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**TABLE
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DIGEST**

Official Magazine

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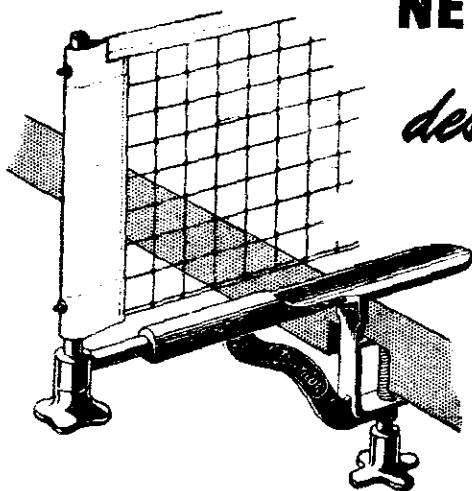
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Joint Editors: J. D. Pattison and J. D. Loughrey
D. M. Foulis W. Stamp A. Montgomery

COMMENT

IT is always interesting in any sport to step back and, instead of concerning oneself with events imminent or just concluded, survey the entire picture and estimate how general trends are moving.

Our own League offers such an opportunity, and recently we have given the question some thought.

The standard of play is a burning topic with many, and readers have been given in previous issues the views of several leading exponents. Consensus of opinion points to a general raising of playing standards, with a lack of really top class players, especially among the men.

We would also suggest that while there is still a tremendous amount to be done, players are gradually realising that table-tennis is a sport ranking with any other, and proper and distinctive club attire is adding considerably to the game's reputation.

Another recent tendency, however, is not quite so satisfactory. Pre-war a marked feature was the rapid rise to supremacy, and equally rapid disappearance of four or five clubs. A closer examination showed that to a large extent the same players were with each of the successful clubs and that a virtual circus, consisting of the best players in the district, were winning the honours year after year.

Post-war a new sequence of events has been occurring, namely the rise of the "A" teams. It appears likely that Balfour will have three teams in the First Division next season, and Rafters two, while Homecroft have also a good chance of having two. It is therefore quite possible that seven places in the division will be occupied by three clubs, by no means a satisfactory state of affairs.

This appears to be the era of clubs with large membership attracting not just two or three class players, but ten or more who are well above average.

We leave it to our readers to decide if this is a good thing or not, but believe that if it continues the smaller clubs will find it increasingly difficult to make any progress as their better players will inevitably be attracted to the larger organisations.

We realise that this is a highly controversial matter, and therefore invite views on the subject which might be of value to the Management Committee if ever the present trend needs attention.

7-18 Down, but Bluey Won

By J. D. Loughrey.

DESPITE Eileen Mansell suffering from a painful affliction of the elbow, Liverpool women were able to beat Sheffield 5-3 in the zone final of the Rose Bowl at Sheffield.

With Eileen something of a doubtful quantity there was some anxiety in the Liverpool party, particularly as Sheffield were twice in the lead, but when in the vital set the Balfour girl beat Nora Senior, an experienced campaigner, the match went all one way.

Bluey May had a most amazing game against J. Davidson. Playing in excellent style, she nevertheless just could not collect the points, and was behind 0-9, 1-14 and 7-18. Then, while not changing her game in any marked degree, she won point after point and levelled at 19-all, going on to win 22-20.

Bluey was also concerned in another great recovery when, with Eileen in a doubles set against J. Davidson and J. Ling, they gained seven points on the run when down 13-20 in the third. In this case, however, although we held two match points, the Sheffield pair managed to win 24-22.

IMPORTANT FACTOR

A great deal of credit for Liverpool's victory must go to Andree Jones, who was in particularly fine form. Her two sets were played when Sheffield

were in the lead, but on each occasion such was her superiority that in the four games she dropped only 47 points.

I felt that the complete domination she showed against Sheffield's No. 1, Nora Senior, went a long way towards undermining the Yorkshire side's confidence, and had an important influence on the final result.

Of the three doubles sets we managed to win only one, which was rather disappointing, and as these sets are so important in Rose Bowl matches—three out of the nine—it might be a good idea if our girls could get some practice together, certainly none of them looked anything like so good in partnership as when playing singles.

K. May, although losing one of her singles, to J. Ling, played very well, her defensive game being extremely good; while Eileen, with her right arm covered in elastic bandages, did wonderfully well under severe difficulties.

This is a good side, who are playing well together, and there must be at least reasonable hopes of them getting to the semi-final stage.

The crux of the matter, however, is 'the elbow,' and we must hope that before the next encounter Eileen is restored to full strength, for without doubt there will be no place for only partially-fit players in the next round.

