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Editor: J. D. Pattison

A. E. Upton, J. C. McKim, A. Montgomery

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No. 2

CONCERN ABOUT THE LADIES

MORE concern is being felt and expressed this season than ever before regarding the general standard of play among the women members of the League and there is a strong feeling current that unless something is done to raise it the two women's divisions may well disappear from our ken. Whether that conjecture is right or not we will not hazard a guess, but there is no doubt that something must be done in attempt to help our women players.

One suggestion that is being made in certain quarters—and may well be proposed at the League's next Annual General Meeting—is that the rules be revised to permit the women players to play more than the 26 matches at present allowed in order that they can play in both the women's divisions and open divisions.

Another suggestion is that there should also be a proviso in the rules that women must first play in the women's divisions.

But these measures alone will not, in our opinion, do a great deal to raise the general standard. One match a week in an open division, playing against men, is not sufficient to bring about the desired change. In our opinion much more can be done in the clubs themselves and it has been a matter of great surprise to us for some time that what men players in Manchester and Stockport are prepared to do, their counterparts in Liverpool are apparently not.

In the two leagues mentioned the men take considerable interest in their women players, especially any who show some potential to being a more than useful player. They coach them along; practice with them and generally improve their play.

From the information we have there is little of this done in Liverpool. It seems that the women are left, in the main, to play among themselves, except for the odd game or two. The result of this can, of course, be seen in the Lancashire and Cheshire League matches and in open tournaments.

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Last season our women's first team only just missed being relegated to the second division of the Lancashire and Cheshire League. Indications this season point to a somewhat similar position arising, for it would appear that we just haven't three women players in the League good enough to bring the league greater success.

We want, through this column, to make a strong appeal to all the men players in the league to take a greater interest in the affairs of the women members. We want to appeal to them to practice with them much more than they do at present—and by practice we mean practice. Not just a game in the club, but really solid practice which pays attention to improving any weakness that our women players may have in attack or defence.

One of the points which will be made, of course, is that a great number of clubs have neither the facilities nor evenings to spare to allow such practice to take place, but there are plenty of others where it could do so.

What we suggest is a long term policy and is one, we are sure, which would eventually pay dividends, especially if carried out by the more experienced men players in the league.

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IS "MERSEYSIDE" WANTED ?

By. J. McKim

ANOTHER Merseyside Open has come and gone, and we are left to wonder more than ever, if this event is required by players or spectators.

The entry, although high in quality, was very poor in quantity, particularly the local entry, which was the smallest for many years, in fact the entry fees were the lowest since 1946, and the spectators at the finals were almost non-existent.

I know that there are many League members who have always supported the Open and who would miss it were it discontinued. I only hope these faithful few can try to arouse some interest in the other League members.

Strictness Charge

It is suggested that we in Liverpool lose some entries because we are too strict and that entry on the day of the tournament should be allowed. Surely it is not being strict to enforce rules which are clearly printed on the entry forms and which are a standard part of any tournament in any sport.

We are well aware that other organisations break their own rules, and E.T.T.A. rules, in the running of their tournaments, but should we sink to their level in order to please the few who are too tired to fill in an entry form? No—the Merseyside has for many years enjoyed a reputation as a properly and well run tournament; let it remain so or cease to exist.

While on the subject of tournaments a word of congratulation to Judith Crafter, who won the Liverpool qualifying round of the Eagle and Girl tournament at Bootle Y.M.C.A. on December 5.

She now represents Liverpool in the area finals in Manchester.

It will soon be time for the distribution of awards to cup winners and divisional and regional champions. As suggested at the A.G.M. last May we are departing from the traditional medal and we would appreciate your comments when you have seen the awards, so that we will know if the idea is appreciated or if you want medals as before.

County Match

We are staging a Premier Division match—Lancashire v Lincolnshire—at the Liverpool Y.M.C.A. on Saturday, January 30, commencing 7 p.m. Admission is 2/- and tickets can be obtained from any member of the committee.

The Liverpool Closed will be held once again at Dingle Vale School on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, April 20-23, with the finals at 7.30 p.m. on the Saturday. Please make a note of these dates. Entry forms will be distributed in a subsequent issue of the *Digest*.

