-city men's matches this season and on neither occasion did I see any uniformity. I would insist that no player represented his or her city unless wearing a city shirt and badge; how difficult it must be for onlookers, unless they personally know the players in question—to decide which is their home team. I would also stress the rule that if a cardigan or pullover is worn whilst playing it must be the same shade or colour as the shirt. Although economy may be a way of spending money without getting any fun out of it, certainly our present Management is carrying economy to the extreme by not issuing our representative players with shirts and badges.

REVISION OF RE-GROUPING RULE

If I were on the Management I would ask for a review of Rule 22b—the rule that demands re-grouping if a player misses 2 consecutive League matches. I have tried again and again to see the purpose of this particular ruling but cannot.

I agree:—

a. that players should be grouped in order of playing merit;

b. that a player should not play for a lower team except under re-grouping;

c. that a club should be able to make application for acceptance of a revised grouping—subject to the Management's scrutiny—if a new member is registered with that club or if a player improves to such an extent that he deserves higher grouping in the eyes of his club's committee and the Management Committee.

But—I do not see why re-grouping is necessary for the third week or any subsequent week, provided the reserve is taken from a lower group and provided the player unable to play does not play for a team lower than that for which he is registered.

TROPHIES

One can't help but feel it is a great pity that trophies which have been presented to the League are no longer for annual competition. I would suggest that the "Foulis" and "Maxwell Fyfe" Challenge Cups be awarded to the most improved woman player and male player respectively. I do not think a competition as run previously is practicable: for one reason the calendar is already crammed, and it would be difficult to find vacant dates for the preliminary rounds; and for another I doubt if the Management Committee would be persuaded to go to the trouble they did before, handicapping, arranging venues, only to find 50% of the entrants turning up and so turning the evening into a farce. Instead I would propose each club nominating its most improved member, and with these nominations before them, the Committee, guided by statistics, could elect "the most improved player of the year".

And what of the "Stamp" Cup? I would suggest it was awarded to the player—man or woman—who represented his city the most successfully throughout the season. After all, it is the inter-city player who is the guardian of the reputation of the Liverpool and District Table Tennis League, and surely he deserves some honour for adding a little gilt to our Liver bird.

A DEPRESSING EVENING

This season's Selection Committee commenced their deliberations with a directive from the Management Committee, to pick the strongest available sides for the two first teams, freedom to experiment with the 'A' team, and having the handicap of being forced to reach their conclusions on last season's form because of necessity of meeting very early in the season.

Two of their tasks were to select the sides for the Rose Bowl and Wilmott matches, and while there was little to discuss with regard to our three strongest women, the men's team was another matter. As it turned out only one of three finally chosen was able to play, but it is unlikely that whatever the combination had been there would have been any different result to the crushing 6-0 defeat inflicted by Manchester.

It was frankly a very depressing evening, for Liverpool ended with not a single game to their credit much less a set, and the days when we can give Manchester decent resistance, much less have hopes of winning, seem farther away than ever.

It was a happier story in the Rose Bowl for the women won through at Burnley to gain a home tie with Barrow in the next round. Playing a Lancashire League match in the afternoon against the same opponents, the side, consisting of M. Jones, M. Willcox and B. Waterson, were defeated 4-6, which was not promising, but in the evening a quite magnificent struggle saw our girls win 5-3.

The first in the ointment from our point of view was a youngster, Miss Haney, who was too good for our side, but Beryl Waterson, in beating her just once in the Rose Bowl match, obtained the vital extra set that was missing in the afternoon, and this was enough—just!

It was disappointing that our first men's team could not have avoided the Third Division, though on last season's form, of course, when we ran an experimental side, we had no real claim for consideration.

As it is there seems to be no other possibility than that the side will win the section very comfortably, having extremely few matches in which they will be seriously extended.

Indeed the main interest among the men will most probably be to see just how well the 'A' team can do, for there must be good grounds for hoping that they may occupy second place at the end of the season, not withstanding that experiments are likely to be made.