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Oil Mills Seeing Red Light

WITH the half-way stage already reached and the league positions of most of the teams more or less stabilised, individual performances are assuming more importance.

The elite of the division are Balfour, Homecroft, Balfour "A" and Rafter's "A," and anything can happen when two of them are in opposition, a remark which also applies when the less fortunate teams fight it out for the reward of avoiding descent into the Second Division next season.

African Oil Mills have slipped up several times lately and to a great extent this has been due to the indifferent display of the team's tail-enders, and the relegation bogey can be seen on the far horizon, a view which must be shared by 15th Crosby, Acacia and Bibby's.

Birkenhead Y.M.C.A. have not come up to the higher standard I had hoped for earlier in the season and seem all but "booked" for a lower sphere next October.

USEFUL REVIVAL

On the other hand Acacia have staged a useful revival, even to the extent of bringing away a point from Rafter's "A," although it was, I believe, by claiming a couple of sets due to the late arrival of one of the Rafter's players.

My earlier prophecy of Balfour "A's" probable future success has been well justified, and they, with Homecroft and Rafter's "A," seem destined to share in a tremendous struggle for the position of runners-up. They gained a useful point when holding the visiting Homecroft to a draw.

AMENDMENTS

Will club secretaries and players make the following alterations in their hand-books :—

Port Sunlight Old Boys (Div. 4).—The new club playing quarters is Greendale Road, Port Sunlight, next door to Port Sunlight Railway Station.

St. Joseph's C.Y.M.S. (Divs. 3 and 5). The new secretary is Mr. R. J. Harte, 14 Tabor Street, Wallasey. Phone (business) Central 7411 (ex. 24).

Continued on page 8

The match, it seems, could have ended in a win for either side for Ken Gaulton only went down at 19 in the third to Roy Jones and only reversed that decision over J. Rimmer by the similarly narrowest of margins.

"Old hands," many from pre-war years, still have the edge on most of the younger players, good though a few of them have become. But it seems to me that with the present National Service so affecting eighteen year olds, coaching and objective encouragement to young men rather than to boys would pay better dividends.

The Roy Jones, Bill Pierces and Bernie Hands don't appear often enough, but there are many players in the early 'twenties with more than passable playing (and thinking) capabilities who could be helped to enhance the name of our league whose standard seems to be set by our division.

Before signing off may I ask all secretaries and captains to assist me by sending any "gen" to me. I don't get around as much these days, to my regret, and I would appreciate more co-operation in this way.

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Not Stylists Perhaps, But Effective

WITH Christmas and New Year celebrations over we can now get back to serious table tennis again. The New Year has opened with the fourth round of the Readman Cup to be followed by League matches. My hope is that the keen friendly rivalry that marked the first half of the season will continue to the end.

Our only 100 per cent. individual record has gone. No sooner was last month's report in print than Bill Jones, of Balfour "B," was defeated twice in the same evening. The record breakers were D. G. Jones and W. Baldwin (I.C.I.'s Nos. 3 and 5). I.C.I. gave the division leaders a good run that night, for though beaten by seven sets to three they lost three sets in the third game by the narrowest of margins.

J. W. Davies (I.C.I.'s No. 1, and incidentally the only orthodox player in the side) went down to George Williams, his opposite number, 21—14, 20—22, 20—22; C. C. Holtum (No. 4) lost to Gull, the home captain, 21—17, 17—21, 19—21; while in the closest of struggles H. W. Fairhurst lost to Sayer 21—17, 21—23, 24—26. It is in such games as these that makes a bottle of aspirins so indispensable an item in the table tennis player's kit.

ENJOY GAMES

I.C.I. are a difficult team to beat in all but two matches they have fielded the same side, and although none of them has an outstanding record they nearly always manage to pick up at least one set each match. Their style would perhaps shock the purists, but it is reasonably effective as their position in the table shows and they certainly enjoy their games.

I should think that Derek Jones, their No. 3, is one of the few remaining players who still uses a wooden bat—and manages to win the majority of his games.

I.C.I. are a happy and contented team who play their matches in a friendly spirit and win or lose it is a pleasure to play them.

Now for some Readman Cup news!

Oakhill "A," at home, did splendidly in beating African Oil Mills by seven sets to three. Bob Hudson was in good form and won both his sets against Frank Varty and John Coveney.

Oakhill's first team also put paid to any Livex hopes with a convincing 9—1 victory. Playing without S. Jones, however, our hopes had not been high.

Hoylake Y.M.C.A. crossed the water to beat Balfour "C" by six sets to four. They "blooded" little Ian Mackie in the match and he won both his sets. Aged 15, he shows good promise.