A large entry will help to offset the loss sustained at the Open, a loss which, although not large in comparison with the League's assets, was still large enough to cause our treasurer some anxiety. A good entry would also give some measure of encouragement to the tournament secretary and tournament referee, both of whom do a great deal of work before and during a tournament.

Finally may I wish you, on behalf of the Committee, a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Tough Going for Seniors

IT cannot be claimed that the men's senior team has, as yet, pulled up any trees this season. In fact, the two matches so far played in the league have resulted in defeat by 9-1 and 7-3 respectively to Manchester and Stockport. Added to these failures must be the exit from the Wilmott Cup, beaten 6-3 by Burnley.

Despite the defeat by the Mancunians it was pleasing to see Arthur Taylor beat Strulovitch by the convincing margin of 21-9 21-16 and also to take Ingber to three games. Apart, however, from Taylor's good showing in this match, the Manchester side again proved much too strong for the Liverpool team.

One heartening aspect of the match was that some 60-odd spectators came along to the Liverpool Y.M.C.A. to support both teams. It must be a few years since such numbers watched a city team in action.

Fine Debut

Turning to the Stockport match, which was played on our opponents' table, this was a disappointment remembering that the result in the corresponding match last season was 8-2 in our favour. Two of Liverpool's successes were scored by Ron Jones, of Liverpool Y.M.C.A., who, making his senior debut following an unbeaten run with the A team, defeated both Hankey and Johnson and fell only to Schofield.

Taylor and Norman Jones combined to win a tense doubles event against the powerful partnership of Schofield and Hankey. But it was Ron Jones who took the eye during the evening. The way in which he applied himself to his task was an object lesson for the younger players in the league.

The same team of Taylor, Norman Jones and Ron Jones will do duty in the next two matches against Burnley and Ashton, while Wally

Allanson has been included in the side to partner Taylor in the doubles.

What now of the women's first team since the last issue of the *Digest*. I only wish I could report a sudden revival in their fortunes, but alas I cannot. The journey to Stockport a few days after the defeat by that league in the Rose Bowl, proved fruitless. This time they were beaten by nine sets to one.

For the match against Manchester at the Beauclair Club recently, Pauline Lawrenson was brought into the side to join Moya Jones and Joyce Randall. Again one must give credit to Moya for Liverpool's only two wins in this match, at the expense of Dolly Wilkinson and Connie Moore, while she only conceded the set 18-21 in the third game against Winifred Swift. I rank this as a first class performance by Mrs. Jones, who has now won all four sets so far gained by the women's first team this season.

Hardest Matches

One tends to take a rather despondent view after studying these results but some improvement may be anticipated for our senior teams in future matches. One must realise that Manchester and Stockport have very strong sides, both men and women, so that the hardest matches have now been played. I just hope I do not have to eat my words at a later date!

The men's and women's A teams present a brighter picture. The women's A team, represented by Gladys Rimmer, Betty Black and Muriel Wilcox won an interesting match against Urmston at the Oakhill Club by six sets to four, which is a good start for Mrs. Ivy Crafter and her team.

The men's A team have so far defeated Wirral by nine sets to one and drawn five-all with Southport.

YOUNGSTER OF FINE PROMISE

NO excuse need be offered for beginning these notes by praising the Junior A team for a great 6-4 win they scored over Wirral's first team.

Liverpool Y.M.C.A.'s young, R. Smith was the star of the match and the player mainly responsible for Wirral's first defeat for two seasons. He played fine tactical table tennis to win all his three singles and also teamed up with his clubmate Ted Briscoe to take the doubles.

In Smith the Y.M.C.A., and the league, have a bright prospect for the future and I would like to think that the senior members of his club are giving him the coaching and practice that will bring him on still further.

Ted Briscoe provided the other two successes by beating both Edgar and Marsh. What a different player Briscoe was in that match compared to the boy who played against Warrington when the A team were beaten 9-1.

Admittedly Briscoe gained our only success then, when he recovered well after losing the first game to J. Barlow. It may well have been that he lacked the inspiration which Smith provided in the Wirral match. One fault that Briscoe will have to eradicate, however, is that he is apt to feel he is home and dried when he has a few points lead.

