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OF THE

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TABLE DIGEST TENNIS

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Editor : J. R. Green
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A. E. Upton, J. C. McKim, S. D. Cameron

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Editorial

THE League tables are now in a very interesting position. In at least four of the eight mixed divisions the top two teams are so close together that there is a distinct possibility of a "tie" on points, and in two other divisions there is a battle for top place also. And, in the first season under the twin-stream system, only 80 points were required to avoid the bottom four places in the 1st division. This season it will be nearer to 100. There is only one "one-horse race" throughout the entire League, as against the many which took place annually in days gone by.

This can surely be attributed to the "twin-stream system" and the consequent quick sifting of teams into spheres more suited to their merits? Before long, under this system, the levelling of teams will have progressed to such a stage that nearly every match will provide a challenge even to the division leaders, making for closer competition throughout the season, to the benefit of everyone concerned.

These statements are made in the hope that the clubs holding opposing views will write to the magazine giving their reasons for their desire to revert to the "straight division" system.

OBSERVE THE SERVICE RULE

Since the new service rule came into effect some years ago, there has been a drastic reduction in the legality of the services generally used throughout the League. On looking around, there are very few players (comparatively) who attempt to serve within the confines of the rule as laid down.

Adverse service decisions have cropped up in two Cup Finals this year, and apart from the players "called" on which I will not comment, there were several whose services are decidedly illegal! Cupping the hand, service from the fingers, and the general attempts made to obtain an illegal advantage from such services are prevalent through the League.

Perhaps if umpires generally decided to "call" every service which does not comply with the rule, from the outset of next season, this tendency to evade the rule will be removed.

It has been said that due to many changes in the rule the players do not know it. This is easily rectified, for the E.T.T.A. print the rules clearly on a large card for hanging in the clubroom (where everyone can see it) at a very modest sum. The few coppers concerned would be a great investment.

DR. ALLAN CRAWSHAW

Allan Crawshaw, of College of Technology, has now left Liverpool to take up a new appointment at the College of Technology in Sheffield. He will be missed by his club where he has been the regular No. 1 for some seasons and for whom he has been the most successful player. He will be missed also at League A.G.Ms. where he has been the outstanding supporter of the new points system among other things.

He has made many friends in this League, even amongst those who have been most bitterly opposed to his views at the A.G.M., and on behalf of these I say that he will be missed in every way. I wish him every success in his new post, a wish which I know, will be echoed by everyone who knows him.

Reply to Jack Lambert

In last month's issue Jack Lambert proposed certain changes for the "Digest" and specifically requested my views on the subject. Hence this article.

First, let me make it clear that I can quite see what Jack is aiming at and I can sympathise to a certain extent. This is not intended as an attack on him, but rather is the form of a reply.

Regarding "two bumper issues per year". The reduction of the number of issues and the extension of two issues to cover the content of five, would NOT result in any financial saving. Rather, would there be a financial loss!

The cost of the magazine is based upon the number of pages contained. The greater portion comes under setting-up of the print, and this is a "per page" charge. In order to cover roughly the same ground in two magazines as is currently included in five, would necessitate a magazine of some 40 pages.

Since the pages are printed in multiples of 8 pages, to reduce the number of pages it must be done in 8 pages at a time. So, the cost of printing two such issues will remain as nearly as maybe as is paid for five at present. In addition to which there would be a reduction in the advertising revenue, for no advertiser is going to be willing to pay as much for two adverts per season as they pay now for *five*. Even if the magazine is only 32 pages, the difference will barely cover this deficit.

So the costs will remain the same, even if not a shade higher!

Time? Well, Jack is barking up the wrong tree a little here. The Printer takes about 10-12 days per issue. Every eight pages added will necessitate a longer delay, for there will be more setting-up of type to be done. **Cost does not enter into the delivery dates at all**, for however much is paid, nobody can set up the type more quickly—or at least very little more quickly—even if there is a greater financial reward! Then it has to be printed. So that, if anything, there will be a far longer delay at the Printers.

Time again? Jack mentions the contributors working to a deadline. Well, it must surely be very obvious that this will still be the case, whenever the magazine goes to press. I have been active on the "Digest" for a number of years, and have always found that all contributors want more and more time to write an article, which they can knock-off in a very short time! I think I can speak for all past Editors when I say that although most people *will* work to a deadline, there is nearly always one who won't. This does not help, as must be clear to everyone.