St. Michael's are having little luck this season. They went down 6—4 on their own table to Birkenhead Y.M.C.A.—the Wirralians' first victory of the season—but probably the greatest surprise of all was the defeat of Anfield "A" by the Fifth Division (Wirral) side, R.A.F. The Airmen were something of giant killers last season. Are they going to repeat it?



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St. Joseph's Lose Two Stars

SLOWLY the gap widens as we go into the final stretch. Pacemakers Cheshire Lines still hold a short-head lead over Wavertree Community, who are coming up strong. Kingsway are still in, but the remainder are fast becoming also rans in the promotion stakes.

At the other end Oakhill, trying hard, secured a valuable point against Balfour, and with this continued improvement in form it appears that Dunlops and the disappointing Westfield side, are likely to stay put at the bottom.

St. Joseph's have had a double misfortune with the turn of the year. Two of their stars, Secretary Freeman and T. McCourt, have left Merseyside, the former to take up a business appointment down south and the latter to train as a Rhodesian policeman.

STRONG RESERVES

The Saints nursed a secret promotion hope; now they are not so sure but, fortunately for them, they have strong reserves in their Division 5 team capable of giving able assistance to the remaining three, H. Clements, L. Ferguson and K. Gooding.

A feature of this team is its attacking prowess. They all like hitting hard, and their table suits this type of game. Their schoolroom headquarters are across the schoolyard, in case you cannot readily locate it; the umpire officiates from the teacher's desk, but it is the home team who usually do the caning.

The lighting could be better if the inside of the shades were white instead of dark yellow, but this applies to many clubs not only the Saints.

Wavertree Community, fighting hard to overtake Cheshire Lines, are now my fancy for promotion. In the last issue I reserved judgment on them, but having seen them since I think this will be their year.

They have a solid side skippered by Reg. Fowler, who has been a Wavertree regular for many years and whose eye appears just as keen as ever to spot those half chances which he slams so effectively.

Their No. 1 is R. Hulse a newcomer who came after their only defeat. He represented Crewe formerly but is now studying at the University here. Supporting him as No. 2 is H. Roberts, who says he had not played other than on a dining-room table before this season. After seeing him your club will probably be scouting around dining-rooms for talent.

A. Siddall is another old-timer at the Centre. Over 40 years of age he is the mechanical man of table tennis and plays his limited range of shots with such precision and for so indefinite a time, that many a strong and young man has wilted and succumbed.

The team is rounded off by S. Shur, another who stands well up, playing a hard close game—altogether a useful combination and although I can almost hear the howls of protest from C.L.C., Wavertree are, I believe, the strongest side in the division.

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Osterley may be Bright Horse

THE season has now reached the half-way stage, and Christmas and New Year seem such a long time ago, so let battle recommence with renewed energy.

At this stage it appears that the division has taken on certain defined sections, with Thorndale, Liverpool Y.M.C.A., and Waterloo Dock having a private battle for the leadership, and the luckless Wallasey Juniors "A" doomed for relegation after only one season out of the West Region.

Of the others the records of four teams call for particular mention, two of whom have slowly risen in the League table and two who have been slipping down the ladder.

First there is Osterley, who, like the sun, have risen from the East Region and may be the bright horse of the division. Although, perhaps, a contributory factor is that they have played seven matches at home against only four away, it was no mean achievement to have such a close fight, resulting in a draw, at home with Waterloo Dock.

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I look forward to seeing them finish in the top half of the table at the season's end, especially if their team remains so consistent as to have only entailed a change on two occasions so far.

STUBBORN FIGHTERS

Bohemians "A" are another steady team who have only used seven players, but they are all fighters to the end, with the largest number of close matches entailing sets of three games, in the division.

A majority of away matches during the first half of the season has no doubt contributed to their slipping three places down the ladder since October, but I am sure that they will regain their position and finish, like Osterley, in the top half of the table.

Whether my November notes helped Aigburth or not I do not know, but I am pleased to notice that after a number of team changes at the start of the season they appear to have now settled down. Their position has improved latterly, and close matches have resulted with surprisingly two 7-3 defeats as the closest. But this appears to be a favourite score of theirs, win or lose.

The entrance of the Civil servants from Holly Mount was very auspicious, with a 10-0 defeat of the Juniors, but December arrived before the next point was obtained—a surprising draw on Bohemian's table after a hard fought match.

The team has been of fairly regular composition, and although it will be a struggle to counteract their number of defeats in the second half of the season, I look forward with interest to see if Mr. Miles' nice work regains the power it had when he assisted the old Ministry of Supply team.

