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Table Tennis DIGEST

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

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EDITORIAL

We awaited with anticipation the deluge of redundant blades and rubbers following the appeal in the last issue. Alas, for our hopes, nothing has been forthcoming. I find it hard to believe that none of you have any discarded rubbers or blades which we can put to good use. Why not have a good search and send what you have to us. I can assure you they will be put to good use.

I recently looked up the very first issue of our magazine (1950/51) and it was not really a surprise to read of the complaints as to players not serving correctly, i.e. throwing the ball up as near vertical as possible. Today, 46 years later, this self same problem is still with us. So much so, that a slight kerfuffle occurred during a 4th Div. match culminating in a player conceding the set because of being called for a foul service on a number of occasions. I am not going to take issue on the rights or wrongs of this particular episode as I was not present, but would that foul serving is rife in every division of our League. Many players have little knowledge of the Service Rule and even less interest in complying with it. The only real surprise is that this incident has been the only one. What are your views on this issue? How best should we tackle this problem within our League to eradicate it without too much aggro? Your response will be published in the next issue, if, that is, I get any.

Turning to another problem, our Closed Championships. When you read this they will have taken place and as always, in terms of organisation etc. they will have been successful. However, in terms of numbers of entries they will have again been a failure. The question has to be asked, do members want a Closed Championships? More importantly, do they deserve one? Much time, effort and planning goes into this Event as your Management Committee feel that you, the members, are entitled to a well run and well organised tournament. For lower divisional players it will have been the only one worth entering.

Some seasons ago the Restricted Singles were replaced with the present Divisional Singles as they offered an opportunity for players to compete in at least one event against others of fairly equal ability. Entries this season number 11 - 5 - 17 & 8 respectively. An Over 55's was introduced to cater for the increasing number of over 55 members. Last season, the first saw 15 entries, this season it is down to 11. Even the Men's Singles have only attracted 48 entries. The Women's have the magnificent total of 4 with Juniors 8. So what do you, the members, want in the way of a Closed Tournament? This is your magazine and your views will be printed. I await with anticipation a flood of views and suggestions and will print as many of them as possible, even if this means adding additional pages. So get cracking, put pen to paper and air your opinion publicly. Perhaps this way we just might be able to run a Tournament which meets the needs of the many instead of as now, the needs of only a few. (Cont'd on Page 1)

MATCH SECRETARY'S ROUND UP by Don Davies



I make no apology for starting my report with a tribute to a truly brilliant young man.

Rarely does a player come along that takes everyone by storm but that is exactly what Adam Robertson has without done, with spectators turning out wherever he appears.

Since his debut, he has had two further outings for the league and has remained unbeaten. The young fellow wiped away England number 3 Veteran, Brian Johns and his brother Ian, both in straight games. On leaving the hall we learned that Adam was now a teenager, having celebrated his 13th birthday the day before. This news brought a sigh of relief to the 'Johns' boys who were delighted that they hadn't been beaten by a 12 year old!

Then we heard that he has become the youngest player in British T.T. history to be selected for the World Championships in Manchester, together with the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, both of course in April. On his next outing in the Norman Cook Memorial Trophy against Barrow there were more than twenty people watching, Liverpool winning 5-1. If you have the chance to watch him before the season ends, don't miss it, you won't regret it.

The Men's team stayed on course to retain their division one title following two important results. The 9-1 victory at Mid Cheshire left us with ten points from our five matches, while Wigan, who also enjoyed a 100% record, suffered defeat at Burnley.

Another decent crowd turned up for Liverpool's tie against Barrow in the Norman Cook Memorial trophy at CADWA. Stuart Richards lost the first set and though conceding four points in each game, wins from Keith, Adam and Brenda, together with the two doubles sets, eased us into the semi-finals for the seventh time in ten years. Our opponents are not yet known but Wirral are a big threat following their recent Q.F. victory over holders Mid Cheshire.

Also boasting a 100% start is the Ladies team, their latest and fifth successive victory at Manchester kept them at the top of division one. Paula (3),

Brenda (2) and Denise (1) plus the doubles doing the trick. Well done Ladies! This result almost certainly ensures that the title will remain in Liverpool.

The Veterans have won only three out of eight matches to date between them. The first team will probably require another two points from their next three matches to avoid the drop.

The 'A' team have been strengthened by the return of Alan Timewell, his inclusion for the match at Halton producing a 6-4 victory, although we lost to Oldham in the next fixture 7-3. Two points from the visit of Macclesfield should see them safe.

The Junior side of Lee Farley plus Jay and Alan French have won just once but have collected points in every match, and I am assured by Stan and Paula that they continue to improve in each outing.

EDITORIAL (Continued)

Finally, an inter-city match took place recently at our new club venue and I reminded both teams that this was a church hall and they should not indulge in swearing or blaspheming. To my amazement a visiting player asked, "how can you play table tennis without swearing?" I responded suitably but if this is the mentality and attitude of players then table tennis as a sport has no future. Mind you, when International players swear and kick the table or court surrounds, should we be surprised if lesser players see this behaviour as being part of table tennis.

Ken Armson

Volunteers Wanted

Are you interested in taking a coaching course? How about an umpiring certificate? Or would you like to be a referee?

The League is desperately short of coaches and umpires who are willing to give their time to promote our sport.

If either of the above appeals to you, and you would like to put something back into table tennis, please contact Stan Clarke, Ken Armson or Brian Leeson.

Your Help is Needed Now!!

SECRETARY'S COLUMN

The horizon continues to look bright for T.T. and with the European Championships in Glasgow, and the Worlds' in Manchester, our sport is going to gain a tremendous boost this year.

We must take advantage of the increased interest to develop Table Tennis in Liverpool, while at the same time raise the status of the LD TTL.

The League continues to develop the sport in the community and the Junior coaching sessions have introduced TT to many youngsters. Organised by Ken Armson the Liverpool Junior Woolwich TT League will again introduce children to competitive play and will sow the seeds for future League members.

In August, Liverpool will host a major Grand Prix Table Tennis tournament at the Wavertree Tennis Club, where many of the country's top players will be competing and this will further raise the profile of our sport.

Liverpool Channel One Cable T.V. company have been showing TT on the 'telly' and no doubt will seek coverage of the Grand prix tournament. This, together with national T.V. coverage of the European and World Championships will put the spotlight on our sport.

