



# Table Tennis

## DIGEST

### LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

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VOL 48

DECEMBER 1993

NO. 1

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### ENTER THE CLOSED

#### EDITORIAL

I find this editorial quite easy to cover, as you can see, future editorials must be very much in the balance.

Having played in all divisions from Division 1 to the East and North regions and having administered a Club which, at one time, had ten teams and, up till recently, at least six, also acted as host to visiting teams, playing our ladies, gents and veteran teams since we moved into our Clubhouse. Mind you those of you who remember when we played in the Canteen can understand my horror when Peter Rumjahn rang me and asked me if he could play a Liverpool game there. We also played a Ladies game there – both 1st team (They must have been desperate), and Regional Championships. There were also times when we had the countries Top players at the Club. I appreciate that I appear to be shooting a line here, but I have not intended doing so, all I am trying to say is that I have felt perfectly justified in shooting my mouth off and giving my opinions on any topics that have arisen.

Times have changed and, instead of seeing a minimum of eight teams a week, sometimes as many as twelve. I now see Mick Allen and his stalwarts when they have a crunch game, or when I am hard up for a pint (they never let me pay for one).

So with the closing of the English Electric Club, the demise of the teams plus a couple of personal problems, I no longer feel in a position to holler at every problem that comes along.

This also applies to 'Table Edges' as I have always acquired gossip and tittle tattle, no one has ever given me any. Don Davies maybe, a life line here, as at the moment he is letting me have his script that the Echo does not publish.

We will see how it goes?!

No volunteers means you are stuck with me. Have a good groan before you continue. Once again it looks likely to be a keenly contested season at the top and bottom with the more interesting fight being the relegation issue. We have had the usual shuffling of players but on a lower scale. Paul Hutchings to Colonsay, Ahemed Thabet to Cadwa, but the move to beat all moves finds Mal McEvoy skulking around in the 3rd. Fortunately for Cadwa, Phil Musgrove who was an expected non appears to be a regular. Neil Gravener is back in Cadwa 'A' and they have introduced Mike Malcolm as a 1st team member. Elec. Supp. must have had scouts out to all points of the compass having already introduced three players, Barry Elliot, N. Boydell and S. Rowe.

At this early stage league placings can only be seen as a guide, but they also provide assurances to some teams. Colonsay lost their premises, the good news being they have found a replacement, going back to the Church hall they used a while back. Will this move, I wonder, invoke a new spirit and see them turning out their full 1st team regularly. On the subject of assurance, having played only 7 matches to date they have won 39 points and can feel really safe. Unfortunately their frequent make shift teams have already played an unwelcome part in the championship and relegation issues. How so, well Colonsay v Y.M. 'A'; team Gary Thornton-Allen, Peter Coyle, Bill Harris, ranked 4; 5; 6; lost 4-6. Colonsay v E. Supp. team Paul Hutchings, Chris Ford, Peter Coyle, 1; 2; 5; won 7-3. Colonsay v Cadwa, team Paul, Peter and Steve Gittins, lost 7-3; Paul winning the three. Against Cadwa 'A' it was Chris, Colin Rourke and Peter, won 7-3. Against G.P.T. it was Paul, Colin and Bill for a 7-3 win. It is galling for teams to hear of easy sets being picked up by other teams and then find themselves faced by a strong team.

Cadwa appear favourites but will have to work hard and maintain a consistent team. With five players to call on they are in a strong position. They disposed of Y.M. 'A' 9-1; newcomer Mike Malcolm losing to Peter Taylor. Lab. 'A' managed to pick up two when Roy Smith and Alan Timewell both beat Mike Malcolm. Interesting to note that he does not fare well against defensive players. Bath St. also took two sets from them, Ken Jackson and Mike Keane beating Natasha Williams in age versus youth encounters. Against contenders Elec. Supp. they got a draw but as Terry Turner retired hurt in his 2nd set it was a good result for Supply. I believe we will see a youthful team take the title this season and go on to the same success in further season. Their potential is tremendous and Mike Malcolm is proving to be a fine addition.

Wav. Lab. struggled early on due to non-availability of players and were relieved to have no match in Week 1. 'A' team players Roy Smith and Alan Timewell stepped in against a Colonsay team comprising Paul Hutchings, Chris Ford and Peter Coyle, and picket up three sets in a hard fought draw. The result favouring only Cadwa. Labour have done their best against the lower teams to achieve maximum points, but the need of those teams for points have made it hard going and they have dropped 22 sets from their first 10 matches with Cadwa having dropped 18 from 8. Typical comment from

Captain Dave Roberts, they will give of their best and take no team for granted. No comment yet from Cadwa, but Bill Hargreaves (Cadwa 'A') reckons Cadwa are the Champions elect with the rest nowhere. Not a view shared by Y.M. Captain Peter Lee who reckons they are in with a chance. His colleagues were somewhat sceptical of his optimism and I share their view. Like Wav. Lab. they do their stuff against the lower teams and have the real advantage of a regular trio, but it is the big ones which count and they lost to Elec. Supp. 8-2. Keith adopting his usual role of lone winner in the big matches. Nothing down for you, Peter, but I admire your determination and enthusiasm, if it could be converted into points your team would be strong contenders.

