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Vol. V

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COMMENT

HAVING now reached the end of yet another season, the usual stock-taking must now take place. It will be duly completed at the A.G.M. in a few weeks' time, but perhaps we can indulge in a few observations in this our last issue.

With an ear to the ground as always, we feel it is safe to say that there is a very strong opinion that the time has come to prune the League programme and will be very surprised if there is not some more concrete evidence of this in the near future. From the Merseyside Open down to the handicap singles, the calendar of events is being reviewed and it will be a surprise if there are not some omissions next season.

There is also the great controversy on the order of play rule, which has possibly engendered more heat than anything else. Proposals for consideration are certain, and the ultimate decision may well see even stricter rules being applied in the future.

Another feature of the League may also come up for sentence—none other than the *Digest* itself, for there has always been a strong nidus of opinion that it is not worth while. It may be decided that the time has arrived for a clear declaration by members that the magazine is really appreciated. An old saying that no news is good news does not hold true for editors—relying as we do for letters as an indication that the efforts of the various contributors are being read. The total received this season must be about the lowest to date, and we are not at all sure but that it could well be evidence of declining interest.

On the subject of declining interest incidentally, it might be noted the attendance at the finals of the Closed was down nearly 25 per cent. compared with the previous season, which again raises the question of the necessity of hiring a hall which holds over 400 when roughly only a third of its seats are filled, with the likelihood of even less in the future.

Public coaching demonstrations also seem likely to be out, when so few turned up to listen to one of the country's leading experts at Dingle Vale.

The lesson of this season, in fact, might be that the League has provided in excess of the demand, and further levelling out is needed to meet present day requirements, which certainly appear to have lost something of the enthusiasm of a few seasons ago.

Perhaps, however, the most memorable feature of the season will be the sudden emerging at the season's close of a number of young players who rocked some of the old campaigners to their roots, giving bright promise for the future.

ALL VERY FUNNY, BUT . . .

By J. D. LOUGHREY

IT is doubtful if ever before any of the numerous Closed finals has witnessed such an extraordinary scene as that which occurred at the men's singles final at the Y.M.C.A.

One was irresistibly reminded of two inebriates trying to play the game for the first time, with a ball that had seen better days. Thus did the first all-sponge final make its debut to an astounded audience who at first hardly knew what to make of it but before the end had made up their minds that it was very funny indeed, but posed a question of enormous magnitude.

All credit to Les Davies and Frank Varty for their strenuous and successful endeavours to attain proficiency and effectiveness with the new bats. They effectively bore out my contention that a 'sponger' would cause chaos in the Closed, but by their very skill with sponge they made one wonder what the future of the game will be if everyone takes it up.

It is doubtful if any rally lasted for more than five strokes, and so helpless were both of them against the other's spin and hits that it was a miracle they even managed to reach that total. Varty, to a large extent, played an orthodox game, but the Balfour man, with his own eccentricities superimposed on sponge, looked the more complete master of the art, and with a service that made the African Oil man at times return the ball almost into the audience, he was a deserved winner.

Ron Rumjahn and Dave Rigby struggled valiantly in the "semis" but clearly had no answer, making mistake after mistake which only those who knew the problems confronting them could understand.

Such strange table tennis made this an occasion to be remembered, but almost equally so the appearance of only one Rumjahn in the semi-finals was worthy of note, and enables us to record the fact that Ted and Peter, together with Reg Hetherington, were all eliminated by youngsters Dave Rigby, Peter Turtle and Les Mulholland in that order.

For many seasons there has been a big time lag between the winning of the junior singles by a player and his subsequent success in the men's singles. Rigby, therefore, must receive a measure of congratulation for almost bridging the

gap so quickly. He had a grand struggle with Mulholland before passing to the semi-finals, winning 19, and 20, but like everyone else he was then soon bewildered by Davies and his bat.

There was no like upset of form and normality among the women. The Eileen Mansell—Bluey Casselman final was strictly orthodox and might have been a carbon copy of many previous occasions. The Balfour player was in complete control throughout, hitting beautifully, and there was never any doubt as to who would win.

The crisis of this event, to my mind, was on the Monday night when a new challenger to Eileen's crown, Muriel Willcox, was causing her more than a modicum of distress. On this occasion there was no free hitting by the champion, who was forced to a number of mistakes and she had two desperately close games, winning 19,23.

The challenge of recent years by Beryl Waterson and Moya Jones never developed this time, the former being beaten by Nan Lamb after a very dour struggle and Moya never got into her stride against Bluey Casselman who won very easily.

All in all, however, it was the final of the junior singles which really had the audience sitting up and taking notice, for the struggle between Ian Rogerson and Tom Stoddart was a near classic.

The Anfield player was away to a good start and, despite a recovery by Rogerson, took the first game to 19. In the next, however, Ian gradually came to his best, levelled the score comfortably, and, not content with that soon built up a useful lead in the third. At that point Stoddart, changing his tactics, became more aggressive and immediately began to pull up, levelling at 15 and going ahead at 17/15.

The concluding points were a pure joy of gripping, excellent table tennis, with courageous strokes frequently in evidence. In the end it was Rogerson who managed to win, after both had held set points. Both lads thoroughly deserved the rounds of applause they received for the best match of the evening.