What can you do to help. Well first of all, if you know of any children who might wish to take up T.T. bring them along to Picton Sports Centre between 4pm and 6pm on a Monday, where they can benefit from our coaching scheme. If you can spare a couple of hours a week to help out at these sessions you will be made more than welcome.

Do you have any old blades or rubbers you no longer use? If so we will be pleased to take them off your hands, they will be put to good use for the children.

Your club could consider running a Junior development programme, and would benefit from support from the ETTA's Top Sport programme.

We are still waiting to see if any of the Lottery application schemes we have been involved in have been successful. A decision is expected in April, so, fingers crossed, there could be a dedicated Table Tennis centre in the city, that will go a long way to dramatically improving our sport.



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THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

With less than 100 days to go the World Championships are attracting enormous interest from all parts of the world and Manchester is likely to be the biggest World Championships ever.

The event will be played on 44 tables all in the same hall at the G-Mex Centre, Manchester. The four show courts will be surrounded by 6,000 seats in a theatre in a round setting, ensuring that all spectators enjoy an excellent view.

The tickets have been on sale for only a month and already more than 3,000 seats have been sold.

Don't be disappointed. Book your tickets now!!

DIVISION ONE by Paul Gittins

Hands up if you thought 'Joan of Arc' was Noah's wife? A good example that people can make mistakes. I'm led to believe that a lot of players made the mistake of not entering the Closed Championships. It beggars belief to why, every year, only a small per centage of players choose to represent their clubs, divisions and themselves at the Closed. I can understand to a certain degree the argument that it's the same faces that progress to the final stages and perhaps it may be a long day to sit around and wait for the inevitable defeat. But so what! It's a great opportunity to meet old friends and players all under the same roof, catch some good table tennis and you never know, you might even chalk up a surprise win or revenge an earlier league defeat. When you think that certain individuals within the league, mainly amongst the Committee, are striving to improve the status of the LD TTL, then I do feel that for one day a year each player could contribute to that goal by mustering up the enthusiasm to enter the Closed.

Anyway, time to wipe the soap off my ankles and report to what's happening in the division. The clash of the top three, Colonsay, Wav. St Mary's and CADWA have brought some interesting results. Young Adam Robertson turned out for Wav St Mary's 1st team (now there's a surprise!) against Colonsay and duly won his 3. Bernie Wentworth played well to beat Paul Hutchings and Chris Ford but lost to Stuart Richards. Dave Roberts then delivered the goods (as you'd expect from a post-man!) by beating Stuart, Wav finishing 6-4 winners.

Within a week the Wav. team entertained CADWA. Rob Bevan replaced Dave Roberts whilst Keith Williams, Kevin Dolder and Phil Musgrove completed the CADWA line up. Keith and Kevin both beat Bernie and Rob but lost to Adam, Keith losing 21/9 in the third. Phil then produced the win of the night by beating Adam. Both teams shared the points in what appeared to be a fair result.

The CADWA and Colonsay game has previously been mentioned but just to reiterate, CADWA won 7-3 with Kevin Dolder and Ian Eaton winning all their games. Colonsay's points came from Paul and Chris beating Phil Musgrove and then taking the doubles.

I don't actually participate in the National Lottery for the simple reason that I did mathematics at school and paid extra attention during the 'percentages' lesson, but one doesn't have to be 'Mystic Meg' to predict that Colonsay will once again lift the Championship trophy with CADWA and Wav St Mary's, for whom fielding a strong team consistently has proved difficult, both fighting for the runners-up position.

YMCA's Jeff Huntingdon has boldly predicted (on the back of the score cards - everyone please take note!) that his team will finish in the top six and I've got a tendency to agree with him, particularly when they convincingly beat their 1st team 8-2. Jeff has also achieved some good individual wins, namely, Dave Roberts, Chris Ford and his three against Waterloo. The remaining squad of Kevin Lau, Ming Liu and Ahmed Thabet are all capable of picking up points and no doubt adds confidence to Jeff's prediction. The thrashing of the 1st team is by no stretch of the imagination an indication that the first team are in dire straits, quite the contrary, particularly for Peter Taylor who is having a really good season. His 3 against GPT assisted towards an 8-2 win whilst his 3 against Police saw YMCA 7-3 winners. Peter seems to be getting that extra one or two balls back and his game's gone tighter. He must fancy his chances of doing well in the Closed Vets, although he'll be hoping that if he faces Bath St's Kenny Jackson that Kenny doesn't produce the form which he displayed against Kevin Dolder, beating him 2 straight and Phil Musgrove in the same match. Kenny also saved the white-wash against Wav St Mary's when he beat Rob Bevan.

The Vet players seem to be having a good season all round. Wav's Roy Smith completed a hat-trick at Bath St 'A' and then went on to beat Kenny Jackson and Mick Keane before losing to Fred Bainbridge. It's also good to see Wav's Phil 'Ravenelli' Luxon make a few special appearances, he even managed to take the game somewhat seriously and beat YMCA's Ahmed Thabet. I too also managed to fall foul of his casual, humorous style, not to mention those awful, below the table shots which I've never managed to return.

The lower half of the table shows Police, Waterloo, GPT and Bath St 'A'. John Rankin and brother Steve (sounds like a character from 'Father Ted'!)

are both playing well illustrated when they had fine wins over Bath St's Mick Keane and Fred Bainbridge, earning a 5-5 draw.

On the subject of 'Father Ted' and having already mentioned rejuvenated Vet players, the combination of these two factors can only conjure up one player, Ted Birch! Ted's having a tremendous season and his list of successes begins with Bob Edwards, Paul Price and Trevor Owen of GPT and against Wav he defeated Mick Tierney and Roy Smith, and, in the same match, Alan Chase beat Alan Timewell to take 3 points from the match. Waterloo then played Wav St Mary's and again Ted triumphed over Dave Roberts and then partnered Alan for a great win over Dave and Bernie in the doubles. Alan also beat YMCA's Peter Lee and in the same match Mick Allen, who is throwing a 'I've broken my duck' party beat the in form Peter Taylor. Well done Mick!!

