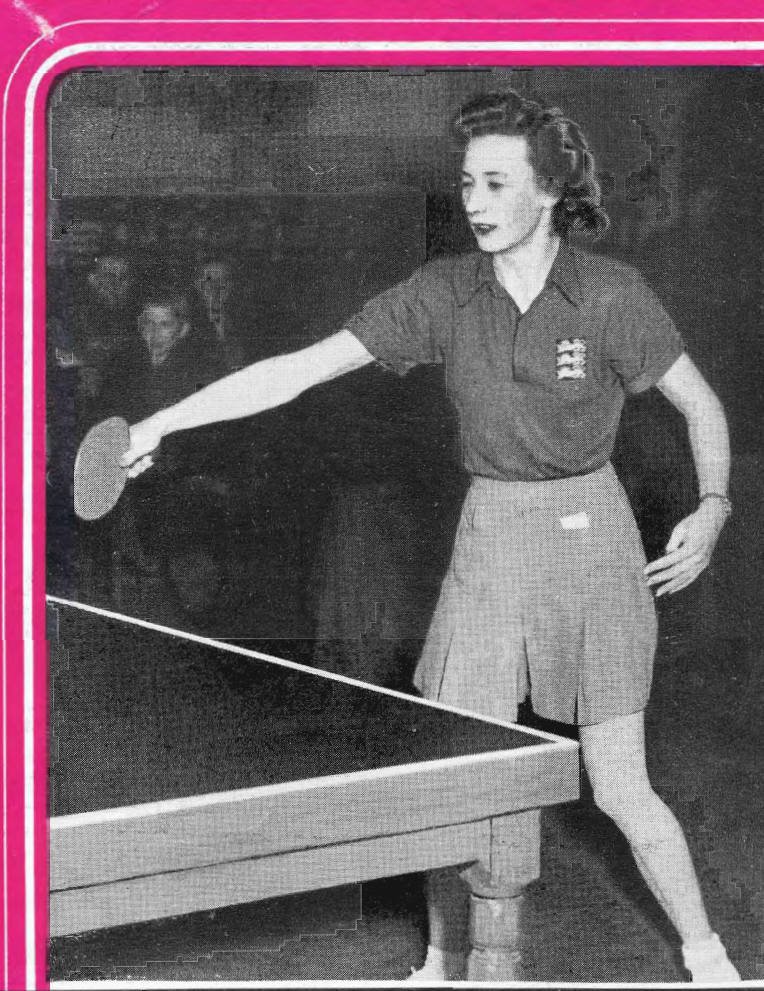


OCTOBER, 1948

Sixpence

TABLE TENNIS



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

TABLE TENNIS

Official Magazine
of the
ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS
ASSOCIATION
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OCTOBER, 1948

HOW OLD IS A VETERAN?

TWENTY-ONE years ago, when table tennis first emerged from ping-pong, the first flight of players was naturally made up mostly of young men and women. Successive bands of recruits from youth brought new developments in the technique of the game, and almost-juvenile World Champions were the rule rather than the exception right up to the war. In fact, in the late thirties it was a commonplace to say that a man was too old to be a champion at twenty-six.

* * *

THE war caused a hiatus in the development of new young stars, and it may be for this reason that we see nowadays so many over-thirties picked for representative honours. It may be, however, that there are for the present no more new technical advances in the game to be discovered and to sweep away the established experts. One thing at least is certain: there are now many more people of mature age who have played in first-class company for ten or fifteen years than was ever possible before—players, moreover, still sufficiently nimble in mind and muscle to continue to give a good account of themselves in that company.

* * *

THE generally accepted age for veteran events in the past has been forty years and above. That age limit became accepted when the game itself was young — when the player of more than forty must have taken up the game after his thirtieth birthday, and must have suffered in competition with younger people because his playing

instincts and technique were not acquired in the pliable days of youth.

* * *

TO-DAY that position has changed. There are several players at the forty mark, and still more notable ones just below it, who can still reach the final rounds of open tournaments. These are players who have grown with the game, after learning it in their youth. But the idea behind a veterans' event is surely to provide a competition for those who have passed the age at which they can reasonably be expected to compete with all comers, and we suggest that the day has now gone by when this happens at forty.

* * *

THE reminiscences of the veteran, Mechlovits, reported in this issue, prompt the question, "How many players really give up table tennis on account of age?" Barring physical disablement, the proportion must be very small.

* * *

TO-DAY there are probably more players of over sixty than there were over forty when veterans' events first appeared in tournament programmes. Has the time come, then, when the age at which one becomes a veteran should rise? We have already heard of one tournament in which the age is to be put up to fifty by yearly stages of one year so as not to exclude any who have previously competed. Is this the beginning of a general change?

OUR COVER PICTURE

Slightly-built young lady in the trim shorts is Miss ELIZABETH BLACKBOURN, member of the great trio which won the Marcel Corbillon international trophy for England for the first time in 1946/47. Although usually yielding place on tournament results to her team-mates Vera Dace and Peggy Franks, "our Betty" at times showed class worthy of ranking her as our best performer against foreign challengers.