Elec. Suppl. are also contenders, but the decision of M.M. to play 3rd Div. this season has seriously weakened their chances. How can a club justify a player who was their No. 1 last season and who this season when playing for Warrington in the L & C league against Liverpool won all his sets, playing in our 3rd Div. His absence is clearly affecting their results as is the loss of his leadership. Judging from the scrawl which passes as a signature he is present as non-playing captain, but you cannot lead from the rear, or a seat on the sidelines. 68 points from ten matches is not championship form and I see them as no real threat to Cadwa and Wav. Lab. With 56 points from 8 matches Y.M. look a better bet to keep in touch with the leaders.

O.K. it is tough at the top, but the toughness is confined in the main to two teams. Down at the bottom it is any two from five. Comment from Bob Edwards, G.P.T.; was that they know they have a hard struggle ahead of them but will give 100% effort and hope they will survive. An apt comment from a player who always gives of his best and who is always appreciative of his opponents shots. They survived last season because their 'B' team won promotion and at present lie next to bottom with 22 points from nine matches. They got no change out of Bath St. Paul Price being a lone winner against Ian McElwee, but recorded a vital draw against Y.M. 'A' and again against Cadwa 'A'. A treble for Paul against Y.M. 'A' and a double for Gentleman Bob against Cadwa 'A'. But Bob's claim for fame this season has got to be his 16 in the 3rd win against M.M. and then teaming up with Trevor Owens to take the doubles against M.M. and Rob Bevan. Not often M.M. gets humbled twice in one match. Certainly wouldn't do much for his ego. Well done, Bob. He recorded another good win against Peter Lee and Trevor chipped in with a win against Mike Mahoney. Two more important points in the struggle to stay up.

Y.M. 'A' fought clear last season and yet another uphill lies ahead, but with Peter Taylor continuing his fine form of last season with 11 wins from 7 matches all still remains to fight for. He was a lone winner against Mike Malcolm making his debut for Cadwa, with Dave Tagg being a lone winner against their 1st team. Peter was a lone winner against E. Supp beating M.M. and again against W. Lab. when he recorded a double in a repeat of last season beating Dave Roberts and Gary Watson. They got a bonus by meeting a weakened Colonsay team and took full advantage with a 6-4 win.

The shock of this season has been the almost unbelievably poor performances of Bootle J.C. Because they send in cards when the mood takes someone, their results and points total are not known, but with only 14 points from 7 matches they are in big trouble. Promoted Cadwa 'A' doing much better with 30 from 9 and looking like a

team which means to stay up. Bootle J.C.'s best result to date being a draw agst Lab. 'A'. Chris Spedding and Nick Miller getting two each. Andy also got two against Bath St. with Chris being a lone winner against W. Lab. with a 2 straight against Dave. Nick chipped in with a lone win against Y.M. beating Mike Mahoney. Against Cadwa they were one short and so gave Cadwa a possible 3 gifts and in doing so pushed themselves nearer relegation. This is the same team which finished in a comfortable position last season with 84 points and in their final match Nick Miller recorded two good wins against Ken Connor and, Peter Flint. What has gone wrong, more importantly, can they get it right and pull off an escape.

Lab. 'A' are also struggling with 31 points from 9 matches with their first match being against Bootle J.C. The resulting draw favouring B.J.C. more the Lab. 'A'. They took four off Bath St. Roy and Alan having to do the winning as third member Mick Tierney is playing under a handicap of an injury in the latter stages of last season which has not yet cleared up. This being reflected in his results of played 15 won 1. They took two off Cadwa and one off Y.M. when Roy beat Mike Mahoney. The set of the night being Roy v Peter with Peter eventually emerging the winner 21/10; 24/26; 22/24. A tremendous set which all present will long remember. They did their stuff where it really counted by beating Cadwa 'A' 7-3 and I cannot really see any danger of their being relegated. But it is really tough at the bottom and you can pay dearly for your mistakes. Comforting thought for Bath St., who rarely make mistakes and are already nicely set with 43 from 9 and the reliable trio of Ken, Mike and Ian picking up sets from the leaders and not finding it too much of a struggle against the minnows, G.P.T. won 9-1; Bootle J.C. won 8-2; struggled against Lab. 'A' but still got a win 6-4 with five games going to three. A result, I feel, which confirms my views that Lab. 'A' will finish well clear of relegation and Bath St. can enjoy a relaxed season.

A tip for the strugglers and the leaders, if you want to know how your opponents are doing etc. get in touch with Roy Smith. He always gets to know all the results and keeps his own league table.