Young Campbell found himself out of touch in both matches and was unable to win a game in either of them. But he need not be down-hearted for the experience should do him good.

The first team has a very unbalanced season with only one match in the first and three in the second. The one match played so far was against Wirral A at Bootle Y.M.C.A. and they had little difficulty in winning by eight sets to two.

Both John Ball and Bob Eden won all their singles and each gained two of their successes in straight games. Ball and Reg Gray combined to win the doubles.

In his singles Gray never seemed to be able to settle down properly. He may well have been feeling the strain of playing in his first representative match, and it was only against Cliff Swindells junior, whom he beat 17 in the third, that he produced anything like his true form.

The first match in the New Year will see our two teams in opposition. By their defeat of Wirral the A team have made the first team's chance of retaining the junior championship easier. It is going to be interesting to see how they fare against our own first team.

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Y.M.'s in Cup Crash

By Our Own Reporter

THE second round Readman Cup tie between Bootle Y.M.C.A. and Liverpool Y.M.C.A. at the Bootle club, failed to produce the fine match one might have expected. Only the set between Ralph Gunnion and Ron Jones produced table tennis of real quality, due mainly to the fact that for most of the match the Bootle players were below form.

Playing without John Cain, Liverpool promoted Peter Turtle to Cain's position at No. 2 and brought in Bob Owen at No. 5, and his assistance proved invaluable indeed, since he won both his sets.

Even when Bootle trailed 1-3—Gunnion having "broken their duck" by comfortably beating Turtle 11 and 15—there always seemed hope for the home team, and this grew considerably when Gordon Brownlee and Fred Cadwallader had greatly reduced the margin by respectively beating Dave Butterworth (12-21 10-21-13) and Turtle (16-21 21-9 21-15).

Fighting Chance

This brought Gunnion and Jones together in what could have been the vital set of the evening. A win by Gunnion would have given Bootle more than a fighting chance since Ian Rogerson had still to play Owen and Cadwallader had to play Pete D'Arcy.

But Gunnion started in anything but sound fashion. Three or four careless and nochalent shots saw him trailing several points behind an opponent who was giving every shot his full concentration. It was only then that Gunnion settled down but he found that Jones intended to give nothing away and the pair virtually swapped point for point so that Liverpool's No. 1 ran out winner of the game 21-16.

One might have thought that the lesson of the first game would have been enough for Gunnion, but he opened the second in like fashion to lose the first few points. This time, however, he settled down more quickly, began to use his head and by means of steady table tennis interspersed with some rare forehands, eventually levelled at 19-all. The next four points were exchanged and then Gunnion, for the

first time got his nose in front, and promptly finished the game 23-21 by taking the next point.

The decider was a very tight affair all the way—easily the closest game of the evening—and there was never more than a couple of points in it. It was not surprising, therefore, to hear the score called "19 all".

It was at this point that Gunnion had his chance of taking the set for having won the next point he forced Jones to make a return that could have been aced with comparative ease only to fluff it. Jones saw to it that such an opportunity did not arise again for Gunnion and he eventually took the game 24-22 for the set.

SKIPPER'S PART

Even with the score 5-3 against them, the Bootle players had not lost hope of forcing a replay but they reckoned without the fighting temperament of D'Arcy and Owen. The skipper fought tooth and nail against Cadwallader and his win by 22-20 21-19 put his side into the quarter final of the competition.

When Owen went on against Rogerson in the last set of the match, one might have thought that instead it was the first, so keenly did the Liverpool man play. The fact that the issue had been settled meant nothing to him. He put everything he knew into his game and after losing the first game to 16, fought back well to win the next two 12 and 17.

There was not the slightest doubt that Liverpool deserved their victory. There was nothing haphazard about them when they went to the table and they sought to make every point a winning point. The entire match gave an excellent indication as to why they are having their finest ever season.

One naturally wonders what would have been the outcome if D'Arcy had promoted each of his players one place up the team sheet, but no one can blame him for using his team to the best of his ability. Cup-ties mean sudden death and no captain can afford to throw away any tactical advantage that comes his way.