The lads at GPT must be wondering what has hit them. Having had such an inspirational previous season they now find themselves getting dangerously close to the relegation zone. GPT have been slightly unlucky against the top teams who have turned up in strength, whereas other lower teams have been fortunate to pick up the odd vital points against the same teams who have fielded reserves. Regardless of that the 5-5 draw against Waterloo looked like a good game on paper and I'm sure that Trevor Owens will be pleased with his wins against Wav's Gary Watson and Phil Luxon. The GPT team will also be hoping to repeat the early season 10 nil defeat of Bath St 'A', however I feel that is doubtful, particularly when you take into account the current form of Ian McElwee! Having recently returned to the division Ian is another player who is 'on song'. He beat John Rankin and yours truly in an 8-2 win for the Police. he also won his 3 against Waterloo which helped his team to a 6-4 win. In the same match Colin Owens was awarded the man of the Match for his defeat of 'Father Ted', amazingly 21/5 in the third. Ian's best win to date is against Bernie Wentworth and this must be an indication of how well he is playing.

I must also mention that the gorgeous Brenda Buoe (I'll get a dance at the social for saying that - and probably a smack off the wife) saved the whitewash by beating Peter Taylor.

Lastly, and this is a genuine request, the cleaners at Fairfield have found a set of dentures and suspect that they may belong to a table tennis player. I've personally left a message for FBI agent, Foxy Mulder to investigate and trace the owner. The message reads, *'The tooth is out there'!!*

DIVISION TWO-NOTES NOT RECEIVED

DIVISION THREE

by Tony Harris

Manweb's first team, having played their games in hand, have shot to the top of the table and are now 12 points ahead of second placed Police 'A' with a game in hand. Manweb, with no.1 Mike Mahoney remaining unbeaten, have yet to lose a match and must be strong favourites to finish as Champions. The runners up spot could still go to any of four teams. Police 'A', Bath St. 'B', Bootle YM and Manweb 'A' are battling it out for the honour of joining Manweb in Div.2 and it is likely to go right to the wire.

So Manweb march on but they had a tough match against the improving Bootle YM team, winning by a narrow margin of 6-4. John Higham and Roly Wright overcame Neil Jennings, Danny Every chipped in beating Alan Radcliffe in the 3rd and a good doubles win for John and Tom Killip over Mike Mahoney and Neil ensured 4 points for YM. Convincing victories followed for Manweb - 9-1 v Wav. St. Marys (W.S.M's.) John Gratton gaining WSM's point with a 21/16, 21/17 win over Alan Evans, -9-1 v Waterloo 'C', Ray Hibbs preventing the whitewash with a fine victory over Peter Carney, 21/18, 21/19. In the all Manweb derby match, 1st team captain, Neil Jennings had a good night, defeating Alan Biggs 19/21, 21/14, 21/16 and Rob Conley, 21/19, 21/16, to help his side to an 8-2 win.

The same four players have played in every match this season for Police 'A', which must be a first, and they are maintaining a strong challenge at the top. Away at Bath St. 'C', Police managed a 6-4 win, with reserve for Bath St, Brian Holden picking up a good win over John Dyson, 21/11 in the 3rd, with John also just losing out in the 3rd to Karen Gibson. An 8-2 victory for Police over Cadwa 'C' was turned into a convincing 10-0 as Paul Morgan and Jack Highton played out of order, cancelling out Jack's

win over Jon Dyson in the 3rd. Steady, Len Dyson starred in the 7-3 victory over Bootle YM beating Tom Killip, 21/17, in the 3rd and Danny Every 21/15, 21/11, with John Higham in fine form for YM, with a double over Gareth Jones, 21/15, 21/11 and Tony Harris 21/13 in the 3rd. Police 'A' have now played all but Bootle YM, of the top teams and must be hopeful of keeping the pressure on. A draw against Manweb 'A' was followed by a battling draw against Manweb, this being all the more remarkable, as Trevor Barraclough came in as reserve for Manweb at no. 4. Man of the Match John Dyson produced his best table tennis of the season, beating Alan Radcliffe, followed up with a 3 set victory over Trevor Barraclough, after losing the 1st 9/21.

Bath St. 'B' are keeping up the pressure in 3rd place but did not take home advantage when they met Police 'A' in a crunch promotion match., Police winning 6-4, in a match that could have gone either way. Gareth Jones starred for Police, beating John Watson in a very tight 3rd set and Rob Peat, while in form John Langton did likewise for Bath St. beating John Dyson and Tony Harris. In the Bath St. derby match, the 'B' team were the victors, winning 7-3. Val Franco had a good win over John Watson, 21/18, 21/16 but was then beaten by Rob Peat, 21/15, 21/15. Dave Stoddern recorded a good win against John Langton, 23/21 in the 3rd and Chris Foley picked up a point for the 'C' team with a two set win over Les Gee.

Manweb 'A' have only lost one match, to their first team and with 3 games in hand are still in the reckoning. No. 1 Trevor Barraclough with his mixture of steady defence and ability to hit winners, doesn't seem to make any enforced errors and is very hard to beat. Of the cards to hand, Trevor has only lost 3 games all season, to Mike Mahoney, Jon Dyson and John Higham for Bootle YM in the 6-4 win for Manweb 'A'.

WSM's 'C' find themselves in mid table security having won 7 and drawn 3 of their 15 matches, but would have been higher up the table if Bobby Owen was able to play every week. They had a good 7-3 win v Bath St. 'C', Bobby picking up a double with wins over Val Franco, 21/18, 21/16 and Dave Stoddern, 21/19 in the 3rd, and John Gratton doing likewise with wins over Val, 21/19, 21/15 and Karen Gibson, 21/13, 24/22.

Harold House 'A' are propping up the table and look doomed to Div. 4 next season but it's any one of a number of teams who will join them. Only 11 points separate Waterloo 'C', second from bottom and Maghull 'A', who are four places above them, so it really is going to be dogfight. When Harold House visited Police 'A', John Hodges, playing at no.3 starred, winning a close game against Tony Harris, 24/22 in the 3rd and the beating John Dyson in two straight to earn 2 valuable points for his team.