## ENTER THE CLOSED

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### DIVISION 2

### ROD BULMER

Here we go again. A new season and a new scribe for the division, so please excuse me if I do not know all the teams and players yet.

First impressions of Div. 2; there are no easy games but the friendliness of the opposition is as good as the 3rd.

Not yet seen a league table, but looking at the available score cards, English Electric would appear to be destined for a quick return to the 1st Div. having taken 45 points from the first 5 games and using the same 4 players. The team consists of Ted Birch, Alan Chase, Mick Corcoran and Mike Allen and having seen them at first hand would be very surprised to be playing them next season.

Probably easier, certainly quicker, to mention their defeats. The awkward Bob Hawkins of Bath St. 'B' beat Corcoran 21-16 in the 3rd. Fine win by Julian Quirk of

Bootle J.C. 'A' over Ted 2 straight 12-21 and 13-21, table must have been too fast for Ted?, and finally Sylvia Graham beat Mike Allen 21-18, 21-18 to record Bootle J.C. 'B' only point in their match against English Electric.

We have 2 clubs in the division each fielding 2 sides, G.P.T. 'A' & 'B' and Bootle J.C. 'A' & 'B'.

G.P.T. of course have the advantage of the colour challenging table, which initially takes you by surprise but after a little time seems to be clearer then more traditional tables.

G.P.T. 'A' have on paper a strong side using Frank McCann, Ted Gilmour, Ian Wensley, Mark Whittaker, Ray Lavin and Peter Wass and with those players can be expected to challenge for honours. Unfortunately some of their results do not seem to support that theory, losing 7-3 at Fords and only turning up with 3 players for the Bath St. 'A' match. Ian Wensley seems to be doing his bit though not having lost a singles yet.

G.P.T. 'B' have been forced to use a number of players, Alan Cameron, Peter McAdam, Andrew Owens, Tony Moon, Ted Green, Mike Feerick and though they work very hard are only averaging 3 points a match. Good win by Andrew over Tony Harris of Police gave them their only point in that match and only Alan's win over Ted Gilmour prevented a whitewash in the derby game. Would have liked to have seen and heard that game! The team are picking a number of doubles sets which may be crucial come the end of the season.

Not many cards from Bootle J.C. 'A' but the squad of Julian Quirk, Stuart Fay, Dave Graham, Sullivan and Pilkington looks quite handy. Excellent 8-2 win over Fords though Fords were without Keith Connor at 1.

The other Bootle side the 'B' team are using the strength of the club to good effect, being able to bring in reserves but more importantly players who can win sets. After 5 matches they have 25 points a scoring level which should ensure a mid to upper position come the end of the season.

Looking through the cards featuring Fords they do not seem to have fielded the same 4 twice, this must make life exciting for the captain. Keith Connor at 1 has only played in 3 matches but has yet to concede a game never mind a set. Graham Reid had a good win 21-12 in the 3rd against Frank McCann of GPT 'A'. In the same match Alf Southall weighed in with a double over Ted Gilmour and Mark Whittaker.

Just some general comments, will captains please include christian names on score cards as I do not know everyone yet.

Do not worry if your team is not mentioned in this issue, their is plenty of time yet.

Good luck to all teams and a very Merry Christmas to all our readers.

ENTER THE CLOSED

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### DIVISION 3

MIKE POWER

So, once upon a time, Ken Armson telephoned me and said Mike its your lucky day. I thought "Great, I've won the 100 club". Hang on a minute, I'm not in the 100 club. Ken said "I've just thrown a 100 names into the air and yours was the only one that

landed face-up the cards are in the post, best of luck". Then the line went dead. I stared into my cider and thought "What the hell was all that about, never mind, hurry up and finish that pint and you can have another one".

After a night on the old apple juice followed by the whirling pits, I woke and thought to myself "Never again" (How many times have you said that?) I scrambled (fell) down the stairs and landed by the front door under which lay a load of score cards, I shouted "Liz you haven't posted these score cards, don't you know we get fined for every one, looking at this lot we must owe 50 quid". She shouted back her usual answers "Is this £20 on the dresser mine?" I looked at the cards and thought back to the night before, through the mist I remembered the name "Ken" the penny dropped. That swine Armson, he knows that I like cider on a Friday night, he tricked me, who does he think he is NOEL EDMONDS, I suppose before I finish my notes I should say something about the table tennis, so here goes.

As this is my "Notes writing debut" I expect to make a few cock-ups so if I do, though! No doubt you'll tell me when you see me. I won't beat about the bush, if Manweb 'A' (previously electric supply) play their strongest team for the remainder of the season namely new boy Mal McEvoy, the Desirable Denise Conroy, the not so Desirable John Moore and the youngster Ian Turner, then the rest of us are playing for 2nd place. At the time of writing they have 68 points from 10 games and would have had more, had Malcolm played more often. (What's he doing in this division anyway?) The shock defeat they suffered was Away to Karen Gibson's Bath Street 'B', with Malcolm in the side they managed to lose 6-4. Well done Bath St., especially Billy Clayton with fine wins over Denise and Martin Roberts. To put this win into perspective, Manweb 'A' have since trounced Bootle Y.M.C.A. 9-1, Bootle being one of the main candidates for 2nd position.

