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DIGEST

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OF THE

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS CLUB

# Table Tennis Digest

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Vol. V

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## COMMENT

ONE of the most interesting happenings in recent weeks has been the wholesale collapse of the regional tournaments, which starting only a few seasons ago, were at once very popular but now seem to have come to a sudden end because of a lack of interest shown by the paucity of entries.

There is a strong feeling in certain quarters that the League is overloaded with tournaments and competitions, and it certainly seems the regional tournaments provide excellent support of that viewpoint.

Apathy remains a constant enemy of the League, and the relatively poor entry generally for tournaments this season is a pretty good reminder that it is still very much present. Perhaps some weeding out of tournaments and competitions is advisable. We have our own ideas as to which should receive the order of abdication, but will not go any further into that at the moment.

In contrast, it is worthy of note that a gratifying number of members had a try in the recent Cheshire Open, particularly satisfying being the proportion of average players who sent in entry forms. As a method of gaining experience there is no better way and it is to be hoped that this is the first sign of increasing enthusiasm for open tournaments. If it is then perhaps some of the effects may soon be felt at our own Merseyside Open, for truly the local entry was a disgrace to a League such as ours.

We must confess to a growing feeling of anticipation with regard to this season's Closed Championships because of the menace of the sponge bat which now appears to have hit Merseyside with some force. It would be a real sign of the times if we had some 'spongers' at the finals, for it would certainly add considerably to the interest of an occasion which has been monopolised largely by the same small band for a great number of seasons.

Table tennis, like any other sports, requires interest to be maintained by new methods, tactics or equipment, and this season may yet be made memorable by a Closed fuller of surprises than for many years.

Meantime, a great opportunity to see some of the world's best players in action will be provided by the international match between England and Czechoslovakia at the Liverpool Stadium. Dare we hope for a full house? It is certainly worthy of one.

## MARCH 29 IS THE DEADLINE FOR "CLOSED" ENTRIES

By W. STAMP.



THE Closed Championships are again being played at Dingle Vale School on Wednesday and Thursday, April 13-14, Monday and Tuesday, April 18-19, with the finals on April 20.

Entry forms have been sent to your club secretary with this issue of the *Digest*. The closing date for entries is March 29, so there is no time to waste if you have not already arranged for doubles partners. Secretaries are asked to send a stamped addressed envelope if they require further supplies because in many instances I have no guide as to requirements and may have enclosed insufficient forms. Do not apply for more than you need as there is not an unlimited number available.

The finals will take place once again in the theatre of the Y.M.C.A., Mount Pleasant. The price of admission will be 2/-, as last year, with a choice of seat anywhere in the hall.

The Management Committee agreed that tickets should be sent to clubs in proportion to their playing strength (viz three per team). We feel that this is not asking too much for our own tournament and the closing event of the 1954/55 season. Tickets will be forwarded to your secretary during the next 10 days.

There is no play in the tournament on Friday and Saturday, April 15-16, because we have arranged for Ken Stanley to spend the week-end here in a series of coaching sessions. He will commence on Friday at 7.30 p.m., when he will lecture and give practical demonstrations both to players and prospective club coaches, and any members of the league who are interested are invited to be present. There will be no charge for admission—it is only necessary to produce your league

handbook and I can promise you an evening that will be both instructive and entertaining.

The actual coaching begins on Saturday and will be restricted to players whom the Management have selected and who will receive official notification in due course. Older members of the league who feel that they could help to coach some of their younger club members, will be especially welcome on Friday night, and if they care to send me their names I can no doubt arrange something further for them with Ken Stanley.

Last week your club secretary received a circular and a poster advertising the forthcoming international match at the Liverpool Stadium, when the Swaythling Cup teams of England and Czechoslovakia meet on Monday, April 4.

I need hardly state that the standard of play should satisfy everyone and while at different times during the past seasons you have seen all the English team, many of you have not watched the Czechs in action. Those that have, I am sure, will want to renew acquaintance with Vana and Andreadis, two of the game's most colourful personalities and so varied in style.

Take heart you unorthodox players, for Vana is one of your school and look where it got him. And to all who aspire to learn a drop shot—just study Bo Vana.

Ivan Andreadis has been described as the aristocrat of the table. Rhythm and Grace certainly flow through all his movements. Are you a little on the heavy side? Let 13 stone Ivan show you how to move lightly.

*Continued on page 11*

## Blackout at Vital Moment

THE ball had crossed the net several times. Crack—a beautiful drive; a miraculous return, and another, and yet another. The score was 20-17 in the third and vital game of the match. Spectators were on tenterhooks, and then—click, everyone was in complete darkness.

This was what occurred in the Readman Cup semi-final when Rafters beat Crosby 6-4 at Oakhill. The players were Bernard Hand and Ron Rumjahn, the latter eventually winning on an edge. Just another coin in the meter and the light was restored to complete the match.

Who suggested Les Davies should play with sponge? He is fast improving his technique and is far more difficult to play than before. He has humbled Vic Chesham, Ted Rumjahn and myself within a fortnight. With the "Closed" coming upon us it will be interesting to see if he follows on Frank Varty's Wirral successes.