AMENDMENTS—Contd. from page 5

P.A.N.T.O. (South Region 2).—The secretary's new address is Mr. T. R. Skinner, 2 Waterway Avenue, Liverpool 10.

Catholic Metropolitan (North Region) have made temporary arrangements to play their matches at 8/9 Gt. George Square, Liverpool 1. Buses 3, 20, 21.

Rafters "B" (Div. 4).—New match night FRIDAY.

Digest Souvenir Edition

ENGLAND
v.
WALES
INTERNATIONAL MATCH



K. STANLEY
(Lancashire).



DIANE and ROSALIND ROWE
(World Doubles Champions).

PHILHARMONIC HALL
LIVERPOOL

SATURDAY - JANUARY 19th - 1952

English Personalities



JOHNNY LEACH (Essex). Present Singles Champion of the World which he first won in 1949 and whom we hope will complete the hat-trick in Bombay next month. Holds numerous titles and in the International against France at Bristol December 4th, 1951, beat M. Haguenuer, G. Amouretti and M. Lanskoj. Has a well co-ordinated game and switches from defence to attack with ease and control.



BRIAN KENNEDY (Yorkshire). Runner-up to A. Erlich in the English Open at Wembley last season. Beat Haguenuer and Lanskoj in the French match in December. His most recent successes being the Singles title at Pontefract, and the Doubles title at the Welsh Open partnered by Aubrey Simons. A left handed attacking player.

KEN STANLEY (Lancashire). Present holder of the Irish Open title and has won many Open titles since he was Junior Champion of England two years in succession just before the War, and partnered by Benny Casofsky has won many doubles titles. He leaves for New Zealand very shortly to take up a Coaching appointment.



BRYAN MERRETT (Gloucestershire). Give this young man a warm welcome as he is playing in his first International match. He is the holder of the Junior singles titles in the recent Birmingham and Welsh Open Tournaments. In the Men's Singles at the "Welsh" he beat the Frenchman Lanskoj, before losing narrowly to his Gloucester team-mate, Aubrey Simons. He should have a great future in the game.

THE ROWE TWINS (Diane and Rosalind). Present Women's Doubles Champions of the World and we hope they repeat their success next month. The titles they hold are too numerous to mention, their most recent successes being in the French Open in Paris last week. They recently gave an exhibition before the Swedish Royal Family at the Royal Palace, Stockholm. Paying their first visit to Liverpool where they are assured of a warm welcome.

GEOFF. HARROWER. Non-playing Captain. International player, and now a hard working administrator. Secretary of the National County Championships and the English Selection Committee.

. . . and Our Visitors



WALTER SWEETLAND (Cardiff) has been the Welsh No. 1 for many years. A player of great experience, he has beaten both Brian Kennedy and Michel Haguenuer, the French No. 2, this season.

GERALD CHUGG (Glamorgan) is a Welsh Swaythling Cup player and has represented Glamorgan for the past two seasons in the national championships. He is an all-round player although his strong forte is his defence.

JOHN DAVIES (Cardiff) is an all-round player with a fast attack and a hard smash who uses both sides of the table cleverly. He never knows when he is beaten and always fights hard.



MICHAEL JONES (Penarth) is one of Wales' younger school who is promising to do big things for his country. He attacks hard on both wings and has the best tournament record in Wales this season.

AUDREY BATES (Cardiff) is Welsh women's champion and has an excellent international record. She is the present holder of the Merseyside Open Singles title, which she won in this hall last season.

BETTY GRAY (Swansea) was runner-up to Audrey Bates in last season's Merseyside Open. She has twice held the Welsh Championship.

H. ROY EVANS, non-playing captain, was formerly secretary of the Welsh Association and is now Hon. General Secretary of the International Table Tennis Association.

AND TO THEM WE SAY

"Croesaw i Lerpwl in cyfeillion Gymru."

Cadwa A Good Second

AFTER Linnet I consider Cadwa our most outstanding team. In previous issues I have had cause to mention some of their performances which I have not the space to repeat.

In Morris and Crafter they have the players with the leading match records, having only lost three sets between them to date. To Tommy Larkin, my old friend of Linacre, goes the honour of winning two of these—well done Tom! As both of these players have played at Nos. 1 and 2 continuously their performances are worthy of mention.

Ivy Crafter leads our women's section. Hedley and Brackley may feel out of it in this company, but it takes five to make a team and they both give as good as they receive.

It seems a pity that Elm Hall Drive, with their excellent table, have club facilities for only one evening a week. It is as well for some of our more fortunate cousins that they know how some of the others plod on in the name of table tennis.

STRONG TRIO

Linacre are another team who play under such a handicap. On their own fast table Moon, Ellison and Harris form a strong attacking trio. Moon and Harris were mainly responsible for making English Electric struggle for a point, winning two sets each.