It has been stressed times without number over the past seventeen years, the life of the "Digest"—that we can never hope for an up-to-date magazine. It is a wonderful ideal that is completely unattainable. First, score-cards must be sent to the contributors (otherwise they would have very little to write). At least one week must be allowed for them to write their copy. Then, the Editor has the job of going through the whole lot, articles, letters and divisional notes, correcting spelling errors (where they occur), correcting grammar, reducing the length as often as not to fit the space allowed, typing out the entire magazine and submitting it to the Editorial Board for them to read through in case anything libellous has slipped through. This cannot take place in ten minutes. Then it is posted to the Printer.

By the time it comes back, some three weeks *must* have elapsed since the commencement of the operation. Then, having written out wrappers, etc., they have to be rolled, sealed and stamped. So, at best it is over three weeks delay.

This delay will never be reduced by reducing the number of issues. Rather, will it be increased by the extra time required to print.

So, two "bumper" issues cannot be either financially advantageous, nor can they be made to reduce the delay in production.

What CAN and will happen, of course, is to squash one of the features of the magazine . . . the exchange of ideas and views of individual players. If someone were to write to the magazine in December,

they will have to await a reply until the end of the season . . . and the exchange ends right there.

One of the main troubles with our magazine is the laziness of the players. We hear numerous moans and groans around the League, but just you ask them to write them up for the "Digest", then duck for cover. People are too indolent to be bothered. But, if these were received from time to time, they could be all ready for the Printers long before-hand.

Finally, the production of monthly League tables to send around the clubs has been tried out already, and later scrapped. Some seasons ago Cadwa made this proposition, and it was passed with some enthusiasm at the A.G.M., but one thing had been forgotten. League tables go out of date very quickly, so, whenever they were ready to go out, someone had to drop everything, and do the League tables. It is not always convenient to leave your job, or your work for another body, such as your club, to cut a stencil and run off 50 copies, but since a delay

would make the tables useless it had to be done. Furthermore, there were at that time only two people on the Committee who had a duplicator, so one of them got lumbered. To what end? To save educated people from taking a couple of weeks results from the "Echo" and doing a little sum! Over the season, with six lots sent out, the cost was approximately £7, which would be added to the financial liability described previously.

Although I know that from now on I shall be accused by every English Electric player I see of being very rude to Jack Lambert, just as I was on a similar previous occasion, I shall bear it with fortitude, since I know that Jack himself knows that I've tried to give a reply, based on logical grounds to queries raised by him.

I will say this. The idea of two issues a season is most attractive in one way, for it would reduce my own labours considerably. But it isn't worth the added cost nor the additional time lag, for which the Editor will inevitably be blamed.

EDITOR.

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The League A.G.M.

Nomination forms and proposals for rule amendments are due in by May 1st. Will Club Secretaries please note this and let me have their forms as soon as possible? The A.G.M. will be held on Tuesday, 30th May at Liverpool YMCA, commencing at 7 p.m. You do not have to be a Club Secretary to attend this meeting—all are welcome to come along and to have their say in how their Table Tennis will be run for the next twelve months.

In accordance with the views expressed at last year's A.G.M., the Committee are not proposing any major changes in the League structure, composition of teams, or method of awarding points, but are putting forward only a few minor alterations to rules, mainly for the purpose of clarifying rules already in force.

The largest audience for some time now witnessed the Readman Cup final this year, also for the replay which was necessary, but it is a matter of regret that many who turned up, particularly at the replay, did so NOT to see our top players in action on the table, but to watch their antics off the table.

The actions of a few players have brought disgrace to two clubs who previously were held in high regard in Liverpool, and the Committees of the Table Tennis sections of

Bohemians and Liverpool YMCA must bear their share of the blame if they continue to allow members of their teams to behave in this manner in public.

One useful piece of information did come out of the first match. That was the proof that the Expedite Rule does really work. One set, which during the first 15 minutes produced three points, and looked to be the perfect cure for anyone suffering from insomnia, was transformed by the Expedite Rule into one of, if not the best set of the match. And, in between, and despite the tantrums, there was a lot of good table tennis played in this Cup final.