Maghull 'A' have put together a good run, taking them out of the second relegation spot. In a good 6-4 win over Cadwa 'C', Tom Downing was in fine form, beating Pete Roberts, 21/15, 21/13 and Bob Peverall, 21/18, 21/9. Ray Parkinson did the honours for Cadwa with victories over Rod Bulmer, 21/13 in the 3rd and Wilf Gibson, 21/18, 21/17. In the 5-5 draw v GPT 'B', Phil Christie had a fine double over Bobby Bell, 21/16, 21/18 and Ted Green, 21/5, 21/12, and Rob Bulmer had an excellent win over Eddie Crowley, 21/19 in the 3rd.

Cadwa 'C' were then at home to Harold House 'A' and despite a plucky performance by H. House, Cadwa won 6-4. Paul Morgan won his two against his former club, beating B. Millward, 21/19 in the 3rd and Bob Hudson, also 21/12 in the 3rd. Steve Critchley also won two, with wins over Ian Burrows and I. Kyte.

GPT 'B' have played more games than their rivals and must be looking over their shoulders at the teams below them. They picked up 2 vital points against Bath St 'B' courtesy of the much under estimated Eddie Crowley who beat John Watson and Rob Peat, and in the draw against Maghull 'A' Bobby Bell did well to beat Tom Downing 21/15 in the 3rd.

Waterloo 'C' have an excellent no.1 in Julie prince, but they have slipped into the danger zone and will need some good performances to ensure their Div. 3 status. In a 7-3 defeat at Bootle YM Julie was in sparkling form, recording good wins over John Higham, 22/20, 21/15 and Roly Wright, 21/18, 21/17. Julie again starred in a 6-4 win over GPT 'B' defeating Ray Lavin, 21/10 in the 3rd and Eddie Crowley in two, and in a 5-5 draw against WSM's 'C' Ian Lunt did the double with wins over Gordon Langshaw and Ken Roberts.

So nothing appears to be decided yet. Its going to be a very interesting and exciting run in and I wouldn't dare to make any predictions at this stage. Good luck to everyone!

DIVISION FOUR by Arthur Garnett

Hello again. We've put away the Christmas and new Year cheers and after 13 matches prepare for what appears to be a very tense finale to the Division Four season.

After 13 matches, Wav. Lab. 'E' head the table with 100 points closely followed by Liverpool YMCA 'B' with 94 points. In the last Digest I forecast a 'runners up' spot for the Labour team and I think I will stick to that. With Mark Miles, Paul Faulkner and Mabel Neary playing 1,2 &3 respectively and the two Kens, Armson and Ray at number 4, they are a strong team which 'bat' all the way down. They have turned in some very impressive performances, such as an 8-2 defeat of the 3rd placed team Bootle YMCA 'A'. Paul Faulkner losing both singles to Chris Maguire 21/10 in the third and an excellent win by Kathy Hayden 21/16 also in the 3rd. They also defeated a strong Manweb 'B' team, 7-3, this time ken Ray losing both singles and then teaming up with Mabel Neary to lose a doubles 21/14 in the 3rd. They also defeated Maghull 'B' 8-2. This is also a fine result, Maghull having only recently been in Div. 3. However, there is this tendency to lose points in unexpected games, such as :- In their defeat of Police 'B' 7-3, Mabel lost to Brian Burrows 14/21, 12/21 and Paul lost to Tom Purcell 15/21, 19/21. Miles/Faulkner then lost in the doubles to Purcell/Winkle 21/23, 12/21. I think they will have to tighten up considerably to hold off the certain challenge from Liverpool YMCA 'B' for the title.

Which brings me to Liverpool YMCA, currently in 2nd place, 6 points behind. The match between the top two does not help me to separate the teams, as they drew 5-5, with the Lab. team winning both doubles. Manweb 'B' being the only other team to draw with YM. It is noticeable that the two out of only three defeats registered against Joey Williams were both in these drawn matches. He won't lose many more this season. With Joey Williams at 1, Jimmy Clewett at 2, Tim Ternant very strong at 4, the only relatively weak spot in the team is position 3. No disrespect to Francis Lay or Russell

Thornton, but this is the area where opposing teams are looking to win points. The only other two teams who have performed well against YM are Bootle YMCA and Maghull who both lost 6-4. Apart from these results it's big victories all the way. But what is it that makes me believe that Liverpool YMCA can bridge the six point gap and emerge as Champions. Well, it's the ability to strengthen their team at the important time of the season. Not just strengthen the team from the top but to do it in the position that I and no doubt many of their opponents and no doubt they themselves have recognised as their weak spot., position 3. My team played against the YM last week and at 3 they had a reserve in place of Francis or Russell - George Smith. Yes! George Smith at number 3 in Division four. Beat that Ken Armson if you can.

The positions of 3rd and 4th in the division will be highly contested between Bootle YMCA 'A' and Manweb 'B'. Currently Bootle YM are in 3rd spot with 82 points and Manweb are in 6th with 75 points having played one game less. I think that Bootle YM will finish 3rd. They consistently field a stronger team than Manweb. When they met at Olive Mount, Bootle won 6-4, with Mike Hughes scoring a double and each other member of the team notching a point in the singles, with the doubles being split 1-1. The team of McGuire, Rivers, Haydon, Hughes is in my opinion the weaker side they put out. They choose four out of five players rotating the turn for each player to miss a match. Their other player is their now regular number 2, Eddie Preston. It may be that if they are serious about finishing in 3rd position they may have to adjust their policy and pick, 'horses for courses', to play their strongest team against the strongest opposition. They started the season poorly with an 8-2 loss to Maghull in their 1st match. I've been told by a Bootle YM team member that at this time there was a certain friction in the team. After this dodgy start they 'knuckled down' to set their season in motion, culminating in week 11 with them being the only team to beat Lpool YM, so far this season. It must be said that their 6-4 victory was achieved with their strongest side which is an indication of what they could have done this season without all the team changes.

I expect Manweb 'B' to finish in 4th place. Their team has had a more regular look to it this season,

Turner - Harrison- Ashley - Miles, being the usual line up, with no more 'guest appearances' from John Moores and Paul Jennings. But it is a lack of consistency which will end up with them in 4th place. To draw against Lpool YMCA is an excellent performance but their defeat, 10 days later, 7-3 to Maghull puts things into perspective.