The team of Moya Jones and Muriel Willcox were never in difficulties in their women's doubles final against Lil Robinson and Anne Allen, of Balfour,

Continued on page 12

The Double Without Defeat

WE must all offer our congratulations to Balfour who have won both the league and the Readman Cup. Which carries the more glory is often in doubt, but to win the league without a defeat shows overwhelming strength and consistency. The only two points they dropped were through draws against Rafters and Oakhill.

In the Readman Cup they beat Oakhill A 9-1 in the semi-final to meet Rafters, who had beaten Crosby 6-4 in the other semi-final. The final, played at Earle, resulted in a 5-5 draw, with Balfour gaining victory by the odd game in a thrilling struggle.

Perhaps the most disappointing team in the division is Crosby, who failed to maintain that strength which they exhibited at the beginning of the season. Anfield too, fell away latterly.

Never before has this division suffered from absenteeism as this season. Walk-overs appeared regularly in weekly score cards. It is a disgraceful situation which should be severely penalised in the future.

The Nomads have experimented with 16 players this season and the standard of play of most of them has improved greatly since the beginning of the season. A. C. Taylor, M. Truman and L. Mulholland have been the most successful, while Rogerson and Anderson have shown glimpses of what they can do.

The most successful players in the division have been: W. Harrison, 94 per cent; E. Rumjahn, 90 per cent.; R. M. Rumjahn and R. Hetherington, 87 per cent.; Pendlebury, 85 per cent.; W. Pierce and L. Mulholland, 84 per cent.; J. Watts and P. Rumjahn, 83 per cent.; V. Chesham and B. Hand, 81 per cent.; and N. R. Jones, 80 per cent.

One must mention the phenomenal performance of L. Davies, who has only lost once since adopting the sponge bat, and the latter performances of B. Hand over the league's best. Of the young players not already mentioned, the most promising are D. Rigby and L. Mulholland, but I cannot see any real hopes of a Liverpool international for some years yet.

Second Division

by J. Coveney

IN DOUBT TO THE END

CONGRATULATIONS to our division champions and to the runners-up, with a word of sympathy for Cheshire Lines, who seemed to have recovered from a poor start and then had the bad luck to drop a home point in their last match after a run of successes rarely excelled in any division.

Bohemians only just "made it" at the finish by narrow victories in their concluding matches but, after all, they set the pace all season and they are capable, I feel, of holding their own in Division I under the present system of ten-set matches. Victoria Park, however, unless strengthened throughout, may return to our fold at the end of next season.

Waterloo Dock nearly avoided descent to Division 3 by the point they obtained from their last match, with my own club, and only the all but incredible 8-2 win by Liverpool Y.M.C.A. A, away at Oakhill A, prevented Y.M., instead of the Dock, from going down with Wavertree.

After much delving into the last twenty years or so, I have reached the conclusion that the only way to ensure

that in each individual match the better team wins, rather than a close finish results by fiddling in the order of play, is to play every match on the basis, for easy comprehension, of an American tournament. In this way a draw in either league or cup would be impossible and each match would consist of a total of 25 games, not sets.

Though not our concern, I offer the suggestion to vary this system for the First Division only, to three aside on the lines of the present Stamp Cup competition, it being impracticable to field less than five aside generally with large membership clubs concerned.

Before signing off, allow me to make an urgent appeal to all team captains to resolve next season to obey the rule whereby a match should commence by 7.30 p.m. Few players, surely, like getting home as late as the next day and that's been pretty usual for many lately. Our club dispenses with a break of more than a few minutes to hand tea round at the halfway stage, and this example could be followed to the benefit of all.

GREAT RECOVERY BY I.C.I.

HAVING already handed out bouquets to Bohemians and Bootle, we turn to the bottom of the division for our next recipients.

I.C.I. deserve our heartiest congratulations for escaping from relegation. Early in the season I warned all concerned that they were slow starters, but this season their slowness was so prolonged that we all gave them up, assuming that they had "conked" out altogether. Their recovery was the finest I have seen.

English Electric and Waterloo Park share the two bottom positions, but these two are among the strongest ever relegated from the Third Division and both have the nucleus of good teams and should do well next season.

Now a word for those middle-table teams, neglected in these notes all season, Lofters, Osterley, the Police and Linacre, all happy clubs enjoying their table tennis. They did not aspire to championships and did not fear relegation. Most of them worked their points out very early in the season and probably finished within two of their estimates.

These clubs are the backbone of the league, turning up match after match, season after season, with the same faces; enthusiasts all, but how neglected they must feel from a *Digest* point of view. Their mention is not before time.

A few of their personalities are also worthy of mention. Mrs. Waterson, who helped to keep the women's flag flying and has recorded some excellent victories over the best of the "boys." We could call Jack Carridge, Stan Bath and Fred Hartman the three musketeers of Osterley. They have played in most matches for some years now.

Dick Hough, of the Police, can give a few years and a beating to many a young 'un, and Tom Larkin, the Linacre heavyweight, can skip around as actively as most.

Finally, my own club, Victoria Park, third in the division and with its personality, George Williams, whose record after the first few weeks of the season was around the 80 per cent. mark.

Thanks for reading, folks, and good-bye to another season.

Fourth Division

by Jim Green

Beauclair Always Looked Winners

THIS, my last article of the season, should really be devoted to the highlights of the season, but unfortunately there have been few highlights. From the early days there has been no doubt that Beauclair would finish at the top, and by reaching the Rumjahn Cup final proved conclusively their superiority.

