

The Liverpool & District Table Tennis League
The Rise and Fall

Season	No. of Divisions	No. of Teams
1926-27		
1927-28	1	13
1928-29	2	20
1929-30	3	33
1930-31	3	42
1931-32	4	51
1932-33	4	51
1933-34	4	52
1934-35	6	65
1935-36	6	69
1936-37	8	64
1937-38	8	94
1938-39	9	106
1939-40		
1940-41		
1941-42	2	15
1942-43		
1943-44	2	28
1944-45	4	48
1945-46	5	51
1946-47	10	99
1947-48	13	130
1948-49	16	151
1949-50	16	155
1950-51	16	160
1951-52	14	168
1952-53	11	132
1953-54	12	144
1954-55	11	129
1955-56	10	136
1956-57	12	134
1957-58	11	126
1958-59	11	125
1959-60	12	129
1960-61	9	125
1961-62	10	121
1962-63	10	114
1963-64	8	105
1964-65	8	102
1965-66	8	109
1966-67	8	106
1967-68	8	99
1968-69	9	106
1969-70	8	95

Season	No. of Divisions	No. of Teams
1970-71	9	111
1971-72	10	116
1972-73	8	97
1973-74	8	104
1974-75	8	97
1975-76	8	106
1976-77	8	106
1977-78	8	110
1978-79	9	119
1979-80	8	108
1980-81	8	105
1981-82	8	100
1982-83	7	97
1983-84	7	94
1984-85	7	87
1985-86	7	87
1986-87	6	77
1987-88	6	73
1988-89	6	69
1989-90	5	59
1990-91	5	57
1991-92	5	54
1992-93	5	56
1993-94	5	56
1994-95	5	59
1995-96	5	58
1996-97	5	59
1997-98	5	59
1998-99	5	56
1999-00	5	57
2000-01	5	55
2001-02	5	56
2002-03	5	56
2003-04	5	56
2004-05	5	56
2005-06	4	55
2006-07	4	53
2007-08	5	58
2008-09	5	58
2009-10		

The accompanying list gives an indication how a sport goes through good and bad patches. From 1927 to the start of WW2, it was a constant rise in popularity, from 1 Division with 13 teams to 9 Divisions with 106 teams, bearing in mind that teams were mostly 5 and 4 player teams, TT in those days, being mainly a night time enjoyment, didn't really have too much competition, getting to the matches was probably the most difficult thing, not many cars about then. Organised Table Tennis stopped when WW2 started but an attempt was made to kick start the league in 1941, but probably due to so many air raids on Liverpool, it was abandoned the following year. But as the tide of the war turned, the L&DTTL was restarted, to begin the start of what turned out to be the most popular period in our history, from 2 Divs & 28 teams in 1943 to 16 Divs. and 160 teams in 1950-5. In those 5 years after the war, taking part in sport was probably looked at as a good way of socialising at reasonable cost, and table tennis had everything going for it, it could be set up at reasonable cost in a minimal sized room, we still had food rationing, but I'm sure something 'special' was found for the matches, (a cup of tea and a few biscuits). The 50's started the decline, the competition for the players attention increased with the availability of TV to the masses, first black & white soon to be followed by colour, and if that wasn't enough, cinema's took up the battle, bringing out 3D, Cinemascope, Todd-Ao, wide screens and Stereo sound, the girl friends probably started to put their claim in for the players time; we could say "but if only one night a week was required, why the decline", who knows, but it did decline, to the late 80's with 5 Divs. with 59 teams. From the early 90's till now, we have managed to stabilise at around 50-60 teams a season, but mainly due to 3 out of 5 Divs. now being 3 aside teams. There was also a decline in youngsters taking up TT in the last 20 years with the advent of the computer, then the computer games, giving rise to the name "square eyed couch potatoes". But hopefully times may be changing, the government is ploughing loads of money into getting youngster 'moving' again, and TT being a 'not so strenuous' sport to learn could be the answer, more and more schools are adding it to their curriculum and it seems to be taking off locally, but help from established players and Clubs is still required to keep the momentum going.

Thanks to Trevor Owens for his research, not often we get straight forward statistics in time to prevent the doomsday prophesies coming true.

R. W.

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