Amos tried manfully for set number six but failed and Jones, whom we have previously met at the old D.C.B., now Taxes, met a brilliant Froud and also failed.

The Cadwa-English Electric clash, which may have cleared the air for our No. 2 position, left things as you were with a 5-5 draw.

Taxes did well at Linnet to keep the score to 6-4. If Green had not broken Guy's unbeaten record this would have caused a sensation. Another good performance was Bootle Y.M.'s draw with Linacre, Stewart's two sets saving the day. It is only fair to warn Linnet that at least three teams are after their unbeaten scalp.

Harold House with three good wins in December continue to improve.

I am not in favour of personal records—I think the team is the thing—but to honour my only correspondent of the season and as all the leading players in the division also occupy the leading positions in their teams I give you the following:—

J. Morris (Cadwa) 94%, W. R. Crafter (Cadwa) 89%, J. R. Green (Linnet) 85%. L. Guy (Taxes) has a record of 92% but was not with us at the beginning of the season and will be leaving us soon I believe, so I do not rank him.

Oscar of the month must go to Aigburth Methodists, who defeated Elm Hall Drive 7-3, gaining their first win of the season and against their deadly rivals. The Wilkinson brothers and Cashin each won two sets and Alan Topping the seventh. What price last month's notes!!

Comments on the Hyde Cup must be saved for the next issue as we are in the throes of the third round as I write. I expect at least four of our teams in round four.

AFTER THE GAME . . .

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Well Done Thorndale!

THERE is nothing "cut and dried" about this division and I predict some shocks in store for the "big three" of the first half of the season. I refer to R.A.F.A., R.A.F., West Kirby and Birkenhead Y.M.C.A. Jnrs.

Congratulations to Thorndale "A" for a 6-4 win over R.A.F.A., their first defeat and shock number one. Well done Derek Lind and S. Caley for taking four sets in such a decisive manner. Other winners were J. Cherry and Phyl O'Connell one each. Two of the shock teams will undoubtedly be Hoylake Y.M.C.A. and Thorndale "A." Down at the bottom of the table I am happy to say that St. Joseph's "A" picked up their first point of the season when they drew with Thingwall.

Looking through my individual records I find the following are the best performances among those who have played in all ten matches :-

Morris, E. (R.A.F.A.) 18 sets, Rivett, A. (B'head Y.M.C.A.) 17 sets, Brown, J. (Cosco) 16 sets, Lind, D. (Thorndale "A") 15 sets.

I cannot mention performances without referring to Sgt. White of R.A.F., West Kirby, who was absent from only one match this season through posting. Out of 18 sets played Sgt. White has won 15.

An item of great interest is the proposal that Wirral Fifth and Liverpool Fifth have an inter-divisional competition on a home and away basis for men's and women's teams. I am now able to say that this competition is definitely "on" and during the next month or so trials will be held to determine who shall form the men's team.

No such preliminaries will be necessary in the case of the women's team as there are only five regularly playing in the division. Perhaps someone will tell me if this is below average or not. The ladies in question are Mrs. O'Connell of Thorndale "A," Mrs. Baird and Mrs. Sharpe of Burrowdale, and Miss Heaps and Miss Barton of Thingwall.

In the event of any of these ladies not being available for any reason perhaps it will be legitimate to call on clubs' reserves who, as such, are not regularly playing in any particular division?

Three players in the division are still in the Maxwell Fyffe Cup Competition. They are Norman Cheshire of the Co-op who created one of the surprises by beating Ken Harold of Balfour, a plus three man. Johnny Brown and myself from Cosco are also interested.

The draw for the 3rd round finds Norman Cheshire (9) away to T. Larkin (10) of Linacre, J. Brown (11) away to A. Lawson (1) of Anfield and your contributor (10) away to A. C. Taylor (14) of Litherland.

Harry Holland tells me that this season's West Region Tournament will be held on Friday and Saturday, March 14th and 15th. This will be a great improvement on last year when a full week separated the two dates.

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Close Games in Handicaps

DURING the past two or three months steady progress has been made with the handicap singles tournaments, and it is now possible to form some sort of opinion as to the accuracy of the Handicapping Committee.

The vast majority of the games have been decided at scores ranging from 31—29 to 31—26, while only a handful have ended with the loser under 20 points. The general average works out about 31—26.

Players with a lower handicap have been successful against players with a larger points allowance in the proportion of 2 to 1, in both the men's and women's events.