The battle to avoid relegation is on. Bath St 'E' are propping up the table with 21 points and I feel sure they will do reasonably well in Division five next season. Who goes with them is a choice of one from three. Currently standing on the trap door are Linacre on 31 points, Aigburth on 39, and Bath St 'D' on 42. Bath St 'D' should escape without too much difficulty but Aigburth and Linacre are in it 'to the death'.

As said in my last notes, Linacre miss Harry Reeve badly but if he returns before the end of the season he just could give them the added push, and embarrass an Aigburth team that should be doing better. Apart from the 6-4 victory of bottom placed Bath St 'E', Linacre's best result is to draw with the other Bath St team, without Harry! Each player winning a singles with Lacey/Davidson A. coughing up a doubles point. Seven points with seven matches to go. It could be done. Aigburth, you have been warned!

The Aigburth team don't seem to be able to put the same team out twice in succession and the team probably suffers for this., They have come up with some fine individual performances - Graham Rollinson beat John Moores (Manweb) 15/21, 21/16, 21/15, and Ken Nelson (W'loo 'D') 17/21, 21/23, 12/21. Peter Williams beat George Frost (Maghull) 21/19, 21/14. Eric Woods beat Russell Thornton (Lpool YM) 11/21, 21/16, 8/21 and Ken Ray (WSM's) 9/21, 8/21. Derek Traynor beat Brian Burrows (Police) 21/12, 21/19. Good victories all but they need to do more to withstand a late Linacre challenge.

So that covers the top and bottom four teams. The four remaining teams, Maghull 'B', Waterloo 'D', Wav St Mary's 'D' and my team, Police 'B' will remain in mid table.

Maghull 'B' are finding that a quick return to Division 3 is not possible for them this time. This Division is a very strong one and for them to win promotion back they will have to strengthen their side.

The team of Frost, Salter, McGanity and Tummino is a reasonable one and they have had some good results, but more consistency is required for a team to win promotion. They defeated Bootle YMCA 8-2 in week 1 but have not been able to reproduce that kind of result. A 6-4 defeat by Liverpool YM is creditable enough but this followed a 6-4 defeat at the hands of Police 'B'. So for Maghull 'B' it's 5th spot.

In 6th spot will probably be Waterloo 'D' followed by Wav St Mary's 'D'. Waterloo currently have 70 points from 13 games while Wav 'D' have 63 points from 12 games. I've separated them with Waterloo on top purely on the result of the match between them when Waterloo won 8-2. Wav St Mary's 'D' in their second season in Division 4 after seasons in Division 3 are finding it no easier this time around. The team has not been strengthened (unlike the 'E') team so it would appear that they are content in the 4th.

What can you say about your own team, Police 'B'. As everyone else, we started the season with high hopes which were quickly dashed. We then hoped for a top four spot but with Richie Winckle missing so many games this has become impossible. We survive to fight another season. I say to my colleagues in my team, 'There are no easy victories in this Division - I do not expect any of us to be someone else's easy victory'. I don't think they listen too well!

Finally, in the last issue, the Editor made comments about foul language used by players in matches. It would appear that his observations have been taken to heart and that players are really trying to control their verbal outpourings. I hope he's pleased!

DIVISION FIVE by Ken Armson

Not an auspicious start for me as far as forecasting, Maghull 'C' being knocked out of the cup by Cadwa 'D' who strengthened their team by the inclusion of Jack Highton. Maghull were not exactly over the moon about this change, but he was eligible and Clubs do have the right to utilise eligible players for whatever reason. Brian Gregory and his team-mate Mateson put it behind them by not only winning consistently but by winning well. There have been few hiccups and even fewer frights in their march to the Championship. One fright

being provided by Harold House 'B' and Maghull had to settle for a hard fought draw, Ted Cramsie being M. o. M. beatings Brian and Jim Gill in straight sets and rounding his performance off with a doubles win. It was left to no. 4 Steve Mc Ganity to save face for them in winning his two singles. They are now clear leaders and although the gap may be narrowed at the finish, no-one will overtake them.

At present in 2nd place, Cadwa 'D' will have to accept that as being the best they can achieve but at least they are comfortably in that position with little fear of promotion being snatched from them. Not much separates Wav. St Mary's 'F' (Wav. Lab. as was) and Harold House 'B' and although they will work hard keeping the pressure on Cadwa, they both have team weaknesses which will prevent their getting into the coveted second promotion spot. Somewhat ironically, W.S.M'. lost to Cadwa in the cup semi final although never having actually lost a match to them. In four encounter, they have drawn three and won one, the semi final being decided on games after two drawn matches, Cadwa going into the final on the narrow margin of one game. Main problem for General Perry being that of not having a player capable of taking on the no. 1's and beating them. The team being strong in depth but lacking the individual strength to get the big wins consistently. Harold House 'B' will keep breathing down their necks but need not fear being overtaken. Eric (have I won yet) Young using a 4 from 5 system and this can be costly, it should instead be 'horses for courses. Sorry, Eric, looks like another season in the 5th for you and your team, you should have kept hold of John Hodges.

Always destined to be in the shadow of their 'C' team, Maghull 'D' have worked hard and well deserve their 5th place. They gave Cadwa a run for their money, losing narrowly 6-4, but did a double in the doubles, Phil Maitland & Andy Mc Court beating Steve and Trevor for, I think, only their third defeat, the others being against Colonsay, Lee Farley/Jay French doing the business and the reverse fixture with Phil on that occasion partnered by Doug Christie. A really noteworthy double with those four sets being just as valuable to the 'C' team as the 'D' team in that they helped consolidate their lead at the top.

With nothing to look forward to in the league and

holding the same position as last season, Aigburth 'A' hoped for better in the cup when the semi final draw kept them away from the big uns. Police 'C' had other ideas and went through with a 6-3 victory, Aigburth suffering a setback when the reliable and difficult to beat Billy (Stonewall) Holmes lost his two. Cadwa will start favourites in the final but Police just might pull it off. Could be a close final, could be a 6-2.

Life in the 5th is mostly about enjoying your table tennis, causing upsets and winning when your opponent expects you to lose but sometimes it is about proving yourself and that tag is fastened on Colonsay, who, to date, have failed to do just that. The team also forms the Liverpool Junior team in the Lancs and Cheshire League and so have gained in experience. After several seasons they still languish in the bottom half, failing to use to the fullest extent, their ability and experience. They need a firm guiding hand if they are ever going to become a threat in this division, someone like 'Thunderball Clarke'. If the best Juniors we can produce, struggle in the 5th, then the future looks grim.