At one time Linnets might have edged Maghull out of second place, but they fell away for a short spell and you can't do that if you want promotion. Anyway, Maghull earned it the hard way—no clubroom, no practice, all matches away. Good luck in your clubroom search, Maghull. Incidentally, my spies tell me that Beauclair will have a new address next season—somewhere in Mossley Hill.

At the other end of the table Domestic Mission and Livex should be dropping. But where do they go? There are no eligible teams in the fifth division apart from African Oil A, and while four sixth division teams that I have seen could more than justify themselves with us—well, that is a headache for the league's "sorting-out" committee.

If my any chance Domestic stay up, they must surely constitute a record for they have been saved from relegation nearly every year by vacancies.

For the rest of our teams I can only say "Better luck next time." I have watched most of them perform and despite league places would not stick my neck out by saying that they will be in the same order again. The standards of all are very close, which is as it should be.

It has been complained that there are forgotten men in my articles. Don't forget, though, that to be written about you must first earn it, and that means doing something unexpected. Too many expectations have been correct this time.

For the records, J. Lovelady of Linnets, maintained his position at the top of the divisional averages, finishing with 86 per cent. Second place was filled by K. Hulme (Maghull).

Finally my happiest memory is the set between McArt (R.A.F.A.) and Edkins (Linnets). Maybe they're not the best two in the division, but with boys like them about there is hope for Liverpool table tennis yet.

All Rested on Last Game

THE final match has been played and, the clubroom lights turned out for the last time and table tennis bats put away until next season.

I imagine there are a few people who will regret the end of the season. Personally I am sorry to see the close of the season from a playing point of view, but as your divisional scribe I must be honest and say "Thank goodness."

It is very difficult to find interesting material to write about each month, as I am sure you don't want to hear what A team beat B team, or that C team topped the division. I have tried to avoid statistics and stick to the more human side of table tennis. I don't know whether I have succeeded or not because comment of any description just does not exist in our league.

Perhaps the most interesting match of last month was that between Rafters B and Victoria Park B at Rafters, for the position of runners-up in the division. A victory to the Park would have given them second place, while a victory or a draw would ensure the Beitley Road Boys that place.

The time was 10.55, Park were leading 5-4 and Charlie Manning and Ken Coldwall stood one game all. The second place therefore depended on the last game of the last match of the season, and it went to 18-all before Coldwell ran out winner for Rafters at 21-18—a thrilling battle.

May I make a request to be borne in mind for next season. Could teams be present early in the evening and stay throughout the match. This does help to make a pleasant evening and it also gives the respective captains a chance to use their choice of games to some effect.

Congratulations to those who have finished among the honours and commiserations with the unfortunates who will find themselves in a lower sphere next term.

CADWA HAD EXTRA BIT

AFTER an interesting battle it is hail Cadwa A, who proved themselves worthy champions by pulling out that little bit extra when it was really needed.

I previously hailed the defeat of Cadwa by Everton as a good thing for the league. In return I must congratulate Cadwa on their win in the vital battle with Everton on the latter's table.

Results show that towards the end of the season Everton were not nearly as good as they were earlier. To my mind this was a pity as they are all Y.M. or Red Triangle players born and bred—a rare thing in these days of players fitting between clubs, to see which is the most "medalscopic."

Between them they only missed three games during the season and all have an excellent record.

At the other end of the table Bootle have had a rough time for a Y.M. team. Top marks go to Waterson, McKenna, Beattie, Barlow and Loye for keeping the flag flying. The endurance of the last named deserves special mention—32 sets without a win. Well done, may your perseverance bring you the table tennis success you deserve!

Osterley, on the bottom rung, at least achieved one success, much to the joy of George Burgoyne and thanks mainly to Barton, in beating Anfield 6-4.

Now for a few statistics for those of you who are interested. The top set scorers were Fenerty 40, Turtle 36, Johnson, H. Ireland and Redmond 33 each.

Top set scorers for their clubs—followed by ever-presents—if any, were: Anfield, Butterworth 19; Aigburth, Hughes 31 (ever-present, Wass); Brenka, Fenerty 40 (Fenerty and Cantwell); Bootle Y.M., Beattie 15; Cadwa A, Johnston and H. Ireland 33 (Ireland and D. Johnson); Cadwa B, Challinor 24 (Walters); English Electric, Kitchen 28 (Jane and Darlington); Everton Y.M., Turtle 36 (Redmond, J. Donnelly and Jones).

Linnets called on 17 players during the season, Everton Y.M. on 7. Fenerty, Brackley (Cadwa A), Turtle and J. Donnelly all played in over 90 per cent. of their games, won at least one set in every match in which they played.