League Tables

Division 1

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Liverpool Y.M.	8	7	—	1	58	22	15
Victoria Park	9	6	3	—	57	33	12
Balfour	8	6	2	—	47	33	12
L'pool Y.M. A	8	5	1	2	46	34	12
Bootle Y.M.	9	4	3	2	52	38	10
Rafters	9	4	3	2	48	42	10
Bath Street	9	3	4	2	45	45	8
Bohemians	9	2	4	3	40	50	7
Linnets	8	2	4	2	37	43	6
Oakhill	9	2	5	2	37	53	6
Waterloo Pk.	9	—	5	4	32	58	4
Anfield	9	1	8	—	21	69	2

Division 2

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Victoria Pk A	10	9	—	1	75	25	19
Litherland	9	8	—	1	66	24	17
Anfield A	9	6	3	—	55	35	12
Balfour A	9	5	2	2	50	40	12
Waterloo Dk.	9	5	3	1	50	40	11
Bootle Y.M. A	9	5	4	—	51	39	10
Rafters A	9	3	5	1	42	48	7
Cadwa	8	3	5	—	32	48	6
Lucan	7	2	4	1	29	41	5
Bohemians A	9	2	7	—	29	61	4
Litherland A	9	—	7	1	27	63	3
Oakhill A	9	—	9	—	24	66	2

Division 3

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Victoria Pk B	9	8	—	1	69	21	17
R.A.F.A.	8	5	1	2	47	33	12
Beauchair	8	5	2	1	50	30	11
Bath St. A	9	5	3	1	51	39	11
Watrloo Pk A	8	5	2	1	43	37	11
Fairlawn	8	3	3	2	41	39	8
Rafters B	8	2	3	3	37	43	7
Balfour B	8	2	4	2	31	49	6
English Elec.	8	2	5	1	33	47	5
Linnets A	8	1	4	3	32	48	5
Linacre	8	1	6	1	32	48	3
Bootle Y.M. B	8	1	7	—	24	56	2

Division 4

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
L'pool Y.M. B	9	8	—	1	70	20	17
University	10	8	1	1	63	37	17
Harold House	9	6	3	—	53	37	12
L.P.A.S.	9	5	3	1	57	33	11
Cadwa A	8	4	1	3	49	31	11
Sefton	9	3	3	3	42	48	9
Victoria Pk. C	7	3	2	2	36	34	8
Warbreck M.	9	4	5	—	44	46	8
Balfour C	9	3	6	—	37	53	6
Litherland B	8	1	6	1	29	41	3
Bohemians B	10	1	8	1	29	71	3
Linnets B	8	—	7	1	17	63	1

Division 5

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Lussac	6	5	—	1	44	16	11
Anfield B	7	5	1	1	45	25	11
Victoria Pk D	6	5	1	—	41	19	10
Watrloo Dk. A	6	4	1	1	44	16	9
Florence Ox.	7	3	3	1	37	33	7
Oakhill B	6	3	3	—	33	27	6
Bootle Y.M. C	6	1	3	2	22	38	4
L.P.A.S. A	7	2	5	—	27	43	4
Cadwa B	8	2	6	—	26	54	4
Bath St. B	7	—	7	—	11	59	0

Division 6

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Wvrtree Lab.	9	8	1	—	70	20	16
Liverpool P.O.	10	8	2	—	70	30	16
Fairlawn A	9	7	2	—	65	25	14
Wvrtree Bapt.	9	7	2	—	58	32	14
Telecomms	9	6	2	1	49	41	13
Bohemians C	9	4	3	2	44	46	10
Rafters C	9	4	4	1	46	44	9
Co-op	9	3	3	3	45	45	9
Nalگو	9	1	6	2	36	54	4
Huntley & P.	9	1	7	1	27	63	3
Bootle Nalگو	8	—	8	—	16	64	0
Domestic Miss	9	—	9	—	14	76	0

North Region

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
R.O.F.	8	7	—	1	62	18	15
Watrloo Pk. B	8	7	1	—	67	13	14
Wrbrcck Mr. A	9	7	2	—	58	32	14
Watrloo Pk. C	9	6	2	1	60	30	13
Lewis's	8	4	2	2	48	32	10
Bath St. C	8	3	2	3	47	33	9
Bootle Y.M. D	9	3	4	2	42	48	8
Belling	8	3	4	1	39	41	7
Moss Side	9	1	6	2	32	58	4
Anfield D	9	1	6	2	23	67	4
Lewis's A	9	1	7	1	19	71	3
Hansons	8	—	7	1	13	67	1