The other main candidates for promotion are Waterloo, Maghull and my own team Cadwa 'B'. My old mate Ken (Tennis Elbow) Nelson of Waterloo doesn't know whether or not they like the 2nd division. They dipped their tow into it last season only to find the water was too hot. Do they have the desire to get scalded again, I'm not so sure. A very friendly team who will give everyone a good game especially when they bring out their secret weapon Ricky (The Boy Wonder) Brown. With Ricky in their side they would be serious contenders for 2nd place but I fear that without him they may just fall short. Having said that, has anyone seen Ray Hibbs play? This man is an extremely talented and steady player, he never gives up, a battler. Only three defeats to date to Danny Every 21-19, 16-21, 21-19, George Higham 15-21, 22-20, 23-21 and John Gratton 21-19, 21-12. That man Peter Frazer is no slouch either, his unorthodox style which produces such a wicked forehand has knocked a good few names off their perch, the best being two straight wins over the ageless Bobby Owen from Wavertree Labour 'C'.

My own team Cadwa 'B' should not be taken lightly. Ian Miller, who like Mal McEvoy should be playing in the 1st division has lost only one game out of eighteen (John Moore, Manweb 'A' 14-21, 22-20, 21-17), an average of 94.44% and could go al season without losing again. Unfortunately, due to his occupation, he will be leaving Liverpool for Geordie-land in January. Our competitors may shed a sigh of

relief, but I, for one, after playing with Ian for the past eight years will be extremely sorry to see him go.

Bootle Y.M.C.A. will be there or thereabouts, having only lost twice to Manweb 'A' and Cadwa 'B', look a very steady side. John Higham won't lose many at this level and is admirably supported by Tom Killip, Roly Wright and Danny Every. They all support averages of around 70% which shows strength throughout the team, unfortunately their doubles play lets them down with only 7 wins from a possible 18.

Another team still within shouting distance of promotion is Maghull with 51 points from 9 games, only one point behind Bootle Y.M.C.A. and Waterloo. Harry McGanity leads the team and should be proud of his young star of the future, Steve Woods. A very good draw was achieved when Bootle Y.M.C.A. visited White House Farm with Steve taking 2 singles and 1 doubles, including a victory over John Higham 22-20, 21-19. He also has the scalp of John Moore, Manweb 'A', 21-15, 18-21, 21-17 and came close to a surprised Ian Miller only losing 16-21, 23-21, 17-21. Unlike Bootle Y.M.C.A., Maghull are more consistent with their doubles play with 8 wins out of a possible 12 (based on score cards to hand) George Frost and Wilf Gibson remain undefeated with 6 out of 6. They are one of only 4 pairs in the 3rd Division who can boast this achievement.

Moving to the middle of the table, you should see Wavertree Labour 'B'. A team where it must have been very difficult to choose the ranking order apart from John (Then Henchman) Henshaw who is clearly their number one, so tell me, why has he only played 3 times out of 7? I've known and respected John since his Cadwa days and I know he can get 80% at number one in this division. So come on John, get to the table and give out as many thrashings as possible and remember the nice things I've said about you when it's my turn.

The surprise result of Labour's season must have been a 6-4 defeat at the hands of their own 'C' team, even with John Henshaw in the side they couldn't keep Bobby Owen's team down. Bob won his three beating John 21-18 in the third. The game that clinched the victory was the doubles win by Ken Roberts and Ken Ray against Bill Stanley and Roy Adams 21-17, 22-24, 25-23, it can't get much closer.

I must say I am surprised by the lowly position of Manweb 'B', supporting the talents of Trevor (Super-loop) Hughes who I've had a good pint with and lost a few bob too, and also the difficult to beat Alan Biggs (where did you get those muscles from) supported by Arthur Harrison and John Ashley, their relegation battle must be with Bath St. 'C' who they just about beat 6-4 but could easily have lost 3-7. Trevor beat Dave Stoddern 20-22, 21-14, 21-19. Alan beat John Langton 21-17, 9-21, 21-19. Arthur Harrison beat John Letch 21-16, 19-21, 21-18. A very close game which could have gone either way. I believe Manweb 'B' are good enough to stay in the 3rd and will have a better second half of the season.

This unfortunately leaves, in my opinion, Bath St. 'C' to join the divisions whipping boys, G.P.T 'C', as favourites for division 4 next season.

Bath St. 'C' however boast another 100% doubles pair (again based upon score cards to hand) this being Rob Peat and Dave Stoddern with 4 wins out of 4. They include

the scalps of John Higham/Tom Killip and Trevor Hughes/Alan Biggs.