FINAL LEAGUE TABLES

First Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour	24	22	0	2	191	49	46
Rafters	24	20	2	2	173	67	42
Balfour A ...	24	14	5	5	143	97	33
Anfield	24	13	6	5	144	96	31
15 Crosby ...	24	14	7	3	141	99	31
Oakhill	24	11	7	6	133	107	28
Rafters A	24	9	11	4	98	142	22
Linnets	24	7	12	5	107	133	19
Lucem	24	6	13	5	102	138	17
L'pool Y.M. ...	24	4	15	5	91	149	13
Nomads	24	3	15	6	89	151	12
Anfield A ...	24	2	16	6	74	166	10
Livex	24	2	18	4	74	166	8

Second Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians ...	22	16	2	4	144	76	36
Victoria Park	22	17	4	1	156	64	35
Cheshire Lines	22	16	4	2	150	70	34
Bootle Y.M....	22	13	4	5	133	87	31
Bath Street ...	22	8	8	6	113	107	22
Cadwa	22	8	10	4	110	110	20
Oakhill A ...	22	8	12	2	95	125	18
African Oil ...	22	5	10	7	96	124	17
L'pool Y.M. A	22	5	12	5	83	137	15
Litherland ...	22	3	11	8	89	131	14
Waterloo Dock	22	4	13	5	84	136	13
Wavertree C.C.	22	2	15	5	67	153	9

Third Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians A...	22	19	1	2	162	58	40
Bootle Y.M. A	22	15	2	5	143	77	35
Vic. Park A ...	22	13	4	5	132	88	31
Panto	22	12	7	3	125	95	27
Lofters	22	10	8	4	109	111	24
Ches. Lines A	22	8	8	6	109	111	22
Osterley	22	7	11	4	94	126	18
L.P.A.S.	22	6	11	5	95	125	17
Linacre	22	6	14	2	82	138	14
I.C.I.	22	4	13	5	100	120	13
Waterloo Park	22	4	14	4	81	139	12
Eng. Electric	22	3	14	5	88	132	11

Fourth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Beauclair	22	20	0	2	172	48	42
Maghull	22	16	3	3	157	63	35
Linnets A ...	22	15	5	2	139	81	32
L.P.A.S. A ...	22	11	8	3	122	98	25
Panto A	22	11	11	0	108	112	22
Littlewoods ...	22	9	10	3	107	113	21
W'tree C.C. A	22	9	10	3	105	115	21
Litherland A	22	10	12	0	109	111	20
Tech. Students	22	9	12	1	105	115	19
R.A.F.A.	22	7	13	2	100	120	16
Dom. Mission	22	5	16	1	71	149	11
Livex A.....	22	0	22	0	25	195	0

Fifth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Balfour B ...	22	22	0	0	188	32	44
Rafters B ...	22	14	5	3	129	91	31
Vic. Park B ...	22	13	5	4	126	94	30
Oakhill B	22	12	5	5	131	89	29
Bootle Y.M. B	22	12	5	5	123	97	29
Bohemians B	22	11	8	3	120	100	25
Balfour C	22	9	10	3	118	102	21
African Oil A	22	8	11	3	102	119	19
Anfield B	22	6	13	3	93	127	15
Vic. Park C ...	22	5	15	2	91	129	12
Anfield C	22	2	17	3	61	159	7
Balfour D ...	22	0	20	2	38	182	2

Sixth Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Cadwa A ...	22	19	1	2	159	61	40
Everton Y.M.	22	18	1	3	159	61	39
Aigburth	22	15	4	3	149	71	33
Brenka	22	15	4	3	147	73	33
W'breck Moor	22	13	6	3	131	89	29
W'loo Park A	22	9	9	4	107	113	22
Cadwa B	22	8	11	3	106	114	19
Linnets B	22	8	12	2	105	115	18
Eng. Electric A	22	6	13	3	97	123	15
Anfield D	22	4	16	2	69	151	10
Bootle Y.M. C	22	2	20	0	51	169	4
Osterley A ...	22	1	21	0	40	180	2

Women's First Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians ...	22	20	1	1	183	37	41
Rafters	22	17	3	2	140	80	36
Balfour	22	16	4	2	167	53	34
Anfield	22	14	6	2	127	93	30
Linnets	22	11	8	3	113	107	25
Littlewoods ...	22	9	10	3	97	123	21
W'loo Park ...	22	9	11	2	100	120	20
Ches. Lines ...	22	8	10	4	96	124	20
Oakhill	22	7	14	1	92	128	15
Bibbys	22	7	14	1	87	133	15
Osterley	22	3	18	1	72	148	7
Beauclair	22	0	22	0	46	174	0

Women's Second Division

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bohemians A...	18	14	2	2	126	54	30
Aigburth	18	14	3	1	139	41	29
Cadwa	18	13	2	3	122	58	29
W'tree C.C. ...	18	11	5	2	113	67	24
Dunlop	18	9	7	2	110	70	20
Leyfield	18	8	10	0	101	79	16
Beauclair ...	18	6	11	1	65	115	13
Brenka	18	6	11	1	65	115	13
Linnets A	18	2	16	0	31	149	4
Oakhill A	18	1	17	0	28	152	2

LEAGUE TABLES

North Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Bath Street A	18	17	1	0	147	33	34
Lofters A	18	13	5	0	109	71	26
Co-op	18	11	5	2	110	70	24
Bath Street B	18	10	6	2	94	86	22
15 Crosby A...	18	9	7	2	102	78	20
Litherland B...	18	8	9	1	102	78	17
Maghull A ...	18	5	9	4	75	105	14
W'loo Park B	18	3	11	4	68	112	10
W'loo Park C	18	4	14	0	52	128	8
Eng. Electric C	18	2	15	1	41	139	5

South Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Dunlop	22	22	0	0	183	37	44
L'pool Y.M. B	22	15	5	2	144	76	32
Rankin O.B....	22	13	4	5	126	94	31
Earle	22	13	5	4	134	86	30
Florence Oxtou	22	12	8	2	117	103	26
Lucem A	22	9	9	4	116	104	22
W'tree C.C. B	22	8	10	4	99	121	20
Cadwa C	22	9	12	1	103	117	19
Ches. Lines B	22	8	12	2	96	124	18
Peel Hall	22	7	14	1	95	125	15
Linnets C	22	2	20	0	48	172	4
Sefton General	22	1	20	1	59	161	3