Plans are afoot on a National level to alter the service rule. It was this rule which caused the start of the trouble at the Readman final, and which caused bad feeling at the Rumjahn Cup final on the following evening, and it is possible that an experimental rule may be introduced for a trial period on the basis that the service can only be made by striking a descending ball. Certainly the present position leaves a lot to be desired, and any alteration will be welcome which cuts out the freak services which are creeping into the game, and even more important, is capable of being interpreted and enforced uniformly by Umpires at all levels.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The last issue of the "Digest" has led us at Colonsay to believe that somebody up there doesn't like us. Our first team may not have covered themselves with glory in their first season in the 1st Division, but we have won some sets, so we feel that our record is good enough to be included in the League tables!

Then, Les French was accused of 'beating-up' Eddie Birch of W'tree Labour in a 1st Division match in order to earn his place. We hope that other clubs don't think that you need to be a karate expert to play for Colonsay?

Now for a few words on a more serious note. As a follow-up to Les French's article, printed in the "Digest" recently, we at Colonsay have decided to try to encourage

some young players to take up or improve their game at our club during the close season . . . for a nominal charge of about 10/- we hope to encourage them to come along, and perhaps to receive some coaching. If anyone knows of any youngsters who might be interested, please let us know.

Incidentally, we have decided also to open the club to any other League players who cannot play throughout the summer for lack of facilities. There would need to be some financial arrangement to cover our charges in this respect, say a fee of 15/- for the close season. If anyone is interested let us know before the end of the season so that we can get something organised.

COLONSAY T.T. COMMITTEE.

At the North East of England

—By Phil Reid (Leicester)

GREAT CHALLENGE MATCH

One tournament which always attracts many Northern entries by its very location is the "North East of England" held at Scarborough every Easter.

This season was no exception, but what was unusual was that two players currently registered with the Liverpool League participated in one of the most interesting matches staged there, and which drew generous support from the crowd. This was a strictly unscheduled match played on the Sunday afternoon. The participants, both Internationals, were Ralph Gunnion and Geoff Pullar. To make the contest fair, it was agreed that sandwich bat player Ralph would perform with pimpled rubber, and Geoff, strictly a pimpled bat exponent, would use sandwich rubber only.

To a fine round of applause from the crowd (led vociferously by the irrepressible Connie Warren) Geoff took the floor, followed by Ralph, who was booed heartily all the way to the table.

Geoff, who seemed to concentrate on putting the ball just where Ralph wasn't, won the first game without appearing to take more than a passing interest. "Passing" applied also to a lot of shots which passed Ralph as he was coming in! To the disappointment of the crowd Ralph took the second, but happily this was purely a temporary set-back, and Geoff—who had appeared to throw the second to please the audience—quickly established a lead in the third.

Ralph's services caused the Lancs. and England batsman some concern and at this stage Warren was heard to call for the Umpire to "fault-serve" Gunnion. His pleas were to no avail, but it seemed to upset an outclassed Gunnion and Geoff completed a fine win with a number of equally good stories in the bar at night.

This match was played in the lightest of spirits and is, of course, no reflection on Ralph's true ability.

Hints on How to Win at Table Tennis

AFTER seeing and hearing about the many forms of codology used throughout the League from time to time, it seems that there is a danger of too much repetition. So, to avoid this, the following hints may be of some assistance to certain clubs.

It should be your aim to get your opponents "jittery", and the first essential is to train a neurotic team Captain. This role can be sustained by any of your players with a flair for amateur dramatics, though any average player should be able to master the rudiments of the job. *Next*, always arrange for the late arrival of your team, that is, within seconds of the League ruling time. In the meantime, the neurotic team Captain will have got into full swing. From the moment of his arrival he must work himself into a mock panic . . . darting about, muttering impatiently, and frantically grab chairs and begin to stack them into a corner. He will stack one too many

and the whole will collapse with a sickening crash just as he turns away. He will ask unintelligible questions of the opponents and dash off before they can reply. As one of them goes to sit he'll scream "Don't sit there" and flick away dust or push down a loose screw.