Bill Pierce has returned from the south in time to acclimatise himself for the Stamp Cup semi-final at Lucern on March 18. Pendlebury is no longer with Crosby.

There are half a dozen players who have extremely good league records. Three are old stagers, Reg Hetherington, Fred Bamford and Ted Rumjahn. The others are Bill Pierce, W. Harris, B. Hand and J. Stoddart (Anfield), who has improved considerably from last season. Others who show signs of consistency are Tony Smith and Ken Gaulton (Balfour) and Alan Lawson (Anfield).

In three weeks the event of the season, the Closed, will be with us. I would like to see all first division players in it, so that they can compare their standard with players from lower divisions. But I do appeal to all to make an effort to play in white shoes and ironed shirt and shorts. Dress is becoming slovenly lately. Let us set an example so that we can be recognised from the mass.

### Second Division

by J. Coveney

## A TREMENDOUS RECOVERY

A WHILE ago I remarked upon the all-round strength of Cheshire Lines, and it really looks now as though they may be playing in Division I next season. Frankly, if only on account of their tremendous recovery after a mediocre start, I hope they achieve their goal. They are in the minority of teams who play in strict ranking order.

This latter attribute is not so apparent in another team in the division, a team not out of danger yet of relegation. It is one of my pet aversions (yes, another of them) shared by many experienced and popular players in other divisions, that a match can be ruined, and that without breaking any League rule, by the playing of obvious reserves so designated at Nos. 1 or 2, or both.

Surely some measure can be introduced to prevent or curb this practice, which may be accounted good captaincy but which I consider to show lack of good sportsmanship and the violation of the generally understood "gentleman's agreement."

I firmly believe that a reserve when called upon should *never* play higher in

a team than any one of that team's nominated players, and if one of the latter fails to turn up that a reserve should be permitted to play only lower in the team than the nominated players. Perhaps this would ensure that 'short' teams or teams carrying reserves did not gain unmerited success.

The meeting of Bohs and Bootle Y.M.C.A. at the end of the season can settle promotion, though Cheshire Lines can do a lot of good to themselves by beating Bohs, who, like Bohs too are on occasion over-generous in giving odd points away to less distinguished opposition, who, however, might want points separately to avoid relegation.

The relegation stakes is more complex with six teams involved. Oakhill A, another team playing in strict order of merit, put A.O.M. in danger by their recent 7-3 win, but then Oakhill's remaining fixtures, on the face of it, don't look like being very profitable in the way of points.

Out of all this we look forward to a photo-finish in the way of both medals and wooden spoons.

## To Whom We Raise Hats

IT is "hats off" to Bohemians, who will undoubtedly finish leaders. They have made the pace all the way and despite losing their No. 1 earlier in the season they have never faltered.

Much of the credit goes to Kay, No. 4 originally. Steady but never spectacular or polished, he changed to sponge and took over at the top with distinct success. Vickers shared Nos. 1 and 2 with Kay; Rycroft, one of the old hands, captained the side and provided the experience, while West and Thomas proved to be the strongest tail in the division.

Bohemians, however, do not strike me as an outstanding championship side. They are solid and steady, with good team spirit, but I cannot see them setting division 2 on fire. But good luck to them and may they prove me wrong.

If we say that of Bohs what about the remainder of Division 3 teams? A most inconsistent lot! Probably Bootle Y.M.C.A. will accompany Bohemians into Division 2, unless their recent run of defeats, including their cup exit and their trouncing at Bohemians, continues.

No matter what team finishes second, their prospects for next season must be pretty poor.

The Rurnjahn Cup final is between Divisions 4 and 5 teams. We expected Balfour B to do well but for the third division not to be represented in the final proves the weakness of our sides.

It is considered in some quarters that I.C.I.'s recovery is due to their two mascots. I saw one; perhaps the presence of the second would have swung the match in favour of I.C.I., but is it fair to distract one's opponents in this way? Most visitors say yes it is! Let us be fair, however, their great win at Cheshire Lines was on merit and they played in order of strength.

That brings me to the final point about team switching. What is the response to my last article? Everyone is expecting the rule to be changed next season to prevent it and most agree that if we all do it, it loses its point anyway. Trouble with all these rules is that we will need an army of scrutineers to see they are kept.

## HEADS BOWED IN SHAME

I GOT a nasty shock during this month, when I was told of the behaviour of a visitor to the L.P.A.S.

The individual in question, like most of us, did not like losing, but where the vast majority accept defeat as something unpleasant, to be avoided in the future if possible, this man passed some extremely abusive remarks to both of his opponents in turn. Fortunately, the Police captain accepted apologies from the visiting team as a whole, and the matter was allowed to rest there. You can well imagine that his colleagues felt uncomfortable, as did I when told, for the offender was a member of my own club.

The moral of this story is of course, quite obvious—if you cannot lose gracefully, then don't play at all, to inflict rotten manners on other people.