Central Region

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Oakhill C	22	21	0	1	181	39	43
Beaclair A ...	22	16	1	5	159	61	37
Fairlawn	22	17	3	2	153	67	36
G.L.S.C.	22	14	5	3	137	83	31
L.P.A.S. B ...	22	12	8	2	133	87	26
Leyfield	21	12	10	0	104	116	24
Stanley House	22	8	13	1	92	128	17
R.A.F. Mov.	22	7	13	2	94	126	16
W'tree Labour	22	7	15	0	99	121	14
R.A.F.A. A ...	22	5	16	1	75	145	11
Tech. Stud. A	22	2	17	3	60	160	7
Parcels	22	0	20	2	33	187	2

MANAGEMENT NOTES

THE Management Committee wish to express their regret to those patrons at the England v Czechoslovakia match on April 4 who did not get the view they expected when obtaining their tickets. We were given to understand that when the ring was dismantled that the floor was perfectly flat and it was not until 4 p.m. on the day of the match that the Secretary learned that there was a small recess which contained certain electrical equipment. Every endeavour was made during the time at out disposal to overcome this difficulty but our efforts were not satisfactory to certain officials and players, and at one time it looked as if the match would be called off. It was decided to turn the table the other way and cover the hole in the floor which meant one end of the arena was being used instead of the middle, and consequently people who had booked a seat for a side view, found they were having an end view.

We can only apologise for this unfortunate occurrence and give an assurance that nothing of this sort will ever happen again.

Why Did McCaig Change?

By J. D. PATTISON

IT will always be a puzzle to me why, when he played Bill Harris in the last set of the Readman Cup final between Balfour and Rafter's at Earle, Jack McCaig forsook the aggressiveness that had served him so well in his first set against Ken Gaulton for a more defensive role.

But that was only one of the many facets in a final which produced much good table tennis and which saw Balfour win the cup by 12 games to 11 after a tie on sets. There were, for instance, the splendid tactical play between Reg Hetherington and Ron Rumjahn; the display of fast-moving attack and counter-attack by Tony Smith and Peter Rumjahn; and the fine defensive play of Ted Rumjahn interspersed with some beautiful kills. Indeed, one wonders why Ted does not produce more of them.

In such a match it is impossible to ascribe victory to any particular factor, but it seemed to me that more than anything else the failure of Ron Rumjahn's forehand kills lost Rafter's the cup. Against Norman Jones, for

instance, it cost him at least ten points in the second game, which he lost to 17 and which proved vital in the final count. It also cost him another dozen points in his match against Hetherington, even though he could claim that fortune ran against him in the matter of 'edgers' and 'net cords.' Indeed, Reg's final point was from a table-end snick.

Hetherington's win was a vital one for Balfour for it enabled them not only to level the scores at 4-all but to lead 10-8 in games so that despite Ted Rumjahn restoring Rafter's set lead by a win over Smith, who found himself unable to cope with the heavy chop of his opponent, Balfour were still level on games.

That left the match to be decided by the Harris-McCaig set and here again we saw a dramatic change. With the score one game each, McCaig led 6-2 when Harris, once more dominating the play, took a dozen points on the run to lead 14-6, a deficit McCaig found impossible to reduce.

Their victory gave Balfour their league and cup double.

A NIGHT OF SURPRISES

By JIM GREEN

THE Rumjahn Cup final between Balfour B and Beauclair produced a night of surprises from the beginning. The first set was won by Gerry Hill, who played extremely well to beat Ken Harold. Now this was one for the book, but I must give all credit to Gill, who played a very thoughtful game to beat a man who, on paper appeared bound to win.

This was followed by Ken Wright, complete with sponge, hitting through Les Mulholland, and here again, I don't think many present gave him a lot of a chance. Then came a procession of Balfour wins to take the score quickly to a 4-1 lead, and at the interval it looked all over but the shouting.

Victoria Park's brand of tea must agree with Beauclair, however, for after the interval they were a different team. Harold beat Mulholland, Weston beat McKechnie, and Porter lost to Gill. With two sets left, at 5-3 down, Beauclair knew that they had to win the last two in straight games to draw on sets and games, which would have meant a points count.

Ron Weston did his part nobly by beating Ellison 18 and 19, and Carter only failed on a deuce to repeat the dose, for he lost 20-22, 21-18, 18-21. So Balfour took the cup to the Fifth Division for the first time.

Mulholland was unlucky in a way to lose both, for he did play remarkably well, and will play much worse and still win. It was his misfortune to run into two men at the top of their form.

On Beauclair's side, the only real weakness, to my eyes was at No. 3, where Stan Porter played as though he could not dare less. It seemed to me that he packed in when the going got tough. The other four all did well, with Wright the team's strong man.

On this form I would not be surprised to see a repeat of this for next year's final, for it will have to be a good team to move either of these teams. And this I will say, if they do meet again next year it will be well worth while watching.

I hope that our editors ask me to cover it again anyway, for I won the night's raffle and a 5/- ticket for the international match.

EASILY THE MOST IMPROVED

HERE we are again for the sixth and last time this season. More words to be written, bringing the total up to somewhere around the 3,000 mark.