Poor old G.P.T. 'C' are still looking for their first win and I am afraid I am going to hold my breath as I feel it is possible they could go all season that way. They can however take consolation in the cup victory against Labour 'B'. I know how they did it, with John Henshaw on Labours side and winning all his three games, G.P.T. 'C' ran out 6-3 winners. The hero of the night was good old Tommy Banton. Yet to win a league game and what does he do he plays Joan Connor 21-18, 14-21, 23-21, he goes on against Ted McGiveron 21-19, 15-21, 21-19, he partners Ted Green to complete a fine hatrick against Bill Stanley and Ted 21-15, 21-12. They are drawn at home to Bath St. 'B' in the next round and must feel they are in with a chance. By the time you read these notes, we will all know.

To finish off, I know you like to see the results of all the close games so, missing out the ones previously mentioned, here's a list of all the others:

Wilf Gibson v Danny Every 15-21, 22-20, 20-22

John McCann v Wilf Gibson 21-23, 21-16, 21-23

Harry McGanity v Ian Turner 17-21, 22-20, 19-21

Trevor Hughes v John Higham 11-21, 21-19, 20-22

Bill Stanley v Trevor Hughes 18-21, 22-20, 19-21

John Reynolds v Arthur Harrison 21-18, 15-21, 23-25

Dave Batty v Steve Perry 21-15, 22-24, 20-22

Karen Gibson v Bobby Bell 21-13, 20-22, 19-21

John Moore v Myself 21-14, 16-21, 22-20

Well, Liz has just shouted to me and said "I've spent that £20, you haven't got another one have you?"

I haven't forgot, how could I, there are two more 100% doubles records left to mention and those are Alan Reid – Peter Frazer with 7 wins and Ian Miller with You-know-who, also 7 wins ( I knew I'd get myself in somewhere).

I hope you all have a Merry Christmas (but watch the cider) and a Tremendous New Year – See you all in 1994.

ENTER THE CLOSED

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## DIVISION 4

## TONY CONNOR

Well, another season half-way through, and this is the tightest 4th division for years. I haven't yet a league table, but on cards insofar most teams are averaging around 5 points a match with no obvious relegation candidates and with only a couple of teams significantly better than most. There is real strength throughout the division unlike most years when, from the outset, some teams are obviously better or worse than the rest. So, who will be relegated? Sadly it will be two goodish teams, who perhaps finished as high as half-way last time round.

Waterloo last year just avoided relegation, winning only twice, so they must be favourites for the drop? Not a bit of it. New recruits Peter Holmes and Andy



Armstrong are making a difference alongside stalwarts Bill Spencer, John Forrest and improving Austin Hayden, a two straight victor over Harold House's Ritchie Blackburne. Of five cards in, two are victories and their record reads 25/25 sets. Against championship contenders Police they lost just 4-6 with Andy, Bill and Austin winning one each and, most impressively they triumphed 8-2 over Labour 'D' who were virtually promoted last time.

So, with Waterloo likely to be safe, it must be CADWA for the drop as they too only stayed up due to the weakness of last year's bottom two. Arr yes! 1-9 loss against Police, must be relegation certainties, but hold on. Two 7-3 victories against promotion hopefuls YMCA and against Bath Street, and an 8-2 win over Maghull 'B' is not relegation form. They are in form and now are strengthened by the exciting left hand attack of Steve Graham who includes the scalp of Maghull's Bill Salter amongst his successes. Jack Highton, in the same match recorded a 2 straight win over the strong Brian Gregory. Trevor Dolder too is new to CADWA's team alongside evergreen Jack Power and Pete Roberts and, I bet, Jack enjoyed his 17, 19 win against old team-mate Russell Thornton, now of YMCA. And I bet they all enjoyed the extraumph provided by yet another new-comer, County Youth ranked, Stuart Toole.

So, with CADWA likely to survive, let's look at the three promoted clubs to find two relegation candidates. Oh yes... Labour 'E' promoted in 3rd place, 26 points from an automatic slot, and entering this season's may a month late. But, they too have new personnel in Wirral Leagues Mark Miles and Paul Faulkner playing at the top of the order. Until recently Mark and Paul only played table tennis against each other at regular weekly sessions at a Wirral Sports Centre, without knowing about the local league. Mike Ashton spotted them and the rest, as they say, is history. Mark recently beat YMCA's Jimmy Clewitt, still a recognised higher league player and, with Kenny Armson, Mabel Neary, Reza Mirdamadi and Steve Perry, this squad is not obvious relegation material. But neither are University who were champions by a massive 24 points last time. This season they have beaten promotion favourites YMCA 6-4 with Pat McGloushan, Robert Watt, Duncan Preston and Chris Campbell featuring. Pat did really well to beat Y.M.'s Ming Liu, in two, whilst the others recorded a win each in the same match. So, no relegation here, but also promoted were Bath St. 'D' comprising Reg Edwards. Alec Gould, Dave Batty, Dave Aimson, George Crowley and others. Eight players used already might suggest a struggle and uncertainty should things go to the wire, but results so far read won 2 and lost 2 out of five, again suggesting mid-table safety, no relegation.