Although I missed the first few sets, owing to business, I managed to see the last six sets between Linnets A and R.A.F.A., and am glad that I did so, for I saw a standard of play generally, that I have not seen previously this season.

Arthur Quiggin played well, but was not given much rope by Joe Lovelady, but the highlight of the match was the set between McArt (R.A.F.A.) and Edkins (Linnets). This was just about the best game I have seen in this division this season. Their styles suited each other down to the ground, and both played all-round stuff, putting on a real show for the onlookers. The counter attacking from both was worth a guinea a box. Linnets won the match, but on this form, R.A.F.A. could have been higher placed.

By the time you read this, Beauclair will have played their Rurnjahn Cup final against Balfour B. This will be the first time since the cup was presented that it has been held by a team from outside the third division. Let us hope that it has only dropped to the fourth, and has not gone any lower. Beauclair deserve our thanks for keeping our division in the running.

There are still one or two teams for me to see, and I assure you that I shall see these before the close of the season.

## BIG PROBLEMS SOLVED

TWO problems appear to have solved themselves—that Balfour B are most definitely champions and that Balfour D and Anfield C appear to be booked for a trip to the lower regions.

Balfour D have had many problems to face this season and many times have found it hard to raise a team. However, any club running five league teams and a women's team must inevitably find this problem on their hands.

One or two members of the Balfour club are inclined to blame the new league system for their inability to fulfil all their fixtures properly, but I personally feel that they have endeavoured to create a team place for every one of their registered players, and that never works out satisfactorily.

It is a strange thing that very few of the senior members of clubs with teams in Division 5 take time to come along to our matches and give any encouragement to their clubmates. Speaking for my own club, Rafters, we are perhaps, one of the exceptions to this. Most of our senior players have visited us at one time or other and we feel that we are not the lost sheep of the family.

It was suggested to me the other evening that certain players shirked their duties as umpires during league matches, and I must agree that this appears to be the case in one or two instances. Don't forget if all do their share of umpiring it only means that each player will be called upon once.

Shock of the month—Victoria Park C's victory over Rafters B by seven sets to three. Well played!

I hear that Joe Ellison (Balfour C) has been regrouped into their B team owing to one of their members having had to leave the city. Joe won't let the side down.

Bootle Y.M. B team have had quite a successful season so far, and this is in no small way due to the consistently good form of R. Banks and B. Crolley, who have accounted for a high percentage of their opponents.

## Their Answer was Snappy

ENGLISH Electric gave me a snappy answer to my love and table tennis not mixing suggestion, by following a month without a point with a month without a defeat. Main reason was the return to form of hard-hitting skipper Darlington.

Also in the undefeated category come Linnets—their best effort being an 8-2 win over Warbreck. Schultze is putting over some great stuff at the moment, and Aigburth, who are among the division's most consistent point-gatherers, have about the most consistent team sheets.

When you add our regular winners—Everton Y.M. and Cadwa—it makes you wonder who is losing! I nearly included Brenka, but no, Waterloo Park continued their good work by beating them 6-4. But what happened after that, Waterloo? Ugh!

The match between Cadwa B and English Electric started at 6.40 and ended at 9.25, despite six three-game sets. This idea was typical of the youthful enthusiasm shown by the Cadwa team. I like their style of play and their approach to the game. I must say I am surprised on this showing at their meagre number of points. All deserve mention, skip Blakeman, leading scorer Challinor, No. 1 O'Reilly, newcomer and definite asset Malcolm, and ever present Walters.

Warbreck have hit a bad patch, after a very promising start with the signing of Les Kilshaw. Les is not hitting his true form and the remainder of the team seem to have been affected. They are still, however, having their best season ever, ably led by Ariss, to whom I offer my thanks as my sole correspondent. Baldwin is top scorer with Thompson and Reynolds registering 26 games between them.

While appreciating the excellent work done by our statistical experts, I suggest that it should not take a handicap tournament to realise the strength of our division or to put this forward as an excuse for the harsh handicaps received by players in the division. A glance at the league tables will show you that we are the "second to lowest form of animal life" in the league.

# LEAGUE TABLES

to 12th March, 1955

## First Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour	20	18	0	2	156	44	38
Rafters	21	17	2	2	148	62	36
Anfield	21	12	4	5	130	80	29
15 Crosby	21	12	6	3	123	87	27
Balfour A	21	11	5	5	121	89	27
Oakhill	21	9	6	6	119	91	24
Linnets	21	7	9	5	99	111	19
Rafters A	20	7	9	4	80	120	18
Lucem	20	5	11	4	83	117	14
L'pool Y.M.	21	4	12	5	83	127	13
Nomads	19	1	12	6	67	123	8
Livex	20	2	15	3	61	139	7
Anfield A	20	1	14	5	60	140	7