Looking back over the season one player strikes me as being easily the most improved in our divisions, Julie Roberts, of Balfour. Last season was her first in the league, when she played for Beauclair in the second division. This season she has on one occasion played at No. 1 and several times at No. 2 for her present team, and each time has given a good account of herself and against Rafter's beating K. Casselman.

Well done, Julie! May we shortly see you among the top-line players.

Now I think congratulations are due to Mrs. Daniels (Waterloo Park), who won the D. M. Foulis Cup this year. Although I think she was rather nervous, she played extremely well to beat Joyce Richardson, the holder, in the

semi-final and Pauline Harbour in the final.

As she only really played regularly for her team in the second half of the season, she was a very worthy winner.

Congratulations also to Moya Jones and Muriel Willcox, who played very well to win the women's doubles in the Closed tournament. Moya also partnered B. Hand in the mixed doubles and once again came away victorious.

Bohemians must be justly proud of their women, the first team being both league and cup winners and the second team winning the second division.

The season ended we now have the summer months ahead of us. What is it going to be—lots of practice in readiness for next season, or a complete lay-off until September? No doubt the weather will be the deciding factor, but whatever it is may you enjoy your break from match play and come back fighting fit next season.

PITY THE POOR HANDICAPPER

By J. D. LOUGHREY

THE following sequence of events may indicate the difficulties of handicapping! In the Maxwell Fyfe Cup P. Turtle was defeated by Taylor easily, though starting with a 12/6 allowance; yet within the hour went on the table in the men's singles of the Closed to beat Peter Rumjahn.

Taylor was playing so well that, after a similarly conclusive victory over Jones (Cadwa), he looked all set to carry off the trophy for the second time. In the semi-final, however, he met O'Reilly (Cadwa) who proved himself one of the surprises of the tournament, and was beaten after a grand struggle.

The great match was the Ron Rumjahn—Handley tie which had a fantastic ending. After both had won a game, the Waterloo Dock player went right ahead and at 30-19 was practically home. With a remorseless certainty Ron won point after point, only to fail 29-31 just when it seemed he was about to pull the match dramatically out of the fire.

Don Crawford, however, was the man to watch after his crushing victory over Lijinsky 19, 20, and though having to

fight hard he was also successful against Handley two straight. By this time he was thoroughly in form and he was able to defeat O'Reilly in the final 19, 27, though the Cadwa player again showed first-class play, as he had done throughout the evening, and fought to the end.

For a brief spell it seemed the majestic progress of Mrs. E. Daniels in the Foulis Cup was going to be halted when she met Joyce Randall in the semi-final. In no time the scores were level at 22 all, but then the old recovery powers, together with the occasional backhand drive, settled into the old groove, and she passed on to victory with only the slightest degree of worry when Pauline Harbour won the first game in the final.

Pauline had disposed of Moya Jones very comfortably in the other semi-final, the Bohemians girl actually being very disappointing, and fought very hard indeed against Mrs. Daniels. The latter, however, played so well that the handicap allowance was too great. In fact, a level battle between these two would have made a struggle well worth watching.

PROUD RECORD OF DUNLOP

THE season's battles are over; the dust has almost settled and all that remains is to applaud the efforts of the successful teams and players.

First to receive our acclamations are L. Mason, G. O'Leary, R. Routledge and F. Williams, who made up the top team, Dunlop. They started like champions, continued in the same strain and finished the season having won every league game and beating their nearest rivals, Liverpool Y.M.C.A. B, 8-2.

Next, the runners-up and winners of the Hyde Cup, the Y.M.C.A., mainly represented by T. Bibby, J. Davies, P. Richmond, L. Davies and D. Christie. They put up a brilliant finish after a bad start. In fact, in their last ten games their only defeat was to Dunlop.

In the cup matches they were only considered to have an outside chance, but the ball ran in their favour and they brought the cup to the South again.

Earle and Rankin O.B. are to be complimented on a good show. They fought hard, never gave in and I'm sure they enjoyed their first season in our league.

Of the other teams, maybe little setbacks spoiled their chances. Florence Oxtan, for instance, lost their No. 1, E. Moran; Lucem did not have W. Shepherd when they most needed him; Cadwa C changed their team too often due to promoting players and Wavertree B lost T. Smith, their No. 1, halfway through the season. I suppose we could go on, but whatever happens, providing you enjoy playing and take a beating like a sportsman, then what can be better?

Of the individual performances in cup and league matches, the following are outstanding:—L. Mason (Dunlop), 93.33 per cent.; J. Cashin (Dunlop), 92.10; E. Clein (Y.M.C.A. B), 87.5; G. O'Leary (Dunlop), 86.84; W. Shepherd (Lucem), 86.66; T. Smith (Wavertree B), 86.36; P. Richmond (Y.M.C.A. B), 82.35; R. Routledge (Dunlop), 81.57; J. Davies (Y.M.C.A. B), 77.27; D. Christie (Y.M.C.A. B), 73.80; J. Bennett (Peel Hall), 72.09; P. Shone (Lucem), 71.42; F. Williamson (Dunlop), 70.45.

The Closed Finals

continued from page 3

who rather disappointed as they had achieved some good wins previously. Their best effort was to eliminate Eileen Mansell and Julie Roberts two straight, an excellent performance, but they could never get going in the final.