There have of course, been many surprises and some of the more interesting ones are as follows:—

Men:—D. Hobbs (Birkenhead Y.M.) lost to G. Exell (Wallasey Y.M. Jrs., 6); R. Boyle (Oakhill, 3) lost to J. Silver (Harold House, 13); C. Smith (Bibbys, 4) lost to L. Calder (English Electric, 11); G. Williams (Balfour, 5) lost to B. Dixon (I.C.I., 11); W. Harris (Balfour) lost to W. Dignan (Cheshire Lines, 7); C. Bell (African Oil, 5) lost to T. Larkin (Linacre, 10); K. Harold (Balfour, 3) lost to N. Cheshire (Birk. Co-op., 9); G. Exell (Wallasey Y.M. Jrs.) lost to A. C. Taylor (Litherland, 14).

Women:—A. Allen (Balfour, 8) lost to L. Rimmer (Bibbys, 10); M. Alcock (Bohemians, 7) lost to M. C. Hadden (Aigburth, 7); M. Rubert (Oakhill, 7) lost to L. Robinson (Balfour, 6).

Survivors to date in the men's event include:—L. Davies (Balfour), J. Covey (African Oil), L. Ross (Oakhill), R. Jones (Homecroft), D. Driscoll (Bootle Y.M.), J. Brown (Cosco) and N. Cheshire (Birkenhead Co-op.)

Noteworthy among the last 32 is A. C. Taylor of Litherland, who with his handicap of 14, must have a great chance of reaching the final stages.

Of the women, M. C. Hadden (Aigburth), L. Robinson (Balfour), W. Finnetty (Bootle C.D.), D. Dan-caster (Oakhill) and M. Bannister (Bibbys) are through to the last 16.

It is evident that while the lower handicapped players are achieving the majority of victories, the "rabbits" are by no means out of it, and there is every chance that when finals are reached there will be one or more of the 10-plus

Continued at the foot of next column

Lind's Great Promise

By J. H. C. Hughes.

WHEN the editors asked me to cover a match a month for the "Digest" they said they did not want an account of each individual game but a general impression.

After seeing Thorndale "A" beat Bath Street 7—3 in the third round of the Hyde Cup, I have one very definite impression—that in J. Lind, Thorndale have one of the most promising young players in the league.

I understand they are grooming him to take the place of J. Morgan, who is returning to London, in the first team. On the display he gave in this match he is ready to step up. His fluent attack on both wings, plus his defensive play when required, was excellent. It took him the first game to weigh up his penholder opponent, J. Gould, but having done so he sailed home.

Against S. Hurst, whose chop defence and flick attack had proved too much for J. Cherry, Lind's attack was devastating.

NEVER GAVE UP

S. Caley, who won both his games, seemed at one time as if he was going to be beaten by Gould, but he never gave up and managed to get to 21 first in the third game. Caley certainly enjoys his game and lets nothing worry him.

E. Goodham has a fine forehand and by taking his time more than he did when beaten by T. Moss, managed to give Cherry his second defeat. Mrs. McConnell, better known to pre-war players as Phyllis Moss, mixed her game well to beat both N. Cooke and J. Seed.

The latter, however, won the last game of the night to get Bath Street's third win and although the match was won both players fought for every point and produced many good shots.

Bath Street, though deservedly beaten could claim that what luck was going did not come their way, but both teams deserve credit for a good sporting game and for providing a standard of play that would not be disgraced in a higher division.

players still in, to add spice to the concluding matches.

It should be pointed out that when a game reaches 30-all the usual two points rule applies.

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Surprises were the Order

FIRST surprise of the month was the 6-4 defeat of Bootle C.D. on their own table, by Homecroft who, until then, had only two wins to their credit this season. N. Murphy won both her sets for Homecroft and the others did their share by winning one set each.

Here are the details, with Bootle names first:—L. Jenkins v. P. Lees, 17-21, 19-21; v. M. Woods 18-21, 20-22. B. Waterson v. P. Lees 21-8, 17-21, 21-15; v. E. Banks 21-13, 21-17. L. Upton v. M. Woods 21-11, 21-16; v. J. Keen 21-9, 18-21, 16-21. M. Griffiths v. E. Banks 14-21, 16-21; v. N. Murphy 18-21, 24-26. J. Lloyd v. J. Keen 15-21, 21-13, 21-17; v. N. Murphy 15-21, 18-21.

It is strange to see a Homecroft team without Hilda Jacobs, now married, who, until this season, was a regular and useful member since the war years.

CONSOLATION

Bootle were by no means downhearted and were probably consoled when they visited Rafters and forced the champions to a draw. It must have been a sad blow to Rafters when Bootle's star player B. Waterson added Olwen Southall to her already long list of triumphs this season.