## Fifth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour B	19	19	0	0	161	29	38
Rafters B	19	13	4	2	117	73	28
Bootle Y.M. B	19	11	4	4	108	82	26
Victoria Park B	19	12	5	2	107	83	26
Oakhill B	19	9	5	5	112	78	23
Bohemians B	19	9	8	2	101	89	20
Balfour C	19	8	8	3	104	86	19
African Oil A	19	6	10	3	86	104	15
Anfield B	19	6	10	3	83	107	15
Victoria Park C	19	5	13	1	79	111	11
Anfield C	19	1	15	3	48	142	5
Balfour D	19	0	17	2	34	156	2

## Second Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians	19	13	2	4	125	65	30
Cheshire Lines	19	14	4	1	132	58	29
Bootle Y.M.	19	12	2	5	117	73	29
Victoria Park	18	13	4	1	120	60	27
Cadwa	19	8	7	4	103	87	20
Bath Street	19	7	6	6	98	92	20
Oakhill A	19	6	11	2	77	113	14
African Oil	17	3	8	6	74	96	12
L'pool Y.M. A	17	4	9	4	65	105	12
Litherland	19	2	10	7	74	116	11
Waterloo Dock	19	3	12	4	67	123	10
W'tree C.C.	18	2	12	4	58	122	8

## Sixth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Everton Y.M.	19	17	0	2	142	48	36
Cadwa	18	16	1	1	134	46	33
Aigburth	19	13	4	2	129	61	28
Brenka	19	13	4	2	128	62	28
W'breck Moor	19	10	6	3	106	84	23
W'loo Park A	19	8	7	4	93	97	20
Linnets B	18	8	8	2	95	85	18
Eng. Electric A	19	6	10	3	88	102	15
Cadwa B	19	5	11	3	78	112	13
Anfield D	19	3	14	2	58	132	8
Bootle Y.M. C	19	2	17	0	45	145	4
Osterley A	19	0	19	0	34	156	0

## Third Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians A	19	17	0	2	141	49	36
Bootle Y.M. A	19	12	2	5	123	67	29
Victoria Park A	19	12	4	3	114	76	27
Panto	19	10	6	3	106	84	23
Lofters	19	9	7	3	97	93	21
Chesh. Lines A	19	6	7	6	93	97	18
L.P.A.S.	17	6	8	3	77	93	15
Osterley	19	6	10	3	80	110	15
Linacre	18	6	11	1	71	109	13
Waterloo Park	19	3	12	4	69	121	10
I.C.I.	19	2	12	5	80	110	9
English Electric	18	2	12	4	69	111	8

## Fourth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Beauchair	19	17	0	2	149	41	36
Maghull	19	15	2	2	140	50	32
Linnets A	18	11	5	2	112	68	24
L.P.A.S. A	19	10	6	3	110	80	23
Panto A	19	10	9	0	95	95	20
Littlewoods	18	8	7	3	92	88	19
Tech. Students	19	9	10	0	94	96	18
W'tree C.C. A	19	7	9	3	87	103	17
Litherland A	19	8	11	0	92	98	16
R.A.F.A.	19	6	11	2	87	103	14
Dom. Mission	19	3	15	1	54	136	7
Livex A	19	0	19	0	18	172	0

## Women's Division I

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians	19	17	1	1	158	32	35
Rafters	19	15	3	1	121	69	31
Balfour	19	13	4	2	139	51	28
Anfield	19	12	5	2	108	82	26
Linnets	19	9	7	3	96	94	21
Littlewoods	19	8	8	3	88	102	19
Waterloo Park	19	8	9	2	89	101	18
Cheshire Lines	19	7	9	3	80	110	17
Oakhill	19	6	12	1	82	108	13
Bibbys	19	6	12	1	72	118	13
Osterley	19	3	15	1	66	124	7
Beauchair	19	0	19	0	41	149	0

## Women's Division II

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Cadwa	16	12	1	3	109	51	27
Bohemians A	16	12	2	2	112	48	26
Aigburth	14	11	2	1	109	31	23
W'tree C.C.	15	9	4	2	93	57	20
Dunlop	16	7	7	2	90	70	16
Brenka	13	6	6	1	65	65	13
Leyfield	14	6	8	0	79	61	12
Beauchair A	15	3	11	1	42	108	7
Oakhill A	15	1	14	0	25	125	2
Linnets A	14	1	13	0	16	124	2

## LEAGUE TABLES

### North Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bath Street A...	16	16	0	0	134	26	32
Lofters A .....	16	11	5	0	96	64	22
Co-op .....	15	9	4	2	92	58	20
15 Crosby A ...	15	9	4	2	92	58	20
Bath Street B ...	16	8	6	2	77	83	18
Maghull A .....	16	5	7	4	72	88	14
Litherland B ...	15	6	9	0	83	67	12
W'loo Park B...	16	2	11	3	57	103	7
W'loo Park C...	16	3	13	0	38	122	6
Eng. Electric C	15	2	12	1	39	111	5