Next he will enlist the aid of the victims in assembling the table. Here the warped genius of the makers can help, for few tables exist which can be assembled easily, so if the legs and struts have pins, ensure that these are bent or that the pin sockets are too tight. After a steady fifteen minutes struggle the table should be assembled and the rest of your team arrived.

Now a carefully rehearsed scene takes place. The opponents' nerves are beginning to settle, so shake them up as the neurotic team Captain screams "Where's the net?" This leads to a heated argument as to who stowed it away last time and a noisy five minute search elapses

before it is found. Fix this, then graciously allow them to knock-up, and arrange the "fused lights sequence". One of your spectators (if you have any) slips out the requisite fuse, snips the wire and replaces it. In the resultant chaos allow one of the opposition to look for the offending fuse and to find it—thus proving that the fuse was at fault. This gives the ring of authenticity.

A hopeless scorer is invaluable and can easily be enlisted from the ranks of your team. He can upset even the steadiest players and provided that your own team is trained to immunity you can rely on making sure of one or two games for your side.

A recurrent caretaker helps also as another irritant. Preferably he should be extremely friendly and his is the role of the amiable chatter-box who knows nothing about the game. He can be used about four times per match. Each time he barges straight in, in the middle of a game (summoned by a bell signal), stands alongside the opposing player and shouts across to the home man such inanities as "What time do you want the tea?" . . . or, "Oh, beg pardon, am I in the way?"; or even, "You'll let me know when you finish, won't you?"

And the biased spectator keeps working away. He must exclaim "good shot" at every mediocre stroke from your player, and when the opponent sends over an untakable belt, he should murmur (with feeling) "hard lines!" The repetition of these two phrases over and over again can reduce the opposition to gibbering wrecks.

You should dish out the tea just as the opponents have called on their star man. By the time he has played three hard games his tea will be stone cold, and there will be none left in the pot! If it is served scalding hot to the next man you're going to call on, he will just about get it ready to drink when he has to play, and getting his game over his also will be too cold to drink. The tea is not to make them die of thirst, but to instil into their minds that they've got to rush to get a drink of tea! Thus making more errors than usual in their hurry.

In conclusion may I add that if, despite the use of these, and other ruses, your team continues to lose regularly, then there is little doubt that you will all have to fall back on to some *practice*. If this fails, well there *are* other inferior pastimes, such as bowls—or golf!

Lancashire and Cheshire League

—By J. R. Green

Out of the Norman Cook Trophy!

Our team fell at the third round of the Norman Cook Trophy at Burnley. Since we had already beaten Burnley 7-3 in the League match, and were fielding the same team, we had every reason to hope for a win again this time, but table tennis being the uncertain game it is, it didn't pan out that way. Gordon Birch and Roy Jones each won one of their two singles, but Peter D'Arcy surprisingly lost both. Mabel Francis won her sole singles set, but with D'Arcy lost the mixed doubles and to crown it all, our Men's doubles pair of Gordon Birch and Jones lost to make the final result 3-6. Just to make matters worse, the Burnley team were weakened by the absence of Hodson, but we cannot grouse at the result. I wasn't there, of course, since the game was played in Burnley, but from the accounts I've heard, none of our players, try as they would,

could hit top form, and you can't beat a team of the quality of Burnley unless you're right on top of your game. We had a good run, though, and there is always next year!

The Men's team have now finished their programme for the season. Our last home game was against Nelson, and Roy Jones asked to be released for this match to play for his club in an important League match. Although Roy is a key man in our team this year, he is also a key man in his club side which is chasing the championship hard, so he was released accordingly, and Frank Thomas (Linnets) came in to complete the team. We won 6-4 after a stern battle in which Birch won all three, D'Arcy two, and Frank Thomas the important sixth set. So then the full team had to meet Manchester away, in the last game of the season. Had we won

we would have been undisputedly in second place, but unfortunately we could not repeat last year's success and each of the team won one set each in a 3-7 defeat. Our final position is now far from clear. Bolton have won the League undefeated (as was expected), but from the news which has filtered through to me, there are four teams tying for second place with 10 points apiece, one of which is ours, and these will have to be sorted out on sets average. Again, according to the "grape-vine" two of these have inferior sets averages to our own, but we'll have to await the final tables from the Lancashire League to make sure.