The draw also deprived Rafters of their one point lead over Balfour, who, by winning all their December matches 10-0, take first place with a better sets average.

I still think the championship is an open guess as Bibby's, whom I consider is the most "up and coming team" in the division, are quite capable of springing a surprise. They are only three points behind the leaders and have an excellent sets average.

Cheshire Lines have so far managed to keep just above the danger line but will have to look to their laurels as no doubt the New Year will have made Wavertree C.C. more determined to secure that elusive first win of the season. They have three draws to their credit and judging from score cards have only failed to secure victory by a narrow margin.

My forecast earlier in the season that Beauclair were quite capable of upsetting promotion plans was justified when they received the Linnets, and were presented with a Christmas gift of two points. Stein Farrell and Daisy Mezey must have been well and truly inspired by the festive season as they each won both their sets.

The scores are worthy of records. Here they are with Beauclair names first: S. Farrell v. E. Palmer 13-21, 21-18, 21-15; v. D. Alcock 21-12, 17-21, 21-19. A. Williams v. E. Palmer 8-21, 20-22; v. P. Alcock 21-18, 23-21. D. Mezey v. D. Alcock 21-10, 21-18; v. A. Richards 21-17, 21-12. M. Tibbells v. P. Alcock 14-21, 21-23; v. J. Tippetts 21-18, 12-21, 21-14. D. Bryant v. A. Richards 10-21, 19-21 v. J. Tippetts 13-21, 9-21.

Linnets now drop to second place, with Bohemians having a clear lead of two points and Beauclair, still a danger, only two points behind.

Following close behind Beauclair are Leyfield, who have only lost two matches and command respect, particularly on their own table. They are all experienced match players and without a doubt an eye on promotion to the First division.

There should certainly be some interesting and crucial matches in both divisions during the second half of the season, with a sprinkling of surprises in the Bartholomew Cup.

TONIC WIN

Domestic Mission scored a convincing victory over English Electric which must have been quite a tonic to them, as the following week they also accounted for I.C.I. It has been rough going for the Mission this season and the departure of Walter and Mrs. Gale to Bristol has not made things any easier for them.

Port Sunlight have yet to score a point and I think if I were given three New Year table tennis wishes the second would be that this gallant team should soon break their duck.

Needless to say my first would be that Liverpool should again reach the final of the Rose Bowl, and this time bring it to Merseyside.

Litherland Sign Guy

AT the time of writing these notes clubs with the exception of Catholic Metro, Burlington, English Electric and Litherland, have completed half their league engagements. It will therefore be of interest to note a few worthy facts and figures.

The league championship, last season, was held by Burlington from the first match to the last. This season at the half-way stage the table has been headed by English Electric and Litherland. Burlington played 14 matches without the loss of a point and there has been no successful challenge to that record in this campaign.

In spite of this, however, I would hazard a guess that the North Region champions will win the league medals with a bigger margin of points than did last season's winners, when the margin between the winners and the runners-up was four points.

Litherland have now obtained the transfer of Len Guy from Taxes and I therefore repeat—"Watch Litherland."

Whitty's

for

TABLE TENNIS

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Here are the North Region's leading Set Scorers to January 5th:—20, A. C. Taylor (Litherland); 17, Gould (Bath St.), A. R. Taylor (Litherland), Moores (Littlewoods); 16, Hurst (Bath St.), Clayton (Litherland); 14, Goodwin (Bath St.), Cantwell (Brenka), Barker (Lofters), Ashton (English Electric), Russell (Waterloo Dock).

STILL UNBEATEN

Individual merit goes to A. C. Taylor who, at the end of ten league matches, is undefeated and to the following who have played in every match and have not suffered a double defeat—S. Hurst, J. Ashton and H. Moores.

Team merit goes to Bath Street, the only team to defeat Litherland and the first team to take a point from English Electric. Next comes Lofters, who were the first to defeat Bath Street and English Electric when they were the only undefeated teams.

Also to Litherland who have taken maximum points from their last eight matches, not having been beaten since October 10th.

Litherland, at the top of the league, have called upon six players only while Catholic Metro and Lofters "A," at the foot of the ladder, have each called upon eleven players.

The North Region Tournament will take place at the English Electric headquarters, obtained through the kindness of Jack Lambert. The preliminaries are on Wednesday and Thursday, February 13 and 14, and the finals will take place, on a date to be named, at the Bootle Y.M.C.A., through the co-operation of Mr. Watson.

Events are:—Men's "open" singles; men's "closed" singles (confined to players who have never played higher than No. 3 up to February 2); women's singles, open to all women registered in the North Region and the following women's teams, Brenka, English Electric and Littlewoods; men's doubles; and novelty mixed doubles (pairings drawn from a hat).