South Region

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
L'pool C.C.	8	8	—	—	62	18	16
Fairlawn B	9	7	1	1	70	20	15
L'pool Y.M. C	8	7	1	—	69	11	14
Stanley House	8	6	1	1	51	29	13
Beauchair A	9	6	2	1	60	30	13
Crawfords A	9	4	5	—	39	51	8
Tech Studs.	9	3	6	—	30	60	6
Oakhill D	9	2	6	1	33	57	5
Crawfords B	8	2	6	—	26	54	4
L'pool C.C. A	8	1	6	1	19	61	3
Eng. Elec. B	6	1	5	—	15	45	2
Wvrtree Lab B	9	—	8	1	26	64	1

LEAGUE TABLES

East Region

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
St. Ed. O.B.	9	7	—	2	72	18	16
Crawfords . . .	9	7	1	1	66	24	15
L.P.A.S. B . . .	9	6	1	2	59	31	14
Wvtree Lab. A	9	6	2	1	59	31	13
Anfield C . . .	8	5	2	1	50	30	11
Nalgo A	9	5	4	—	49	41	10
Eng. Elec. A . .	9	4	4	1	41	49	9
Beauchair B . .	8	4	4	—	35	45	8
Fairlawn C . . .	9	2	6	1	32	58	5
Oakhill C	10	1	7	2	30	70	4
Rafters D	9	1	7	1	24	66	3
Birds Eye	10	—	10	—	23	77	—

Central Region

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
University A . .	7	5	1	1	42	28	11
Cadwa Y	9	4	2	3	51	39	11
St. Edwards A	10	4	4	2	50	50	10
Bootle Y.M. Y	8	4	3	1	45	34	9
Linnets Y	9	2	6	1	43	47	5
Harold Hse A	7	2	5	—	18	52	4

Women's Division 1

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Rafters	8	6	—	2	61	19	14
Cadwa	6	6	—	—	53	7	12
Orrell	6	4	1	1	39	21	9
Bibbys	7	4	2	1	36	34	9
Oakhill	6	4	2	—	36	24	8
Linnets	7	3	3	1	31	39	7
Cadwa A	7	1	4	2	29	41	4
Bohemians	8	2	6	—	31	49	4
Bath Street . . .	7	1	5	1	23	47	3
Waterloo Park	8	—	8	—	11	69	—

Women's Division 2

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Huntley & P.	7	6	1	—	52	18	12
Sefton	6	5	1	—	44	16	10
Bohemians A . . .	6	4	2	—	37	23	8
Wvtree Lab. . . .	5	3	2	—	32	18	6
L.P.A.S.	5	2	3	—	23	27	4
Rafters A	4	1	3	—	17	23	2
Orrell A	5	1	4	—	14	36	2
Tech. Studs. . . .	6	—	6	—	1	59	—

Note:—Orrell and Technical Students regret they cannot participate in the subsidiary competition; will the Women's Second Division teams please delete these two clubs from the subsidiary fixtures.

Litherland's Tough Time

THE Litherland Club are going through a tough time this season, not so much from a playing point of view as from a shortage of players and from the consequential financial reasons.

Their position, which Secretary Norman Cooke, in a letter to the *Digest*, describes as desperate, has resulted from the refusal, for one reason or another, of several of last season's players to sign up again. This caused them to withdraw their C team from the league and they fear that if the present drift away from the club continues next year, they will have to withdraw yet another team from the league—if not the entire club itself.

New members are vital to them if they are to carry on in the tradition for which the club has been noted in the past.

Mr. Cooke has no intention of poaching on the preserves of other clubs, but he would welcome anyone interested in table tennis who is not at present attached to a league club.

Continued from Page 10

One Bright Spot

At the other end of the table is another consistent team. Oakhill A are very much in the doldrums, having lost every match. In fact, the only bright spot for them so far this season, was a 7-3 cup win over Bohemians A, who were without Alan Rycroft, Moya Jones and Muriel Wilcox.