The opening match for the men was Liverpool v Liverpool 'A' which the seniors won 10-0. Represented by P. Rumjahn, R. Hetherington and A. Taylor they were much too good for the 'A', but one bright spot was the play of Les Mulholland, who, notwithstanding his lack of match practice, put up a pretty good show and was very unlucky in losing all his sets as the following will show—v P. U. Rumjahn 19/21 in the third; v R. Hetherington 19/21 in the third; and v A. Taylor 18/21 also in the third.

Proceeding to Chester, with Ted Rumjahn and Bill Pierce replacing Peter Rumjahn and R. Hetherington, the match was won without the loss of a game, and as the 'A' team did their set average some good by beating Widnes 10-0 a week later, when represented by L. Mulholland, F. Thomas and I. Rogerson, there can be little doubt that Liverpool first are going to win the division, with a sets average that may well be record-breaking, so far as the Lancashire League is concerned.

Forthcoming matches:

November 30: Ladies v Bury, at Balfour.

December 1—Ladies v Barrow (Rose Bowl)

December 8: First v Southport 'A' Away.

December 11: Ladies v Manchester, Away.

December 12: v Barrow, Home—provisional.

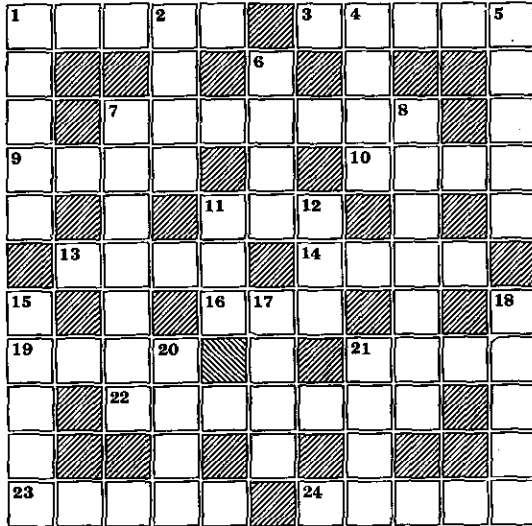
December 14: 'A' v Warrington, Home, at African Oil.

THE DIGEST CROSSWORD

As an additional interest to our readers the Digest is this season to include a monthly crossword puzzle. For this month's puzzle, given below, the Management Committee will give a prize of six Villa XXX table tennis balls to each of the senders of the first two all-correct solutions opened. The decision of the Editors in that matter, must, of course, be final.

We also offer a prize of a dozen Villa XXX balls to any reader who submits a crossword puzzle which is used in the Digest. The answers to the clues must, of course, accompany the puzzle.

Entries for this month's puzzle and any new puzzle must be sent to Mr. W. Stamp, 3 Farndale Close, Liverpool 18.



Compiled by A. Montgomery

Name

Address

ACROSS

- 1-3—Signed by both Captains (5-5)
- 7—Four take part, one at a time
- 9—Not us (4). (7)
- 10—Assists (4)
- 11—Play it again (3)
- 13—He is idolised (4)
- 14—Not small (4)
- 16—Starting point of another game (3)
- 19—Lovely in the South of France
- 21—Mammal (4) (4)
- 22—They usually play for their Country (7)
- 23—If you're not fit, T.T. may give you this (5)
- 24—It is everyone's this to beat the Champ (5).

DOWN

- 1—One of the Regions (5)
- 2—Let's hope there's plenty of this behind the table (4).
- 4—In front of an old House (4)
- 5—Forehand Drive (a winner) (5)
- 6—Competent (4)
- 7—Just the opposite (7)
- 8—Two participate here! (7)
- 11—Found in an auction sale (3)
- 12—Le ou La en Anglais (3)
- 15—Sometimes performed on a T.T. Table (5).
- 17—Twenty all (4)
- 18—Flower (5)
- 20—County Umpires have passed one (4)
- 21—Top of the Bill (4)