So, looking at last year's mid-table for possible relegation candidates Maghull 'B' started poorly last time, but rallied superbly to finish 5th. They have made a similar start this time with two draws and two losses. Their squad is virtually the same, but Tony Sales is playing more frequently and Steve Maganiny now features too. Any relation Harry?. Steve did well to beat Bath St.'s Alec Gould in three whilst Doug Christie was superb in outlasting Police's Arthur Garnet 20 in the 3rd. Phil Christie completes his rehabilitation after some years away and is now a constant, attacking higher order performer. Bill Salter, Jimmy Gill and Brian Gregory complete this experienced set up. Relegaton? Shouldn't think so, but two teams have to go down.

So perhaps Harold House 'A', who as usual rely on a system and again this season are averaging 5 points a match. They drew with Maghull, with Harold House's Bob Hudson losing to both Phil Christie and Brian Gregory. In the same match Paul Morgan won both whilst Mike Poole and Ritchie Blackburne won one apiece. Dave Cohen, Ted Cramsie and Les Mulholland also feature for Harold House with Ted enjoying a fine 17, 24 win over Y.M.'s Francis Lay. Les's hard-bat backhand remains lethal with his ability to make his shots from very low over the net. Against CADWA, Dave Cohen had the dubious pleasure of trying to hold the well coached expertise of Stuart Toole and actually did quite well taking the set to 3. But Dave's wiles, chat and lilac shoes were ultimately not enough.

I think that all the teams portrayed so far along with Linacre and Labour 'D' (and excepting the exceptional University) are fairly equal in strength and all are beating each other. A lot seems to depend on who is turning out on a particular night as most teams are operating large squads. But, if pushed, I suspect Labour 'E' will find it hardest to maintain a place in this division.

So, that leaves only three teams that stand out from the pack, and of these YMCA must be most disappointed, averaging just 5 sets per match despite their promotion aspirations and players available. Really, on results, they too are in the pack, but with Ming Lui, Francis Lay, Russel Thornton, Jimmy Clewitt and John Lau to call on their fortunes must improve. Francis is building on last seasons 5th division comeback, and his wins include a superb -10, 21, 13 against Bath St.'s Reg Edwards and an equally impressive -21, 18, 18 over CADWA's Steve Graham. Ming Lui, ex Liverpool Restricted Champion also has won most but really Y.M. have suffered most through their weaker squad players being called as, perhaps, too often. Back to Ming, my abiding memory of playing him (4 years ago) is his ability to conjure up ridiculous back spin or top spin from apparently identical serve action. I've not seen Ming yet this season so perhaps he doesn't do this any more. Other comeback merchants include Andy Armstrong of Waterloo and CADWA's Steve Graham, all out and out attackers and all contributing to the increasing strength of this division.

I expect Y.M.C.A. to improve and to finish third, but the championship is probably between Police and University. Police are averaging 7 a game and call mostly on Dave Crispin, Ritchie Winkle, Tony Harris and Arthur Garnett, but University are my tip for the top position as Police have sometimes struggled to carve up wins against the likes of Waterloo and Linacre, both 6-4. In this latter match, Linacre's Frank Lacey recorded a fine win in three, over Police's Bob Rawlinson in a battle of the penholders. Linacre perennially jump from division 4 to 3 and back again, but this time will have to settle for 4th and 5th, as will Labour 'D'. Labour just missed promotion last time by 3 points but are well off the pace now despite the efforts of John Reynolds, Sandie Sanderson and Mike Ashton. Sandie had good wins against Ritchie Winkle (Police) and Mal Cray (Linacre) the latter 15, 15. John Reynolds has sacrificed his forehand loop and spinnier serves for the greater control of pimples on

his forehead, but he still carves out more than his share at number 1, including the scalps of Bob Hudson and Peter Holmes. Mike's closest win in the third against Bath St.'s Dave Batty.

So, University for champions, I predict, despite the handicap of catching up on games, and most of the rest of us fairly equal.

We'll see. Enjoy the rest of the season.

ENTER THE CLOSED

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## DIVISION 5

STAN CLARKE

You cannot begin to understand the pride I felt when I received a letter from the Editor's henchman, the bold Ken Armson, telling me that the honour of writing this seasons notes had fallen on my unworthy shoulders, it's a little like winning the pools only to find you forgot to post the coupon.

After spending some years playing in the higher divisions and getting thrashed each week I thought that life in division 5 would prove to be much easier, only to find that the only thing that has changed is that I am getting thrashed by different players. The standard seems to have improved since I last played in this division, or perhaps I'm getting too old for all of this.