The Men's "A" team have not played since I wrote last, having matches to play v. Blackpool "A" and Widnes. On these I'll report in the last issue.

The Ladies' team have played twice since the last issue, both away, losing to Stockport 3-7, and beating Warrington 8-2. Judy Crafter could not turn out against Stockport due to a function at work, so Jean Reynolds made up the side. Our three sets were earned by Mabel Francis (2) and Joyce Randall (1), but there should be special praise here for Mabel who beat the Stockport No. 1, the hard-to-beat Doreen Schofield. The Warrington match for some reason was scheduled for Easter Saturday, and Judy Crafter was engaged in the Scarborough

Open, and with Joyce Randall unable to play either for domestic reasons, Jean Reynolds and Elizabeth Loughrey stood in for them, both with success, winning two of their three sets each. Jean teamed up with Mabel Francis to win the doubles, and Mabel added three. There is one match outstanding v. Oldham. Although they did not turn up on the original date, we agreed to re-arrange it, and since then have fixed two definite dates, both of which were later refused by the Oldham team. Eventually, we accepted a date suggested by them, and although this is most unsuitable to our girls, fixed the match for April 1st (Saturday). Now Oldham are protesting about the starting time, so whether the game will get played or not is very much open to question. I rather wonder if Oldham really want to play the match! We must wait and see.

The Ladies "A" team have not had a game since the last "Digest" but play their last match well before this will appear in print. Another win will give them a further lift up the table, and we can only hope that they manage it.

In addition neither the Youth nor Junior teams have been engaged since the last report, but again will play their final matches before this is in your hands. The last report of the season should be fairly full of incident.

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Around the Divisions

DIVISION 1

By JIM GREEN

	P	W	L	D	Pts.
L'pool YMCA	24	23	0	1	211
Bohemians	23	22	1	0	197
W'tree Labour	25	19	2	4	184
Rafters	25	13	8	4	128
Linnets	24	9	10	5	123
Bath St.	23	11	7	5	117
L'pool YM 'A'	23	9	10	4	113
Beauclair	24	9	12	3	112
W'tree Lab. 'A'	23	7	11	5	103
University	26	7	16	3	95
Bohs. 'A'	22	8	12	2	92
Cadwa	23	2	19	2	73
Colonsay	24	5	18	1	61
Linacre	23	0	18	5	51

It will be a Photo Finish

This has the look of being the most exciting finish to the season for many years. Liverpool YM and Bohemians look like finishing so close that any suggestions now as to who will be champions is purely guesswork. Wavertree Labour are the key to the situation, so although they cannot win the League for themselves they will now be instrumental in deciding which of the other two will do so, for the situation is that the destiny of the championship depends upon how many sets they can take from the YMCA. One of Bohs. outstanding matches is against their own "A" team and the other v. Linacre, both of which they should win without much trouble, then, once more it will be the YM v. Bohs in the last match of the season with everything depending upon the outcome. Which will make the Readman Cup final look like a back-street scuffle in comparison with the battle of Waterloo. What ho!

At the other end it is now decided that Linacre, Colonsay and University cannot escape relegation. The other place will be filled either by Cadwa or Bohemians "A" with the odds all in favour of the Bohs team to stay up.

Linacre really had a raw deal in being pitch-forked into this division. They were so obviously going to be out of their class, and this is one club which holds the admiration of the entire League, so everybody felt sorry that the situation had arisen. However, even if they have not had very much success in their matches,

they have enhanced the already high reputation in which they have always been held in the League, and they go back to the 2nd division with everyone's best wishes. Any one of the others could well be back next year, and will probably give a better account of themselves when they do, for there has been a noticeable improvement in playing standard as the season wore on.

One of the notable improvements of the season is that of Beauclair, whose signing of K. Harrison from University before the season has helped them to a higher place in the table. The return of Arthur Taylor to Bath Street also has raised them from outside the relegation zone (only just) to a place well within the top half. It is too early yet to say exactly how high, but there is no doubt at all that the division gets stronger each successive year. There are far fewer "easy" matches now than for many years and the trend is towards further strength rather than the opposite.