Entrance fees, 1/6 singles, 1/- each player doubles. Closing date Saturday, February 2. All entries to be made through club secretaries.

Partington Loses Record

NOW that the festivities are over we can once again settle down to the more strenuous job of fighting for promotion or to avoid relegation.

At the time of writing R.A.F.A. are the only club to have fielded an unchanged team in all their matches. And what an impressive team it is—in ten matches their set record is 90 for and 10 against. The set averages, working down are 75%, 90%, 100%, 90% and 95%.

In the match between R.A.F.A. and Balfour "D," T. Partington, Balfour's No. 1, lost his unbeaten record, losing in straight sets to L. Donelly and K. Boden.

A. Wilkinson, African Oil's No. 1, and J. Robinson have retained their unbeaten records. Among the Nos. 1 and 2, Boden holds second place, and in the Nos. 3, 4 and 5 the R.A.F.A. tail occupy the three positions.

CLOSE MATCH

The match between Leyfield and Anfield "C," which ended in a draw, was a very close affair, six of the sets going to three games. F. Bellion, Leyfield's No. 3, and N. Raggatt, Anfield's No. 1, both won two sets.

R.A.F. Movements, who last month were next to bottom, gave Balfour "D" a shock when they were narrowly beaten 6-4 on Balfour's table. Four of the sets went to three games—one in R.A.F.'s favour being won by R.

Grimwood against W. Rogers, at a score of 27-25.

Another keenly contested match was that between two middle-of-the-table teams, Vagabonds and Osterley "A," the former winning 6-4. In this match five of the sets went to three games. W. Savidge (No. 1) and R. Kennedy (No. 3) both won two sets for Vagabonds, and K. Miller (No. 3) won two for Osterley.

Bohemians "C" are not leaving all the winning of points to their "B" team, having obtained nine points out of a possible 20. Two of these were gained at the expense of Vagabonds, whom they defeated 6-4 away from home.

I was glad to see that Anfield "D," who took over St. Bartholomew's fixtures, break the ice by taking two points from Vagabonds.

Beauclair "A," South Region team, defeated African Oil in the Hyde Cup 6-4, after a very close match. A. Wilkinson, who at the moment is a certainty for the Regional team, beat F. Farrell 28-30, 22-20, 21-14 in a really ding-dong battle.

In the last set which the Oil Mills had to win to draw, Atherton, Beauclair's No. 5, was playing D. Martin, Oil Mills No. 5. The score was 22-all in the third game. Then Atherton got two net cords—there were sighs of disappointment and relief.

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These are your Letters

Small Attendances

SIR :—It surprises me to read in the December issue of the small attendance to watch the match between Liverpool and Bradford Ladies at the Balfour Club. Whenever I have seen matches of this kind, they have been very interesting and proved well worth watching for an evening, but the present understanding appears to be that matches of this kind are for occasions only when a person has nowhere else to go.

This is, surely, the wrong attitude to adopt, and I should blame the lack in advertising these games, for if they appeared in the press regularly, I'm quite sure that there would be a far better attendance.

It comes to something when the "Digest" has to advertise these little points of interest before the public will support. It seems rather a shame that the teams themselves cannot gain enough support without the game is 'plastered' all over the pages of our magazine.—KEN IRWIN (Linnets).

Playing Conditions

(The Chairman of the League writes :—)

Sir :—Tom Blunn was, without doubt, quite right to draw attention to the deficiencies in playing conditions in Liverpool, but surely he was quite wrong in quoting this as "the root of the trouble" for our inability to produce first-class players from

the ranks of our youngsters.

It would be equally misleading to blame inadequate playing facilities as the reason for the even greater shortage of promising lawn tennis players in the Liverpool area and very inappropriate indeed to blame conditions at Wimbledon, Queen's, etc., for our lack of success in the Davis Cup, etc.

My own impression is that, while youngsters "play" quite a lot of table tennis, few of them "practise" for, say, 2 to 3 hours a day. This deficiency is sometimes due to the fact that the youngsters are too lazy to practise for such a period, but more often is it true to say that opportunities for such lengthy practice exist in very few clubs indeed. Always there are too many players for too few tables. A League headquarters would have solved this problem.

Nevertheless, as Tom said, clubs can improve their facilities, and I must add that players should cut out a lot of those "best-of-three" with their pals and rivals and get down to a spot of solid (and boring) practice.

Learn to defend—few of them can ; let them forget their favourite "bread and butter" shot and add more weapons to their armoury.

I could write several more pages on this subject, but I'll spare you the wear and tear on your blue pencil.—DONALD M. FOULIS.

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