Companions in distress, Bohemians and Litherland A met at Bohs when the home side scraped through by six sets to four, due to two sets each from Rycroft, Moya Jones and Baker.

Just one plea—but it comes straight from the heart. When will players realise that the starting time of matches is 7.30? Many clubs have to tidy up and get out of their clubrooms by 11 p.m.

Y.M.C.A.'s Make the News

LIVERPOOL Y.M.C.A. and Bootle Y.M.C.A. continue to make the news in the First Division scramble for league points, writes Ken Jones.

With eight matches completed, the Liverpool team of R. Jones, J. Cain, D. Butterworth, P. D'Arcy and P. Turtle, have increased their lead to three clear points.

Bootle provided the startling result of the season by beating a full-strength Balfour team by nine events to one. Several sets were very closely fought and were only decided by the odd point or two in the final game. Nevertheless, Bootle deserve every credit for this fine performance.

Oddly enough the two Y.M.C.A.'s met in the Readman Cup with Liverpool gaining a 7-3 victory. During this match Ron Jones became the first player to beat Ralph Gunnion this season in a very close set, 21-16, 21-23, 24-22. P. Turtle (2) and D. Butterworth (1) were Liverpool's only losers.

Only One

Gunnion is the only player in the division boasting an unbeaten record in league matches. A glance at the leading league averages shows that Vic Chesham, Don Hobbs and Ron Jones are close behind him, having lost just two sets each for an average of 87.5 per cent. It is interesting to note that this quartet are all using sandwich bats with great success.

Team-mates Arthur Taylor and Wally Allanson of Bath Street are next with 81.2 per cent, followed by Gordon Brownlee (Bootle) and Dave Ferguson (Rafters) on the 75 per cent mark.

Among the lower team order players, Ted Morris (Victoria Park) and K. Poonsirivongse (Liverpool Y.M. 'A') lead the way with the splendid average of 92.8 per cent, closely rivalled by Liverpool Y.M.C.A. skipper Peter D'Arcy on 87.5 per cent, R. Tierney (Victoria

Park) on 85.7 per cent and Dave Butterworth on 78.5 per cent.

These figures raise some pertinent questions, such as should K. Poonsirivongse be promoted at the Y.M., why is Vic Chesham overlooked for representative matches, and to what extent is the bat responsible for so many sandwich players appearing at the top of the averages?

★ ★ ★

IT surely cannot be long before Balfour's selectors realise that their first team would be greatly strengthened by the return of Les Davies, writes Glyn Jones.

The playing standard of the Second Division may not be very high but his results for Balfour A. have placed him head and shoulders above the division's other leading players. Only Jack Seddon, of Waterloo Dock, has been able to take him to three games, Davies eventually winning 21-18 in the third.

With some results still to come in before the halfway stage, Litherland are continuing their steady progress towards getting back to Division 1. They have beaten in succession Cadwa (9-1), Oakhill A (8-2), Rafters A (8-2) and Anfield A (7-3). Their strength lies in steadiness at Nos. 4 and 5. Of the eight sets conceded during this period, only one was dropped in the lower order.

Victoria Park A have an almost identical record. Their toughest match in recent weeks was the one in which they gained a 6-4 victory over Bootle Y.M.C.A. A. With Hudson and Tarr not playing—Truman and Park replacing them—they were still an experienced side and the young Y.M. team did well to hold them to such a narrow win. When Hughes, Keating and Ball realise that craft and consistency are important in table tennis, the Y.M. A team will be a very difficult side to beat.

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HAILSTORM STOPPED PLAY

AFTER seven consecutive defeats in the Third Division, Bootle Y.M. B finally recorded their first win of the season when they overcame Linnets A 9-1, writes Brian Leeson.

The Bootle club would win more league matches if they could decide on a regular five. Their team has been changed so often that their results have consequently suffered.

Linnets, playing a man short, were well beaten, their single success being attained by R. Griffiths. In their previous two matches, Linnets played a man short on both occasions but managed to draw with Balfour B and Fairlawn. Full credit therefore, to the four Linnets players who won those points under such a handicap.