Very little separates Bootle YM 'B', Police 'C' and Hope in points or ability, they have each recorded some good results, but Hope, newcomers last season, have been the ones to make their mark. They use a lot of players, some good, some weak, but they have improved and it is showing in their results. Best result recently being an 8-2 against Police with no.1 Martin Hopgood getting two very good scalps when beating George Wright and John Jeffrey. Not to be outshone, Lisa Mortimer, at no.4 also chipped in with two wins. They finished bottom last season with 38 points and having now exceeded that, they will be aiming to get above Bootle YM and Police. I think they can do it. 'Not so', will say Jim Geddes, for one, whose team is sound and experienced but their results have not equated with their ability and they have yet to prove themselves in this division. Same applies to Police, both teams getting good results against lower teams and being battered by the higher ones. Two lower half teams could find themselves being pushed even lower by Hope who could be on an upswing.

Battling at the bottom to avoid being in last place are Bath St. 'F' and Harold House 'C', Bath St. having the points, Harold House the games in hand. Bath St. 'F' being mainly composed of new-comers

thrown in at the deep end when their club entered a late additional team. Ron Georgeson acts as non playing captain and is the guiding hand which Colonsay lack. His support and encouragement has proved successful in that only John Nesbit has yet to record a win. Hope fortune smiles on you soon, John and that you and your team-mates, Steve Faulkner, Mike Bates, Don Gibson and Graham West will be back with us next season using the experience of this one as a springboard to more victories. Still on the subject of first wins, W.S.M.'s introduced a new-comer, Mike Davitt. He has practised with us for over a year and General Perry decided it was time he got his feet wet. He got his first win against Neil McGorry of Aigburth 'A' and there is now no holding him back. Well done Mike! To those six players I would say to them, look on this as being a long and fruitful era of competitive table tennis, you won't regret joining us. Those hard to come by victories of this season will become positive wins next season.

Finally in November, Harold House 'C' failed to turn up for a re-arranged Wk. 1 match against Hope, who duly claimed a walk over. A few weeks later, Hope failed to turn up against Harold House 'C' and they duly claimed a walk over. I don't know the full facts and will not take sides but this does smack strongly of tit for tat. Presumably Harold House 'C' failed to turn up with good reason. Possibly Hope had disbanded for Christmas, I don't know. Hopefully, the two teams have/will resolve this hiccup by mutual agreement and we can put it down to a misunderstanding arising from lack of communication. If not, perhaps a gentle banging together of heads by our Fixture Secretary, Paula French, might have the desired result. Or have I got it all wrong and this is not the friendly 5th Division which I thought it was.

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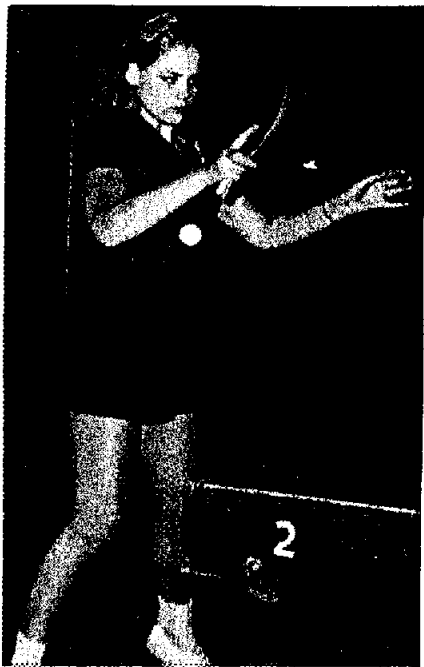
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TABLE TENNIS NEEDS YOU!
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Another face from the past! This lady, from a famous Table Tennis family was at her peak in the 1960's, when she won four Ladies Singles titles in the Liverpool Closed Championships. Who is she? (Answer - foot of Page 13)

THE VERY EARLY YEARS

Although the Liverpool & District T.T. League was founded in 1926, there was a thriving Table Tennis scene in Liverpool as early as 1902.

The sport had a fanatical following all over the country and the playing of table tennis in the city of Liverpool was formalised at a meeting on Tuesday 21st January, 1902, when local enthusiasts decided to form a club under the title of, 'The Liverpool Table Tennis Club', the words 'table tennis' being used owing to the fact that ping pong was registered by a London firm of manufacturers.

Mr Frank Sugg, a noted cricketer was elected Chairman of the club, Mr D. Connor, Treasurer, and Mr W.J. Pearson, of whom it was reported, 'to whose foresight and energy the club owes its initiation', Secretary, and on 3rd February, the club opened their new clubhouse at the New Cafe, Moorfields, in the city centre.

The first major table tennis tournament in

Liverpool, appears to have taken place between 4th - 8th February, 1902 at the splendid St George's Hall.

As well as including the North of England Mixed Open Championship, the tournament included Gentlemen's and Ladies Open Championship, and a competition for Gentlemen and ladies who resided within a ten mile radius.

For any of the three events, a payment of ten shillings was due, which included a season ticket to the Cycle and Motor Show, which was being staged in the Hall at the same time.

The competition was run under the 'Cavendish Rules' but in addition, no gut string racquets or white costumes were allowed. Each game was of 20 points up and after 19 all, the best of 5 points decided the game.

Liverpool, and Lancashire certainly appeared to be a bedrock for the game, and North/South rivalry was strong, as witnessed by an article in issue number 3 of the 'Pioneer', a T.T. journal of the time. The article reported that the formation of a North of England Ping Pong Association was imminent and quoted 'one of our Northern contemporaries', who stated, *'it seems in ping pong, as in everything else, that what Lancashire thinks today, the rest of the world will think tomorrow'*.

From being the absolute craze of the day, TT disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared on the scene.

How did this come about? There had been increasing reports of the boring tactics of 'stonewalling', which the Pioneer reported, *'produced absolute dreariness for the spectators and disgust on the part of the ordinary brilliant player'*. A report of a tournament in Oxford stated that it took Mr N.P. Batten two hours to defeat Mr J.R. Turner by 20 points to 13, one rally consisting of 715 strokes'. The game had become serious business and with prizes of up to £100 had lost its attraction as a spectator sport.