### South Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Dunlop .....	18	18	0	0	149	31	36
Earle .....	19	11	4	4	116	74	26
Rankin O.B. ...	18	10	3	5	104	76	25
L'pool Y.M. B	19	11	6	2	114	76	24
Florence Oxtan	19	10	7	2	101	89	22
Lucem A .....	18	8	6	4	103	77	20
W'tree C.C. B	19	8	7	4	93	97	20
Cadwa C .....	19	8	10	1	88	102	17
Peel Hall.....	19	7	11	1	87	103	15
Chesh. Lines B	19	6	11	2	79	111	14
Sefton General	18	1	16	1	46	134	3
Linnets C .....	19	1	18	0	40	150	2

### Central Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Oakhill C .....	19	18	0	1	157	33	37
Beauclair A ...	19	14	1	4	140	50	32
Fairlawn .....	19	15	2	2	137	53	32
G.L.S.C. ....	19	12	5	2	114	76	26
L.P.A.S. B .....	19	10	7	2	111	79	22
Leyfield .....	19	10	9	0	88	102	20
R.A.F. Mov. ...	19	7	10	2	84	106	16
W'tree Labour	19	7	12	0	92	98	14
Stanley House	19	6	12	1	73	117	13
R.A.F.A. A ...	19	4	14	1	65	125	9
Tech. Stdts. A.	19	1	15	3	46	144	5
Parcels* .....	19	0	17	2	33	157	2

\* Resigned

## MANAGEMENT NOTES

SECRETARIES of clubs are reminded that all outstanding fixtures must be completed not later than Friday, 1st April, 1955, and under no circumstances will an extension beyond this date be granted.

### Cup Finals

**Readman Cup**—Balfour v Rafters at Earle on Thursday, 31 March, 1955.

**Hyde Cup**—Liverpool Y.M.C.A. B v Bath Street A at Bootle Y.M.C.A. on Wednesday, 6 April, 1955.

Quite a number of players in the League have taken up the sponge bat but as yet no women have dared the experiment. Is it possibly that we will yet see one of them adopt this soundless "menace."



# . . . . Better Never Late

By **BILL BENT**

**ANFIELD D**, not to mince matters, have had a bad season. But even a downhearted team should not arrive quite so late as did Reg Gray's boys for their Sixth Division match with Waterloo Park A one night this month.

Some clubs would have sent in the card and retired homewards long before the Anfielders arrived. But Park stayed to play—and to win by the relatively clear margin of 8-2.

And here I feel the Anfielders might reflect a moment on the fact that all four sets which required a third game to decide were won by the home team. A few minutes' more practice and the result might have been different.

Both Anfield's wins were scored by **D. Butterworth**, who beat the steady **Tom Lorimer**, a player who can return anything short of kills and who hits reasonably well despite a tendency to take the ball too low.

## **Impetuous**

A good scalp for young **Butterworth**, but if he is to be good—as he could be—he must stop trying to look like a graceful stroke player and forget about slamming opponents' services. A good idea, too, would be to keep an eye on the ball.

Against **Lacy**, **Butterworth** dropped some of his impetuosity, showed some table-craft, a good backhand attack and a useful defence before becoming rather lackadaisical when holding a lead of one game and several points.

**Lacy** hits well forehand and back, but his slow footwork leaves him out-positioned occasionally. He beat **Jones** primarily by effective use of a good fast flick. **Jones** used the table well but exaggerated his footwork with silly little skip-jumps that did nothing but waste energy.

He showed up better against **Jim Hearle**, particularly when he stopped making it a slogging match and mixed his game. But **Hearle's** aggressiveness won the day, as it previously had against **Harry Malley**, whose game was rather negative. He showed that he could hit well, and then handed the initiative to **Hearle**, who hits in an attractive fashion but not so hard that a counter-hit is impossible.

**Malley** showed up better in the second game when he used a steady slow attack,

but **Hearle's** defence was adequate and his backhand hit earned him victory.

I was pleased to see **Tom Reynard**, a team-mate in the season after the war. He didn't look pleased that his first opponent, **Reg Gray**, was a penholder—and an experienced one, too. The Anfield skipper quickly noted his opponent's weak backhand defence and angled the ball well to take a game and a lead.

Midway through the second game, however, **Reynard** ceased to be hypnotised by the unorthodox **Gray** and brought a very good attack into play. From then on the result was never in doubt, **Reynard** winning 17-21 21-15 21-14.

Against **Malley**, **Reynard** showed that he had learned his lesson and hit hard—the fact that he occasionally hit wildly was atoned for by a couple of timely drop shots. **Malley** remained subdued though flashes of aggression showed the set he might have made of it. He defended resolutely and well to take the second game, but harder, sounder hitting gave **Reynard** the decider.

## **Pulled Stops Out**

**Blagden**, of **Park**, took two useful sets at **No. 5**. Against **Gray** his medium speed shots were as meat and drink to the penholder who took the first game comfortably. In the second **Blagden** placed his shots better and then pulled out all the stops to win the third from a tired opponent from 8-14 down.

He scored a clear-cut win over **G. Culshaw** by means of placing his shots accurately and defending steadily, although **Culshaw** hardly looks ready for divisional table tennis yet. He plays his forehand too close to his body, is "lost" to a wide ball, has only rudimentary footwork and, worst of all, has no push shot.