Graded Sequence

Bath Street A must be congratulated on being the first team to defeat the strong R.A.F.A. side by 7-3. C. Smith and A. Rupell both scored doubles for Bath Street. W. Murray did well to beat B. Smith (R.A.F.A.), who has one of the best averages in the division.

Balfour B also did well in holding R.A.F.A. to a draw. In this match E. Jones and M. Looker won two sets each for Balfour, while B. Smith and Jim Robinson gained doubles for the R.A.F. Association.

Linacre have held their place in the Third Division for a longer period than any other team at present playing in it. They are, however, in danger of losing that distinction this season for they have won only one match to date and are finding points very hard to come by. H. Reeve, their No. 1, has only lost two events this term, but the form of the rest of the team has been very inconsistent.

Victoria Park B remain undefeated, but they had a narrow escape at Fairlawn where they eventually won 6-4 after a most exciting match. Play was held up for several minutes during one of the sets while the players waited for a hailstorm to subside. The noise of the hailstones hitting the roof of the Fairlawn clubhouse was so loud

that the players could not hear the umpire's voice.

★ ★ ★

LIVERPOOL Y.M.C.A. B have now built up such a commanding lead at the head of the Fourth Division that it is virtually an impossibility for them to be caught, writes Bert Ariss.

Sefton General Hospital, however, must take full marks for being the first team to take a point from the leaders, mainly thanks to a great victory by veteran George Kettle over young Ted Briscoe 12-21 21-11 21-16 and a good double by A. Douglas over Des Loughrey and J. Donnelly.

Unfortunately the Police have suffered a severe blow by the loss of their No. 1, D. Gauld, who has sustained a slipped disc and will miss the rest of the season's fixtures.

Bohemians B have "broken the ice" by beating their fellow strugglers, Linnets B, by six sets to four, which may well serve as a much-needed tonic to skipper Mike Crawford, one of the most whole-hearted players in the division, who sets a fine example to all younger players.

Two Surprises

Warbreck Moor have produced two big surprises in the past month by winning 7-3 at the University and by defeating the Police by six sets to four. After trailing 1-3 at the University, they won the next six sets to end comfortable winners. Nevertheless only hard hitting No. 1 Norman Rees and top form Doug Christie have shown the consistency required to offer a serious challenge for honours.

Harold House are having a good season, relying on all round strength rather than any individual stars. Their 8-2 victory over Victoria Park C was their most convincing success—and a very surprising margin indeed!

For the record book. In the Police v Balfour C match, not one of the ten sets needed three games to reach a decision—a very rare occurrence.

Anfield's Challenge

THINGS remain much the same regarding the top four teams in the Fifth Division, writes John Cawley.

Two teams are disputing the leadership, Victoria Park D and Lussac. At the time of writing Lussac are the only team in the division who are still unbeaten. Under the leadership of Harry Holmes, the rest of the team of Goodall, Leeming, W. Holmes and Kneale make up a very good side and it will take a very strong side to smash that undefeated record.

Victoria Park D, their greatest rivals, could not hold Lussac, even with the advantage of playing on their own table, and were beaten by six sets to four after a very hard game. Lussac owed their success mainly to the two Holmeses winning two sets each, while Cope played a captain's part by winning his two for the Park.

Playing Well

I was shocked to see Waterloo Dock A beaten 6-4 by Oakhill B, even though they were without Nan Lamb. Waterloo were no match for Oakhill, who are playing well at the moment, with Imundi and Davies in good form.

Anfield B, with Stirling and Maher as their stars, are making a strong challenge to the leaders. Also fighting their way back up the division are Florence Oxtan. The "Florrie" got off to a bad start but with Eddie Moran, Pete Mansfield and Cook on top form, they will not give away many points.

Police B will do better this season. They have hit on the same side two matches running—an encouraging sign for them—with Conroy and Carlisle winning most of their sets.

Cadwa B will win a lot more matches when they get a settled side. They have a very good No. 1 in A. Jones. Also playing well is Black. With a bit more experience Bootle Y.M. C should pick up a few more points, with McEllenborough, Atkins and Ward making a brave fight for points.

Bath Street B are still without a point but they keep on trying and hoping for their first success.