So the game died out. No doubt it was still played, out of the public eye, but it was soon forgotten by the masses, until its remarkable resurgence in the 1920's, which led to the formation of many Leagues up and down the country. The rest, as they say is history!

MAILBOX

Dear Sir,



Wavertree Labour, now W'tree St. Mary's have found a new venue, St. Mary's Church hall, Northdale Road, Wavertree. This is a one way road and the purpose of this letter is to seek the assistance of players in respect of not parking outside, or in the vicinity of the hall. Residents living opposite have complained to the Church P.P.C. in the past about parking and noise from the late departing users, i.e. car doors slamming and loud conversation etc.

We do not wish to get involved in any form of dispute with residents and are seeking the co-operation of our own and visiting players to park away from the immediate frontage i.e. Sandown Lane/North Drive being more suitable. It should be borne in mind that with two matches being played each night, up to a dozen cars could be involved dependent on travel arrangements. It has taken four months to find this venue and we do not want its usage threatened by inconsiderate parking and noisy departures. The co-operation of all members attending our home matches will be greatly appreciated.

Hon. Secretary

Yours faithfully
W'tree St. Mary's

TABLE TENNIS SOCIAL

Last season's joint Table Tennis Social evening, between the Business Houses, the Police and our own League was a huge success, both as a good night out and as a way of raising funds.

This year's social is to take place at the **Police Club, Fairfield on Friday 9th May, 1997**, so put the date in your diaries now!

A small part of the evening is taken up by presentations but the rest of the night is yours.

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Further details will be available soon.



Give yourself ten out of ten if you successfully identified the young celebrity in the last Digest. Only Peter Rumjahn was forthcoming in correctly naming a 13 year Ronnie Rumjahn. The older player was a famous player from the 1930's, Benny Casofsky, who partnered Peter to several major Doubles titles in the North West.

Ron, as well as brothers, Peter and Ted, was an England international and the family annexed the Men's Singles title at the Liverpool Closed for an amazing thirteen times and eleven seasons in succession, along with numerous Doubles titles.

Introduced to table tennis by their father, Doctor Rumjahn, affectionately known as 'Doc Rummy', when they used to play on the dining room table at home, the Rumjahn family will long hold a special place in the history of the Liverpool & District League.

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NAME THE PLAYER



And now for this issue's 'Name the Player' feature. The young man shown above was based on the Wirral and was a star of the Great Crosby club in the late 40's and 50's. (Answer foot of Page 13)



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JUNIOR COACHING

The Junior Coaching sessions at Picton Sports Centre are continuing, under the guidance of Ken Amson. Several League members have been helping out but once again it has to be said that, **MORE HELP IS NEEDED!**

If you can spare 2 hours a week then you will be made more than welcome at Picton Sports Centre, Mondays, between 4pm - 6pm. Thankyou!

LIVERPOOL CLOSED TOURNAMENT FINALS DECIDED AT EVERTON PARK SPORTS CENTRE ON 16TH FEBRUARY

DIVISION TWO

TREVOR JONES (MAGHULL)
BEAT
PAULA FRENCH (COLONSAY)
21/7 21/12

DIVISION THREE

EDDIE CROWLEY (GPT)
BEAT
JOHN HIGHAM (BOOTLE YM)
21/17 21/10

DIVISION FOUR

MABEL NEARY (W.S.M.'s)
BEAT
JOEY WILLIAMS (L'POOL YM)
21/17 16/21 21/17

DIVISION FIVE

STEVE CRITCHLEY (CADWA)
BEAT
LEE FARLEY (COLONSAY)
21/11 21/11

VETS OVER 55'S

TED BIRCH (WATERLOO)
BEAT
PETER TAYLOR (L'POOL YM)
21/11 21/16

Congratulations to all the winners, runners-up and indeed everyone who supported the event!



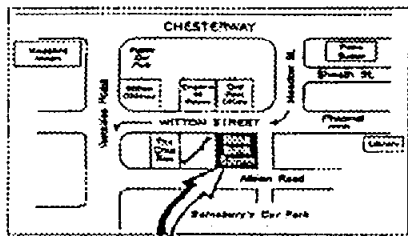
This young lady won the Ladies Singles title in 1970 and again in 1987 and she is still playing in the League today. Currently ranked at 120 in the Veterans list, she is still winning honours in the Liverpool League. Do you recognise her? (Answer - foot of Page 13)



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MORE TABLE EDGES

Roy Smith contested his 7th Veteran's final in February's Closed at Fairfield. The records show that Roy first appeared in a Closed final in 1960, when beaten in the Juniors by John Ball. A year later, though, he returned to defeat the 1959 Champion Bob Eden, whose son Andrew claimed the Men's title in 1989.

He reached the Men's final in 1963 and 1977 but was beaten by Wally Allanson and Keith Williams respectively. Normally one wouldn't be expecting to be reading of a players' defeats but in Roy's case I make an exception. To be contesting a final 37 years after your first, is truly remarkable. He did win the Veteran's title in 1988 beating Alan Chase and no player has won more Readman Cup and Division one title honours. The question should be asked. Will his like be seen in the future? I very much doubt it! This article has been prepared before the Closed night, so maybe by the time you read this, Roy has added to his haul of honours. Well done Roy.

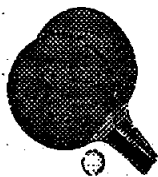
Liverpool Ladies are in the last eight of the J.M. Rose Bowl and face either Leeds or Northumbria at home.

The Veterans have reached the last 8 of the Alec Brook Trophy. Dave Roberts, Phil Luxon and Ken Jackson turned in a super show and with the match level at 4-4, K.J. went to the table seeking a hat-trick on his Liverpool debut. He earned a thrilling last set victory and a home tie against Harrogate. Now that should attract a big crowd for the Yorkshiremen will bring Denis Neale, the six times English Closed Champion. One of my favourite players, Denis has twice reached the last 16 in the Worlds' and was ranked at 17 in the world and 6 in Europe. He has appeared for England in over 500 matches, amazing!! Be there to support the team if you can.

Name The Player - Answers

Mabel Neary	Page 13
Bill Pierce	Page 12
Judy Crater	Page 10

TABLE EDGES, NETS & ECHOES OF THE PAST



The day after the Everton Park event I telephoned Barry Robertson to find out how Adam had fared in Sweden and found that the superstar had flown into England, and after first going home, had travelled to Cardiff for a five day training camp!