And so a workmanlike team won. If **Park** can keep these boys they will do well, particularly at home where conditions favour them slightly. And Anfield's mixture of experience and youth will bring dividends for **Jones**, **Culshaw** and **Butterworth** will win many sets in future seasons through the defeats they have suffered this term.

## HAPPIER CHESHIRE LINES

HOW quickly the time seems to fly where table tennis is concerned. Just a short while ago I was writing the first article of this season; now within a few short weeks table tennis will be behind us once again and we shall either be very proud of our season's efforts or bemoaning our lowly positions in the league.

Looking at the tables, the fate of some of the teams seems to be assured.

In the first division there is little doubt that Bohemians will be the leaders. They are now firmly settled at the top and have had a very good season as they are now the Bartholomew Cup holders, beating Anfield by six sets to four in a very close and exciting match.

Another team that must be feeling very pleased with life these days are Cheshire Lines. For several seasons they have been hovering round the bottom of the division and no doubt have been feeling quite worried about their future. But this season they are well and truly safe, midway up the table.

Whether this is due to the able assistance given by B. Pealing and E. Palmer, who last season played for Linnets, or to the grit and determination of their old stalwarts, M. Green, D. Hayes and R. Garner, I cannot say. Doubtless it is a little of both.

### Surprise Team

The team that has probably surprised me more often than any other this season is Oakhill. Somehow I expected to see them in a much higher position than they are, but since the early part of the season they have been without Edna Moore. This seems to have been the cause of their downfall as she played in their first five matches, out of which they won four. No doubt they are not feeling to happy about their position.

Beauclair are also feeling the pinch at the bottom, but they were unfortunate in that they lost the services of their former No. 1 and they went up into the first division with possibly a weaker team than the one with which they did so well last season in the second division.

Looking at the present second division, it seems pretty certain that Cadwa will be one of the teams for promotion next season and Ivy Crafter will once again be gracing the first division. Bohemians A, I should think, will probably be runners-up, although their recent defeat by Brenka must have worried them not a little.

With Aigburth following this up by defeating Cadwa, both teams must be wondering whether Aigburth are going to allow them to stay comfortably at the top of the division.

Our other new team in the second division, namely Oakhill A, have not done so well in their first season, but they are a very young side and no doubt this season's experience will help them a lot. Maybe we shall see a vast improvement next season.

And now our best wishes to Joyce Lloyd, late of Bootle Civil Defence and Lofters, who is shortly to be married and will the following week leave England to start a new life in Canada. Joyce has not played in our women's divisions this season, but I feel sure most of you remember her and wish her a very happy future.

Also congratulations to another Joyce Lloyd, who plays for Littlewoods, on her recent marriage. This season she has been a real asset to her team. May her marriage be equally successful.

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### Secretary's Desk—continued.

Space does not allow me to go into details regarding the rest of the Czech team or the England side, but you can rest assured that you will not be disappointed in the standard of play or what you can learn from watching these stars in action.

Tickets, price 5/-, 4/- and 3/-, can be obtained through your club secretary or from Messrs. Jack Sharps, Whitechapel; Rushworth & Dreaper, Islington; and the Liverpool Stadium, adjoining Exchange Station. There are no booking fees.

## Tribute from Overseas

HIS clubmates in Bootle Y.M.C.A. and his other friends in the League, will be glad to hear that F. Cadwallader, now serving with the Royal Air Force in Gibraltar, will soon be home again.

Cadwallader is returning to this country within the next ten days and is due to be demobilised on March 29, and just how keen he is to get back into table tennis he tells in a letter to the *Digest*. He also says that he is looking forward to playing in the League Closed Championships.

It is also interesting to hear from Cadwallader how much he looks forward to receiving our magazine, for what he says will probably apply to all our other members who are now, or may be at some future date, serving with the Forces.

"It's very nice reading the *Digest* each month," he writes, "and I really look forward to it. Out here it is a sight for sore eyes and it is good to be able to read how table tennis is going on in Liverpool.

"Now that demob. is almost due I'm really looking forward to start playing again in the second division for my old club, Bootle Y.M.C.A. and hoping that they make the first division, although at the moment, reading the league position, it is a hard fight for those two top places.

"Unfortunately I'm coming out near the end of the season and may only manage a couple of matches, but all the same it will be good to play again and meet some of my old friends."

## MICKLESFIELD HAT-TRICK

I WAS delighted to hear from my club colleague Ian MacDonald, that our region had triumphed in the final the inter-regional match very decisively 8-2, and had so won the Micklesfield Medals competition for the third season running.

The news was particularly palatable since I did not know the match had taken place.

My congratulations to our representatives on a fine achievement, for this is the first time ever that six matches and not three have had to be fought.

It is a strange fact that what I consider the strongest ever North Region team failed to win the competition. That team was Marnor Morison, Jackie Seddon, Stan Wooding, Tommy Larkin and Albert Harris.