★ ★ ★

WAVERTREE LABOUR now lead the way in the Sixth Division, writes Brian Leeson, and also boast the only unbeaten player, P. Hurworth. Telecoms did well to overcome the Labour Club team in October, but since then Wavertree have continued on their undefeated way, gathering their points with ease.

Wavertree Baptists gave Telecoms something of a shock when they beat them by six sets to four. C. J. Jones won his usual two sets for the Telecoms to maintain his high average, but Daley and Wainwright both lost their two. J. E. Travis scored a double for the Baptists.

Nalگو's first win of the season came when they defeated Domestic Mission by the convincing score of nine sets to one at Mill Street. M. Patterson was the Mission's only winner and results to date indicate that they are likely to be relegated to regional play next season unless they show considerable improvement.

Bootle Nalگو are also candidates in the relegation stakes and their meeting with Domestic Mission next month will be vital to both clubs.

Huntley and Palmer is another club who are finding points difficult to obtain this season. G. Gaskell and M. Campbell produce satisfactory results at Nos. 1 and 2, but the rest of the team is rather disappointing. Perhaps when they settle down in their new premises their former high standard will return.

Only One Defeat

Fairlawn A have made a commendable recovery after a poor start. L. French has been beaten only once in 16 events and B. Phillips is proving hard to beat now that he has gone over to the sandwich bat. P. Whalley, T. O'Donnell and D. Walter complete the team and all are improving steadily.

SUCCESS OF THE CANTWELLS

Another promotion prospect is Liverpool Post Office, who only came into the division this season from the North Region. W. Shiel has lost only two sets to date, while Foster and Carr seem difficult to overcome.

The inclusion of Mrs. Casselman in Rafter's C will certainly strengthen the team and it will be no surprise if the club's points tally improves in the New Year.

★ ★ ★

THE past month has brought no change in the positions of the teams in the top half of the North region table. The fight for the championship is obviously going to be between the unbeaten Royal Ordnance Factory and Waterloo Park B, with the latter waiting for the chance to get at their rivals when they meet for the second time on the Park's own table next month.

The Park players will undoubtedly be all out to avenge the 6-4 defeat which R.O.F. inflicted on them in the second match of the season, the only match in which Waterloo dropped points, in the hope of pushing them off the top rung of the ladder.

But there has been a different story in the bottom half of the region table. Since our last notes Belling and Lee have lifted themselves a couple of places up the table with two good wins over Lewis's A and Moss Side and a drawn game with Bath Street C.

Much of their success has been due to J. Cantwell and Mrs. E. Cantwell. The former, playing at No. 1, dropped only two sets during that period—to R. Reynolds, of Warbreck A, and B. Winder, of Moss Side, both of them three-game sets—while Mrs. Cantwell was beaten only once, by G. Hill, of Warbreck, and then in another three-gamer.

Among Cantwell's victims was Warbreck's No. 1, J. Millin, whom he convincingly defeated 11 and 9. Considering that Millin suffered only one one defeat in the month's play, when he was narrowly beaten 19 in the third by Chris Coveney, of Waterloo Park B, Cantwell's victory was a performance of note.

First Win

Lewis's A have at last broken their duck, and also did themselves a lot of good, with a fine 8-2 win over Hanson's Dairies. The victory took them off the bottom rung of the ladder and left Hansons as the wooden spoonists.

It was Lewis's three lower players, C. Blundell, B. Griffin and J. Waner, who won the match for them, for all three won their two sets, C. Avery and J. Duke contributing the other two and each losing in straight games to the Dairyman's No. 1, J. Hanson.

P. Wilkinson, of R.O.F., is still proving to be the outstanding player in the region. He has carried all before him in the past month and won all his sets in straight games. His toughest match was with R. McNaghten, of Lewis's, who held him to 18 in both games.

Waterloo Park seem unable to make up their minds as to who will lead their B team, Coveney or D. Chapman. In the last month both have appeared twice in the No. 1 position but it was Coveney who came off best. His one defeat in the period was, oddly enough, at the hands of his own C team clubmate, B. Wood, who beat him 13 and 17 when Coveney was at No. 2. Chapman, however, was beaten twice—once by A. Evison, their C team No. 2, after a terrific struggle, and the other time by W. Larsen, of Bath Street, after another hard game.