The mixed doubles final was also rather one-sided for Moya Jones this time in partnership with Bernard Hand, had plenty to spare over Tom Killip and Reg. Royle, of Anfield. In this event there was a welcome mixing of players, which gave opportunity to the lesser lights to reach the later stages, and some lesser known combinations achieved triumphs.

There was excitement in the men's doubles when Ted and Peter Rumjahn, having won the first game, led 19-16 in the second against Hetherington and Harris but failed to clinch matters, and in the end were beaten 14-21. It was a surprising performance, but once the Balfour pair had levelled the match there was no holding them, and it was a fine victory after they had been in so near to defeat.

Another noteworthy triumph was the success of Stoddart and Cuff against Watts and Coogan, another pleasing instance of young players proving their strength against seasoned opponents.

The consolation singles went to Peter Morley and Myra Murphy respectively, the latter winning comfortably, but the former had to fight hard to beat Don Hobbs—19, 10 and 19.

For many reasons this was a finals night to be remembered. The emergence of sponge as a real menace to the best players was one matter of importance. It does not, however, enable one to say that the old guard are on the way out, for both men's singles finalists are not in the junior singles class by any means. Rather it poses the question of what is the answer to sponge rubber.

What could in the long run be of more importance, is the splendid junior singles final and the heartening series of unexpected wins by the under 20's in the preliminary rounds, though where all the young women players have got to is a matter which certainly seems to require an answer.

Well Done, Fairlawn's Women

FIRST, our congratulations to Oakhill C whow on the region championship and did so without a defeat. Beauclair A, the runners-up, were the only team to take a point from them.

The strength of the Oakhill team has not lain in their Nos. 1 and 2, but in the fact that it has been almost equal from No. 1 to No. 5. And they should consider themselves very fortunate to be in such a position for most teams cannot field such strength.

We must take our hats off to the two women who played all season for Fairlawn and finished the season with very creditable averages, Mrs. McGrath with 63 per cent. and Miss Evans with 55 per cent. It is not a little achievement to be more than 50 per cent. successful in a division that is practically all men. Well played both of you!

More evidence of the fact that it was Oakhill's all-round strength that put them on top is to be found in the table of averages where we find that two R.A.F. Movements players, J. Anderson

with 90.48 per cent. and F. Hampson with 85 per cent., on top. In all we had a total of 43 players each with an average of 50 per cent.

Early in the season I despaired of the standard of play in some of the lower teams in the region, but I am glad to say that these teams showed great improvement as the season progressed and sprang one or two surprises on teams much higher than them in the table. A good example was the 6-4 victory gained by Stanley House over the Police.

In addition to R.A.F.A., who, as I reported previously, are probably losing their club premises, Beauclair have also lost their clubroom and are now very busy looking for a new venue in readiness for next season.

What a contrast it is that Stanley House have all the facilities, yet cannot get enough members sufficiently interested to keep their table tennis section going. I hope they get an influx of new members before June 30.

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Y.M. WENT ONE BETTER

By KEN JONES

APPEARING in the final again—they were runners-up last year—Liverpool Y.M.C.A. B won the Hyde Cup by defeating Bath Street A by five sets to five, thirteen games to eleven, at Bootle Y.M.C.A.

Despite several of the sets being rather one-sided, excitement was maintained throughout as each team took the lead in turn only for the score to mount evenly.

J. Davies, the Y.M. skipper, played a true captain's part, being the only man in his team to win his two sets. In his first he easily defeated E. Halsall in straight games, the Bath Street player contributing to his own downfall by some very wild hitting.

Davies' second success came when the score stood 4-all, and with his team leading on games he knew he had to win to ensure his side's success. Opposing him was the Bath Street No. 1, B. Wilson, and after a very good set Davies triumphed at 21-16 in the third.

But the man of the match was Bath Street's Cyril Smith, who gained two straight victories. Neither P. Richmond

nor F. Bibby had the answers to his experience and quick, angled attacking strokes.

These two Y.M. boys played well in their other sets, Richmond beating A. Rawlinson, the Bath Street captain, and Bibby narrowly losing to Wilson in what was easily the best event of the match. After leading 16-10 in the third game, thanks to a steady attack, Bibby had to give best to Wilson's sound defence at 20-22.

During Wilson's fine fighting recovery, the deputy North Region secretary seemed to be suffering a thousand agonies!

Set winners for the Y.M. were J. Davies (2) and Richmond, L. Davies and D. Christie one each, and for Bath Street, Smith (2) and Wilson, Rawlinson and Halsall one apiece.

Congratulations to the young Y.M. team (average age 19), and to Bath Street, hard luck in losing by so narrow a margin, but why, oh why, did you not play Cyril Smith when you had the choice of sets and the score was 4-2 in your favour. A bird in hand . . . !

Stamp Cup Final

By GEORGE WILLIAMS

PERHAPS the very poor attendance at this cup final was due to the desire for last-minute practice before the start of the League's Closed Championships which were due to commence the following evening. Whether this was so or not, I feel sure that the younger players in the league could have learned more by watching this match than aimlessly knocking up in their clubroom.

Rafters were represented by the three Rumjahn brothers, and 15 Crosby by B. Hand, C. Coogan and F. Bamford, the ultimate result being a win in favour of Rafters by five sets to four. Although no high pitch of excitement was reached, the match having been won when Rafters led 5-2, there was much in the variety of the play to interest the dozen spectators.