At this stage of the season, with only a small number of cards to look at I find that the best way of judging the performance is by their sets average, at the time of writing Bootle Y.M.C.A. "A" are lying in top spot with a sets average of 8.6, in second place are Harold House "B" averaging 8.3, these two teams are so far ahead of the rest of the division that they seem assured of promotion, though I am not prepared to stick my neck out at this stage to forecast which of the two will finish as divisional champions. In 3rd spot are Mersey Bus with an average of 6.8, ahead of Aigburth on 5.9 closely followed by Maghull C with 5.75 and Bath St. 'E' on 5.6, Aigburth 'A' are at 4.25 Bootle Y.M.C.A. 4.1, Police 'B' 3.2 with Waterloo on 3, Colonsay 'B' are at 1.8 and Harold House 'C' bringing up the rear at .55 though they seem to be lagging well behind the rest in the number of matches played.

It's good to see a team of youngsters playing in the division (their Captain expected) which is what you would expect in the bottom division, unfortunately such teams have become the exception rather than the rule. I am pleased to report that of the cards in my possession very few walk-overs have been conceded, lets keep it that way.

I know that most of you only read the notes to see if your name has been mentioned so here is your chance, there have been a number of matches in which individuals have saved their teams from a white wash, as follows: Jack Letch, Bath St. 'E' beat Mike Hughes, Bootle Y.M.C.A. 'A', Lee Farley, Colonsay 'B' beat Steve Weldon Waterloo 'B', Tommy Wong, Bootle Y.M.C.A. 'B' beat Ted Cramsie, Harold House 'B', Stan Clarke, Colonsay 'B' beat Tony McGuire, Bootle Y.M.C.A. 'B', beat Peter Williams, Mersey Bus, Alan Wood, Police 'B' beat Kathy Hadyn, Bootle Y.M.C.A. 'B', all of these in 9/1 defeats.

Tommy Wong beat Andy McCourt and Tony McGuire beat Doug Christie for Bootle Y.M.C.A. 'B' against Maghull 'C', Eric Woods Aigburth 'A' beat Richard Blackburn and Les Mulholland of Harold House 'B', Billy Holmes beat Ron Georgeson then combined with Bill Leeming to beat Brian Holden and Jack Letch in the doubles for Aigburth against Bath St. 'E', Brian Jelley beat Colin Hughes and Phil Baines beat Jay French For the Police against Colonsay 'B', Ollie Solaru beat Steve Weldon and Nadeem Wahib beat Dave Carter for Police against Waterloo 'B' and finally Bill Leeming beat Mike Hughes and Billy Holmes beat Chris McGuire for Aigburth against Bootle Y.M.C.A. 'A'.

I have been a little surprised and concerned at some of the bats and equipment that are on display in the division, I personally feel that playing in the bottom division should not be an excuse for playing with what is clearly illegal equipment, for instance it is not acceptable to paint a rubber to comply with the red/black rule as the application of paint to rubber clearly alters the playing characteristics of the rubber, and gives the user unfair advantage.

In conclusion may I wish you all a happy, prosperous and peaceful New Year.

### ENTER THE CLOSED

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## FRANK MURPHY HANDICAP CUP COMPETITION

A brief report on this season's handicapping. At their meeting the Handicap Committee studied the results of last season's handicapping and discussed these at length. It was felt that the minus handicapping could be eliminated and an all round improvement in handicapping be possible if we moved to 25 or 31 up. The final decision was for a changeover to 31. This has led to greatly improved handicaps at all levels and the elimination of the minus handicap.

We will be studying results and would like your views on this season's handicaps and how best we can improve handicapping. I do get many verbal comments and opinions but we need these to be in writing. It is a difficult job and losers will always feel they were under handicapped or their opponents over handicapped, but in every match there have to be winners and losers. Our remit was to make this a more enjoyable competition for all competitors by making players as equal as possible. This does not mean making it impossible for top players to win, or for weak players to lose, but for each to have as equal a chance as possible of winning.

We don't believe we have got it right and certainly don't believe we are overnight experts. Your letters, no matter how critical, caustic, insulting or complimentary – won't be many of the latter – will be studied and all ideas investigated. Your views are important and I look forward to an avalanche of letters and assure you they will be given serious consideration. Make my day – send me your comments etc.

I am hoping to arrange a follow-up meeting of the Handicap Committee when the results of Round 2 are too hand.

Ken Armson (Chairman)

## TABLE EDGES

I thought you said – never mind wot I sed!!

First and foremost our helpful and most co-operative printer has returned to the fold – so no thrashings for Alan Smethurst or we will never get the Digest printed!

Before you start shouting about Handicaps, think about it. The Committee spent from about 7.30 to 11.30 trying to sort them out. But if we have any volunteers who have a week or maybe two to compare each individual handicap with every other handicap, I am sure you would be welcomed by the Committee Chairman.

We have five good men and true doing the notes – I think! Just a simple request, if births, Marriages, deaths, or work interfere with the writing thereof – just let me have the cards – Please.

When notes don't arrive, I have explicit instructions from the Committee to send the Digest to the Printers – you let about forty odd people down when they don't arrive.