I was amazed to hear that Barry had also been to Sweden, having received a telephone call the day prior to departure, asking him to Captain the squad since Alan Griffiths had been forced to pull out. Barry quickly packed his case and was off.

It's all go in the Robertson household and I wonder how they manage to fit everything in. Adam won the under 13's and reached the Q.F. of the U/14's and U/15's singles. Well done once again. The tournament attracted some of the world's top players and Adam's team-mate Ryan Jenkins, after winning his Men's group, was rewarded with a match against 1989 World Champion, Jan-Ove Waldner, considered by many to still be the best in the world. Imagine missing that opportunity to play in the Liverpool Closed! Adam must attend as many top class events if he is to improve sufficiently to make it to the very top.

The day before the Closed I spoke to Bernie Hand, who lives in Holmrook, Cumbria. One of his claims to fame is that he became the first player to bring to a halt the eleven successes Closed victories by the Rumjahn brothers, which dated back to 1939 when Peter was crowned as Champion. he recalled that he and Vic Chesham had beaten the current World Champion, Johnny Leach and Jack Carrington, in the North of England Men's Doubles semi-finals. They were beaten, however, by Bennie Casofsky and Ken Stanley, who later became George Best's manager. Bernie was coached by Bobby Roberts and won the Junior title in 1947 and with partner, Moya Jones, annexed four Mixed Doubles titles in a row from 1955 to 1958.

Vic Chesham incidentally, won the Closed Veterans title four years in a row, from 1965 to 1958 and a hat-trick of Men's Doubles titles with Ron Rumjahn from 1952 to 1954, plus the Mixed Doubles with Julie Roberts in 1959.

Continuing with all our yesterdays, Bernie mentioned old friend, Bill Harris, who still plays for Colonsay. Bill won a first division championship medal in the early 1950's and the Men's Doubles title with Reg Hetherington in 1955. Keep going Bill, great to see stalwarts still going strongly.

The Junior's have reached the quarter-final of the Carter Cup without playing a match. Leamington Spa and Reading have both declined my dates and we have now been given another home draw against Slough! What a way to come for a Junior match.

Who remembers watching the Closed at St Mary's Church Hall? The new home venue of Wavertree 'Labour', staged the 1967 tournament, when Gordon Birch beat the 'injured' Dave Butterworth in the Men's final. Gordon won the first game but to the crowd's delight, Dave forced a decider when he snatched the second. Judy Crafter took her fourth and last Ladies title, exactly thirty years after her mother, Ivy, had recorded her sole success. Her final victim was Barbara Cain who also lost to Judy in 1966, with Barbara then claiming the title in each of the following two years. The venue has already staged a Liverpool match when the Veterans beat Matlock in the Alec brook Trophy.

DIVISION 1	P	W	L	D	PTS
WAV. ST MARYS	15	14	0	1	113
C.A.D.W.A.	14	12	0	2	109
COLONSAY	10	8	2	0	80
LPOOL YMCA 'A'	14	6	4	4	73
BATH STREET	13	6	5	2	70
LPOOL YMCA 'A'	13	6	5	2	69
WAV. ST MARYS 'A'	15	6	8	1	62
POLICE	11	3	5	3	52
G.P.T.	14	1	11	2	39
WATERLOO	13	0	10	3	38
BATH ST. 'A'	14	1	13	0	34
BOOTLE J.C.	Record Expunged				

DIVISION 4	P	W	L	D	PTS
LPOOL YMCA 'B'	16	13	1	2	119
WAV. ST MARYS 'E'	14	12	1	1	109
MANWEB 'B'	15	10	3	2	100
BOOTLE YMCA 'A'	16	10	5	1	95
MAGHULL 'B'	16	9	6	1	94
WATERLOO 'D'	15	8	4	3	82
POLICE 'B'	16	8	7	1	66
WAV. ST MARYS 'D'	13	5	7	1	66
BATH ST. 'D'	16	5	9	2	64
AIGBURTH	16	2	12	2	47
LINACRE	15	1	13	1	33
BATH ST. 'E'	16	0	15	1	29

DIVISION 2	P	W	L	D	PTS
MAGHULL	15	12	2	1	106
CADWA 'A'	13	11	1	1	99
WATERLOO 'A'	13	10	3	0	90
HAROLD HOUSE	13	12	1	0	89
G.P.T. 'A'	14	6	6	2	77
WATERLOO 'B'	16	4	11	1	64
FORDS	13	3	7	3	57
COLONSAY 'A'	12	5	6	1	54
BOOTLE J.C. 'B'	10	5	5	0	48
WAV. ST MARYS 'B'	14	2	10	2	45
BOOTLE J.C. 'A'	10	3	6	1	41
CADWA 'B'	15	0	15	0	20

DIVISION 5	P	W	L	D	PTS
MAGHULL 'C'	15	12	0	3	123
HAROLD HOUSE 'B'	16	11	4	1	101
WAV. ST MARY 'F'	16	9	3	4	101
CADWA 'D'	14	11	1	2	100
MAGHULL 'D'	16	8	6	2	93
AIGBURTH 'A'	15	7	6	2	78
COLONSAY 'B'	15	6	6	3	72
POLICE 'C'	15	3	8	4	62
BOOTLE YMCA 'B'	15	4	9	2	62
HOPE	13	3	10	0	41
BATH ST. 'F'	15	1	13	1	27
HAROLD HOUSE 'C'	12	1	9	2	26

DIVISION 3	P	W	L	D	PTS
MANWEB	15	13	0	2	120
POLICE 'A'	16	12	1	3	112
BATH ST. 'B'	15	11	3	1	100
BOOTLE YMCA	16	10	5	1	100
MANWEB 'A'	13	10	1	2	85
WAV. ST MARYS 'C'	15	7	5	3	73
MAGHULL 'A'	16	4	9	3	59
BATH ST. 'C'	14	3	10	1	58
G.P.T. 'B'	16	2	10	4	55
CADWA 'C'	13	3	9	1	48
WATERLOO 'C'	14	3	10	1	48
HAROLD HOUSE 'A'	15	0	14	1	36