From the maximum of effort and energy of Chris Coogan, to the calm and labour-saving play of the old-timers, Peter Rumjahn and Fred Bamford, we had the intermediate stage of at times brilliant and other times wild play of Ron Rumjahn and Bernie Hand, with

Ted Rumjahn playing his usual sound and steady game.

For the losers Bernie Hand won all his three sets, and in the final game of the evening, against Ron Rumjahn, he was actually leading 15-1, only for him to lose the next 13 points in succession, and then as happens all too often when a player makes a similar recovery, Ron again fell away and lost 21-14.

Of the four sets which went to three games, two went to each team, the other five sets being clear-cut wins, three to Rafters and two to 15 Crosby.

As I stated earlier, the match was over when Rafters led 5-2, and it was after this that Peter Rumjahn and Fred Bamford played each other. I would be failing in recording Liverpool Table Tennis history if I did not mention that both these players were positively beaming at each other during the game, and to those of us who remember the dour and relentless way these players approached a match ten or more years ago, it was good to see them enjoying a free and easy game.

NOMADS EXPERIMENT A SUCCESS

By J. D. LOUGHREY

A FULL season's play enables some assessment to be made of the endeavours to provide encouragement and openings for the youth of the League to make a serious challenge to the seniors.

The actual achievements are the winning of the junior singles of the Lancashire Open by Ian Rogerson, and the reaching of the final of the junior singles in the Merseyside Open by Peter Turtle. But to this list must certainly be added the several successes by juniors in the recent Closed. It is in my opinion, to justify the belief that we are on the right lines, and that the Nomads experiment has proved successful and deserves further opportunity.

There has been constant experiment and it is felt that a pretty thorough coverage of the League's young talent has been achieved, though if secretaries will bring further likely names to the notice of the committee, every effort will be made to give them opportunity to progress.

The week-end spent with Ken Stanley at Dingle Vale was the high-spot of the season's endeavours, but it is felt that the scheme must not be allowed to lie dormant during the summer months, and plans are being made to bring the

youngsters together at regular intervals under the guidance of Peter Rumjahn, who will primarily be engaged in seeing that the advice and instruction of the coaching week-end is put into practice.

It remains my belief that the Nomads should retain a First Division place as being an important part of the scheme, though there are contrary views to this, but, with a great number of people actively engaged in making the project run successfully, I do feel that the minority who might suffer minor hardship should be prepared to make a sacrifice in the common cause.

The Management Committee arranged a public session during Ken Stanley's visit to enable senior players to pick up extremely useful tips as how best to impart methods of play, etc., to younger club members. It is a matter of great regret therefore, that such a pitifully small proportion, in fact, attended. That evening could have done more good for the standard of play in the League than anything else in recent seasons, but unfortunately it was very largely wasted.

Credit at least to Cadwa, who brought a coachload of youngsters; there were more than 30. Their enthusiasm deserves reward in the future.

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DECISION RESTS WITH THE CLUBS

Sir:—Apropos the letters in the March *Digest* from Don Foulis and Joe Watts regarding order switching. I am very pleased to hear that this vexed question is again to be raised at the A.G.M. but wish to say this.

First to Joe Watts. You are not accurate in saying the present M.C. is to blame, as at least two of us have protested loud and long over the present position. Secondly to Don Foulis. Your innuendo re the chairman is hardly "cricket" as you were chairmen for a much longer period than the present man, yet the inference in your letter is that the decision rests with the chairman. The decision rests with the body of players through their elected representatives and at least some of us on the present M.C. will give an "order of merit rule" our fullest support.

Quote from my letter in *Digest*, March, 1954: "Players for each team to be registered in nearest possible assessment of order of merit and not being allowed to be moved more than one place up or down without fresh registration with—and permission from—the league. The freedom to move a player one place would make reasonable enough allowance for a captain to take account of such things as current form."
—GUS REED (Oakhill).

I'M SORRY . . .

Sir:—First I feel I owe an apology to the boys of the Police A team for "inflicting my rotten manners," as Jim Green calls it, upon them. I am really sorry and hope the lack of sportsmanship shown by me has not caused any ill-feeling.

Secondly, I think in cases like this "the individual concerned" should be named. If you make a big affair of it, it is not right to place it all on the club's head and leave the club, and team-mates, under suspicion that they might be concerned with the offence.

Thirdly, I want to apologise to the members of Linnets A and B teams for the damage done to them and to the club.

I would like to mention, however, that nobody approached me during the evening of the offence. All the apologising was done later. The matter could and should have been settled there and then by my way of thinking—F. W. SHULZE (Linnets).

MEDALS COMPLAINT

Sir:—I recently attended a cup final and was disgusted at the poor quality of the medals awarded to the two teams. Not only do the medals contain no mention of the cup for which they were awarded or the year of award, but I am also told that no effort is made to engrave them with the names of the winning teams. In fact, as sports trophies they are useless. Surely a league of our size and standing can do better than this.—E. W. STURGESS (Beauclair).

Mr. W. Stamp replies:—The quality of our medals is the same as they have always been. We cannot afford silver or gilt. They are made from our own die and indicate they are from the Liverpool and District Table Tennis League, and the colours in the centre and ribbon indicate to which cup or division they belong. This was set out in the *Digest* over two years ago. The medals are presented at the conclusion of the finals and therefore cannot be engraved with the names of the winning teams. Surely if the recipients think it worth while, they will have their names inscribed themselves.