### Tragic Defeat

The North's success erased the great disappointment of my vision of an all-North Region Hyde Cup final between Bath Street A and my own club, Lofters A, not materialising.

To be leading 5-1 only to eventually lose on points can be rightly named tragic, but let us give full praise to our opponents who never lost the will to fight and for providing yet another classic example of the maxims: "A match is never lost until it is won."

Well, my Bath Street friends, we look to you with confidence to hoist our flag in the knowledge that you have the ability and will not fail at the last ditch.

# We Only Had 26 Entries

YOU probably all know by now that the regional tournament had to be cancelled owing to lack of support, but there are one or two points I would like to make.

First, by the closing date only five clubs had replied and only two replies came the following morning, leaving five clubs who failed to show any interest at all.

Secondly, only three clubs managed an entry of five or more players.

The old excuse that you had not a chance if you are a tail-end player could hardly apply this season because I had introduced the restricted singles for the benefit of weaker players.

We managed only 26 entries, a mere 30 per cent. of our possible total. Yet only two seasons ago, with only one division, we raised 46 entries for the men's singles alone.

It was in the South v Central match that our lack of youth became so apparent. The team that eventually played (four players different from the original selection) were, I should

imagine, five of our oldest. Worked out, at their own suggestion, it was discovered that the average age was 36½ years.

I hope to field a younger team against the North, but anything may happen before we reach the table.

How sorry we were to lose Parcels from our midst. Their secretary, G. Mountain, tried hard to keep them together and field his team at full strength, unfortunately not always successfully. Perhaps he will have more success in the future.

We are not represented in the Hyde Cup final, but G.L.S.C. put up a splendid fight against Bath Street in the semi-final that it was a match that could have gone either way.

Bath Street's main advantage was experience. For four of the G.L.S.C. players it was their first season in competitive table tennis and to reach the semi-final was no mean task. So close was the match that Bath Street feared a draw because in that event they would have lost on sets.

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# A NOMADS CRITICISM

Sir.—When the possibility of the Nomads causing chaotic, or not true to form, final League placings was discussed at the A.G.M., I am given to understand that Mr. Loughrey gave the assurance that every effort would be made to keep the Nomads at the same strength when playing against lowly-placed teams. Apparently the effort has not been made, and so we are faced with the ridiculous position of the Nomads selectors virtually deciding who goes into the second division.

I understand that this sorry state of affairs does not unduly worry the greater percentage of the teams in the upper half of the first division, but their complacency may be shaken in the future, if the Nomads greatly improve and a number of ill-timed changes in the youngsters' team could possibly mean the loss of the League championship.

The obvious solution is to expunge the Nomads' record from the league, though continuing their weekly matches on a friendly basis, and so rid the present and future relegation and championship games of their lottery-like struggles.

If this unfortunate situation, which to my knowledge has no comparison in any other table tennis league, or for that matter in any other sport, is allowed to continue, teams in the lower half of the first division might just as well draw lots to see who is lucky enough to escape "the big drop."—J. BRIERLY (Anfield).

(A reply by Mr. Des. Loughrey appears on page 16.)

## THOSE "TACTICS"

Sir.—Congratulations on your timely 'leader' last month. Although unable to take a full part in the activities of the League this year, the undercurrent of dissatisfaction with that absurd rule which encourages 'fiddling the order' under the guise of tactics has not escaped my notice. The only merit this rule has that it can cause acute dissension and absurdities *without* anyone infringing the letter of the rule.

I have *always* been in favour of playing in estimated order of strength on the grounds that the vast majority of our members are true sportsmen. Our

chairman, on the other hand, has always been in favour of "play as you please," which can, of course, reduce the proceedings to a farce.

I hereby give notice that I intend to press for the amendment of this iniquitous rule and I invite the support of every club and player who has the interests of the League at heart.

What about it, Mr. Chairman, isn't it time you forgot the old pen-holder days and saw the light too?—DONALD M. FOULIS (Lucern)

## CHANGE ESSENTIAL

Sir.—The policy of team switching has recently been attacked strongly by the leaders of our League as being a terrible crime, etc. But these same members of the Committee are to blame for the whole position.

I raised the point several years ago with a committee member that teams should play in order of merit but was told that this was not favoured. Since then the Committee have noticeably failed to support any such proposal.

It is quite as natural to play to win (subject to rules) by switching as by trying to benefit by choosing a favourable "next game on."

If Bernie Hand is not available for a Crosby match, then his position at No. 1 is filled by a reserve and the remainder of the team play in their normal positions.

In the current issue of the national official magazine, *Table Tennis*, our general secretary has indicated that a certain "tactical" switching is allowable, yet he attacks it as a strategy. He further says that for a Rumjahn to play at No. 5 would be unsporting and never done, but this was done against Crosby in the Readman Cup semi-final, and I have no complaints whatever.

I consider an "order of merit" rule essential for the good of the game and intend to raise such a motion at the A.G.M. for future seasons in the Liverpool League.