Malcolm McEvoy – Third Division – Interesting.

English Electric – M/M Wednesday, Division 2

Liverpool and Wales number 1 Natasha Williams remained unbeaten for Clwyd against Cumbria in the county championship.

Nice to see the Liverpool City Council sponsoring the Junior Premier Championships which were held at the Everton Sports Centre with Brian Leeson referee.

Kevin Dolder of Cadwa now number 10 in the country's junior rankings – nice work.

I see Ming Liu and Frances Lay are back home with Liverpool Y.M. and Ahmed Thabit has emigrated to Cadwa.

Colonsay and De la Salle have parted company, but were fortunate in being able to return to their old premises in Christ Church Hall, Buckingham Road, L13. 1st team Wednesday, A & B teams Thursday.

Good to see Alex Gould back in the swing again, not many players make a come back at 85!

Three of the five young players of Colonsay 'B', Jay French, Colin Hughes and Lee Farley had encouraging 8-2 win assisted by young Stan Clarke.

European Championships, N.E.C. Birmingham – I wouldn't mind running a couple of lists if interested 'car seats available' and 'looking for a lift'. 25th March – 4th April, price £7.00. Semi-finals and final £9.00 and £12.00. Discounts 10 and over.

Our own closed championships – Sunday 6th February, Tuesday 15th February.

Janet Le Page died rather tragically at the end of November.

DIVISION 1	P	W	L	D	PTS
WAVERTREE LABOUR	10	7	0	3	78
CADWA	9	7	0	2	71
MANWEB	10	7	2	1	68
L'POOL Y.M.C.A.	8	6	1	1	56
BATH STREET	10	5	5	0	51
COLONSAY	7	4	2	1	39
WAV. LABOUR 'A'	9	2	5	2	31
CADWA 'A'	10	1	8	1	31
L'POOL Y.M.C.A. 'A'	9	2	5	2	29
G.P.T.	10	0	8	2	25
BOOTLE J.C.	8	1	6	1	21

DIVISION 2	P	W	L	D	PTS
ENGLISH ELECTRIC	10	10	0	0	84
FORDS	10	6	4	0	56
BOOTLE J.C. 'B'	8	5	2	1	47
BOOTLE J.C. 'A'	7	6	1	0	47
G.P.T. 'A'	7	4	3	0	39
POLICE	7	3	4	0	34
MAGHULL	9	4	5	0	32
COLONSAY 'A'	7	1	4	2	31
G.P.T. 'B'	9	1	7	1	28
BATH ST. 'A'	9	1	8	0	28
HAROLD HOUSE	3	0	3	0	6

DIVISION 3	P	W	L	D	PTS
MANWEB 'A'	11	8	1	2	78
CADWA 'B'	10	7	1	2	66
WATERLOO	10	5	2	3	57
BOOTLE Y.M.C.A.	9	5	2	2	52
MAGHULL 'A'	9	5	1	3	51
WAVERTREE LAB. 'B'	10	2	3	5	51
WAVERTREE LAB. 'C'	10	5	5	0	51
BATH ST. 'B'	9	2	5	2	41
MANWEB 'B'	10	3	6	1	41
BATH ST. 'C'	10	1	7	2	32
G.P.T. 'C'	10	0	10	0	20

DIVISION 4	P	W	L	D	PTS
POLICE 'A'	10	6	2	2	67
L'POOL Y.M.C.A. 'B'	10	3	4	3	52
LINACRE	8	4	2	2	48
UNIVERSITY	6	6	0	0	46
WATERLOO 'A'	9	4	4	1	45
BATH ST. 'D'	9	2	3	4	42
CADWA 'C'	9	4	5	0	39
HAROLD HOUSE 'C'	8	2	3	3	35
WAVERTREE LAB. 'D'	6	2	3	1	28
MAGHULL 'B'	8	0	6	2	19
WAVERTREE LAB. 'E'	5	2	3	0	19

DIVISION 5	P	W	L	D	PTS
BOOTLE Y.M.C.A. 'A'	10	10	0	0	86
HAROLD HOUSE 'B'	9	8	1	0	75
AIGBURTH	11	5	3	3	65
MERSEYBUS	8	4	2	2	55
BATH STREET 'E'	9	6	2	1	51
MAGHULL 'C'	8	4	2	2	46
BOOTLE Y.M.C.A. 'B'	10	2	6	2	41
AIGBURTH	9	2	5	2	39
POLICE 'B'	11	1	6	4	37
WATERLOO 'B'	8	2	5	1	24
COLONSAY 'B'	9	1	7	1	17
HAROLD HOUSE 'C'	6	0	6	0	4

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Notes:-

1. Please check your team records, post missing cards and advise the fixture secretary of any discrepancies.

2. Note match regulation 10, all matches up to match No. 18 must be played within 8 weeks of original match number.

3. Will University secretary please ring the fixture secretary.

4. Please ensure that all cups are returned by the end of February in accordance with rule 24.

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