It seems most unlikely that Rafters will maintain their high position for very much longer, for their points tally has dropped drastically this season. It seems that one or two younger players would improve the situation there, for it is only their skill as players which helps to cover up their slowing footwork. What a record this club has had. It will be a great pity to see them drop down the table year after year, but this is most likely unless they soon get some new players for 'you can't beat the clock'.

The Readman Cup has been won by Liverpool YMCA on games, after two drawn matches. As everyone knows, there is little to choose between these sides, so the result should surprise no-one. Good luck to the YM for winning it back from the holders.

There seems to be some surprise that there were incidents during these matches. I can't say I'm ever surprised at incidents at 1st division games, although there are some forms which cannot be condoned, some of which have occurred this year, but incidents will inevitably occur when two teams meet, every player of both teams intent only upon one thing . . . "winning"!

Generally speaking the main difference between players of Div. 1 and the rest of the League, is that they hate losing. Either their own sets or the match. So when two teams meet with this in mind, some form of incident is bound to crop up. There have been very many during this season, accepted by everyone as part of the game, but when there are

spectators, as at a Cup final, it arouses more comment.

This is not to say that I condone the form of incident which took place, but I do say that it would have been a miracle to find these two teams back-slapping and hobnobbing with each other. They wouldn't be the players they are if that were the case.

DIVISION 2A	By EDDIE CAMERON				
	P	W	L	D	Pts.
English Electric	21	21	0	0	180
Waterloo Park	21	16	2	3	141
Crawfords 'A'	23	13	6	4	138
University 'A'	26	13	8	5	126
Linnets 'C'	24	12	8	4	125
Rafters 'A'	23	10	10	3	112
Colonsay 'A'	21	14	6	1	116
L'pool Jewish	24	10	12	2	116
Bohs. 'B'	21	9	11	1	94
Wav. Lab. 'B'	21	4	11	6	93
L.P.A.S. 'A'	24	4	16	4	90
Lussac	21	2	12	7	87
Sefton General	23	5	18	0	79
Pirates 'A'	21	3	16	2	67

English Electric, the prospective champions, represented us in the Rumjahn Cup final against Mossley Hill. We know of the skill of Mossley Hill with their three Widnes town players by virtue of the earlier defeat of Waterloo Park, but we also knew that our own Division would not be let down. Unfortunately we lost 6-4 but whilst commiserating with English Electric we offer our congratulations to worthy winners in Mossley Hill who must have fielded one of the strongest ever Rumjahn cup teams.

Relegation battles continue but the League shows little change and the strength of the teams is such that any one unlucky enough or playing badly enough to make a false start must pay the penalty. Sefton will I believe find this out despite their improved performance and team strength in the latter half of the season.

English Electric are home and dry champions and worthy ones too, far and away the outstanding team of the division and we can begin wishing them luck in the higher sphere. Waterloo Park will accompany them, a strong team with potential, apart from English Electric also outstanding in our division, but I fear a team most likely to become the latest addition to the division 2 - 1 - 2 shuttle service which operates so

successfully these days. Of course I could be wrong, new signings could bring continued division 1 competition but somehow I fancy that Waterloo will stand by the boys who lifted them and will come quietly back after their season of the hard life.

Liverpool Jewish are a middle-of-the-table team with more than a little sentimental soft spot in my memories (I am not really as old as that sounds)—many of my old club Victoria Park, joined up with the Jewish club and it is like going home when I visit them. They have proved to be an energetic go-ahead outfit and can show a new table and a spruce, well-equipped club room mainly as a result of their efforts. Dave Cohen is their most successful player, probably because he has a great variety of styles which he switches on to suit his tactics. Beilinson and Wiseman take the brunt of the work at No. 1 and 2 with average success whilst Jim Mangall, Tony Cohen and E. Dorfman back them up. On form they are a match for most and are perfectly happy jogging along in the middle of the division. It will be noted that they operate from six players, a system they use throughout the club. This is an excellent safeguard against playing short and when operated with a number of teams keeps the full club reserves in the picture with full interest and competitive play.

University 'A' have finished their fixtures and are assured of a healthy position. It is good to welcome University teams in our midst and to help provide recreation for many young people away from home. They are a friendly bunch of lads and with their much improved club facilities are a very welcome addition to our division. We trust they will be with us again next season. This is not connected with the fact that my own club took thirteen points from them this trip.