Crosby is one of the clubs whose switching policy in the absence of regular players, has brought this matter to a head, but who have been unjustly attacked by those who would not listen to me in past seasons.—J. WATTS, (15 Crosby).

# BOHEMIANS COMPLETE DOUBLE

By J. D. PATTISON

IN conditions that were as near ideal as it is possible to obtain, Bohemians won the Bartholomew Cup for the first time in their history, at the Police Training College in Mather Avenue last Friday.

In doing so they have joined the small select band of clubs who have won the league and cup in the one season, for they have now virtually retained the championship which they won last year.

But their cup victory over Anfield by six sets to four, only came after they had suffered unexpected reverses and some heartaches. Two of these were the double defeats of Moya Jones at the hands of Ita Howley (two straight) and Reg Royle (in three) and a third that of Chris Gleed, again by Miss Royle.

As a result Bohemians were on the collar from after the first set until the ninth when, for the first time in the match, they got their nose in front and began to breathe more freely.

They owed their success in the main to Muriel Willcox, who beat both Miss Howley and Olga Eagle in straight games, and May Alcock who had victories over Edna Gray and Miss Eagle.

But if Miss Willcox was the best table tennis player of the evening, the outstanding performance came from Miss Royle. Her success against Miss Gleed was achieved after losing the first and

also after resisting two match points in the third to eventually win 22-20. Then against Mrs. Jones she again overcame a game point in the first to gain a deuce win and after losing the second by a similar margin, took the third to 19.

Altogether it was a match of great variety, from excellent table tennis to delightful ping pong, with Miss Eagle adding her customary touch of unorthodoxy. There were at times some fine hard driving and at others equally careless, and until almost the last point the tension which had existed from the start, never eased.

One may in the future, see better matches from a playing point of view, but never a keener one.

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Congratulations to Dr. Des Loughrey, the League's statistician and member of the Management Committee and of Liverpool Y.M.C.A., on his marriage at the end of last month. By his taking unto himself a wife, Rafter's have also gained a player, for Mrs. Loughrey has signed up with them.

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For several weeks Balfour B have been without F. Rooney, owing to his having fractured a bone in his ankle when playing football. His injury has, however, improved sufficiently as to allow the removal of the plaster cast.

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# Des Loughrey Replies

AT the A.G.M. the Management Committee were given a mandate to go ahead with the Nomads, and at the "handbook meeting" further information was given.

Mr. Lawson raised a number of possible objections which could arise, some of which were undoubtedly sound, and they really could only be resolved by the League as a whole trusting the Nomads committee acting in close conjunction with the Management Committee, to exercise a strong sense of justice and fair play.

It seemed to me as chairman of the sub-committee, that at that time there was a general confidence we should not give grounds for criticism of bias, lack of thought or any other cause, and speaking personally it is a matter of regret that Mr. Brierley feels we are now open to such a belief.

In reply let me stress once again that my own opinion, backed by both committees, is the Nomads *must* play matches which have a definite end in view, where their opponents have the will to win. Such could never be evident in friendlies; only in league games.

It should be evident as never before that Liverpool desperately needs new blood, and whether success or failure finally attends the Nomads venture, it is at least an attempt to tackle the problem. That the scheme has even the fraction of the same chance to succeed with friendlies being the order of the day, I will never agree, and would greatly regret if the League, after a season's experience, decided that Mr. Brierley's view is the correct one.

That there may be hardship to a club is indeed possible, though I re-state that the sub-committee have constantly been on their guard to avoid mistakes. When, however, we have to choose a side from around the ten mark, it is clear that the strength must vary, but we have done our utmost to be fair.

I suggest, however, that the League as a whole, has a serious claim for the suggested hardship being tolerated, even if it strikes at a small number of clubs to a certain extent. Surely the aim of the Nomads should appeal to every registered member.

Now as to the facts. Perhaps a reference to relegation area of the premier division would be instructive. At Christmas the Nomads were beaten 3-7 by Livex with the following side: A. Taylor, I. Rogerson, B. Crolley, K. Park and E. Clein. A fortnight ago, Nomads drew 5-5 with Anfield A, of which Mr. Brierley is a member, and the side was the same as the one beaten by Livex.

Earlier in the season Anfield A were beaten by Nomads 3-7, and it would not surprise me greatly if the side which opposes Livex in the last match of the season corresponds to marked degree with the side victorious at Anfield.

Liverpool Y.M., another side low in the table, have played both their matches against the Nomads constituted as follows: first match: A. Taylor, M. Truman, B. Pardy, L. Cairns and P. Turtle; second match: M. Truman, P. Turtle, E. Anderson, B. Crolley and K. McKecknie.

Both these matches were drawn and I would suggest that neither of these sides would bear unfavourable comparison with any concerned in the Livex and Anfield A matches to date.

I am happy to leave the facts in the hands of the League members to judge accordingly, but I would suggest that Mr. Brierley might have been better able to judge fairly if he had waited to the end of the season when he had *all* the facts before him, and his opinion as to whether the Nomads sub-committee had failed in their duty would have been more sound and worthy of serious consideration.