First prominent as a 14-year-old representative of Exeter, that home of West Country talent, she "disappeared" into the W.A.A.F. during the war years, developing in that time a musical urge and a liking for medical study which have lately proved a successful counter attraction to the "glamour" of world-class table tennis.

What we are missing may be realised when we recall that in that first post-war season, with only spasmodic practice, and residing far from the usual championship battle grounds, she reached the World's Singles Final, and during the team matches of the same week inflicted a copy book defeat on the then unbeaten Gizi Farkas.

In fact there are many experts who rate those two games against Farkas as the highest quality of table tennis yet produced by any woman player. The fact that she lost the Singles Final to the same phlegmatic Farkas does not damp the confidence of her supporters, for that is typical of the Elizabeth we know. Her play is a mixture of dull, aimless plodding and brilliant, calculated aggression.

In this is reflected Elizabeth's whole attitude to the game—a mixture of benevolent apathy and sudden violent enthusiasm.

This changeability is at once her weakness and her strength, for her opponents can never be quite sure what is coming. Her favourite tactics consists of bottling up an attacker by extra heavy wrist-chop on forehand and Bergmann push-half-volley on backhand, then a sudden leap into the table to deal out a fierce one-two couple of drives, directed differently every time. It needed a good player to hold this onslaught down, and if she did, the daintiest of dropshots would bring her scrambling to the net.

These variable Blackbourn effects were made possible by the nimblest footwork of any girl player, perhaps only equalled by that other example of the "fairy" physique, Roseanu of Rumania.

Again, within a few days of completing

The " F.A. CUP of TABLE TENNIS "

This is how E.T.T.A. Tournament Secretary Geoff. Harrower describes the Wilmott Cup Competition, the annual contest for teams of three from all over England.

But table tennis has something that football has not—an F.A. Cup specially for the ladies. This is, of course, the J. M. Rose Bowl, which runs on parallel lines to the Wilmott Cup.

Entry forms for both competitions have been sent out, and entries from teams representing leagues or directly-affiliated clubs may be sent in up to the 15th October, 1948.

Manchester won the Wilmott Cup and Northumberland the J. M. Rose Bowl last season.

* * *

A resolution accepted at the Annual General Meeting last April has resulted in a change in the J. M. Rose Bowl match procedure. In order to allow for a fuller match, it was decided that 9 ties should be played instead of 5; at the same time, all parties wished to retain the doubles event in match.

It has therefore been decided that each match shall consist of 6 singles and 3 doubles, the three ladies in each team having to play 2 singles and 2 doubles each. This should certainly make for an interesting match.

* * *

The finals of both Wilmott Cup and J. M. Rose Bowl Competitions are to be played before the end of March. Any organisation interested in staging either of these finals should apply now to E.T.T.A. Office, 69, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

a wonderful season's play, she "disappeared" into the heart of America to prepare for her career.

Occasional letters from Iowa have shown an Elizabeth pre-occupied, nay, in love with her new vocation of Chiropractic, and now we learn from her American friends that she has qualified as a Doctor of this new-science. For the many friends she made in English table tennis, we send hearty congratulations and hope this may be the forerunner of still further success.

And if we venture to say that (a) it would do our hearts good to see Elizabeth playing again, and (b) that we think Chiropractic is something akin to Osteopathy over here, well, we may be sticking our editorial neck out, but who could put it back into place more nicely than "DOCTOR ELIZABETH."

From the Secretary's Chair

by W. J. POPE, Hon. General Secretary, E.T.T.A.

It is proposed that in future issues news should be given about the meetings of the National Executive Committee, and that all players should be taken into the confidence of the Committee, through the medium of the magazine, about the problems with which they are faced.

Up to the present, meetings of the Executive Committee have been treated as "private," with the result that very little has been known of the administrative work of the Committee. It is generally known that, in an organization such as ours, innumerable problems are always cropping up, are the cause of anxious consideration, and, although they may not interest a number of players, they are vital to efficient administration.

Unfortunately, the meeting of the Committee on October 2nd will be too late to allow me to give a full report for this issue of the magazine, and news about the last meeting, held during the summer, is not now exactly topical.

OUR FOREIGN VISITORS

The news about the visit of the Czechoslovakian tourists appears on page 8. A team of Austrian players will visit Wales, Scotland and Ireland from 1st to the 14th December, and it is hoped they will be able to play a match with England before they go home. If the U.S.A. team take part in the World Championships at Stockholm in February, it is hoped they will also enter the English Championships and play some matches in England before returning to U.S.A.

THE ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Our own Championships, February 16th to 19th, seem almost certain to be played at the Paddington Baths, with the finals at Wembley, and perhaps the semi-finals also. A decision on these points will be made by the Executive Committee on October 2nd.

WOMEN'S MATCH AT NEWCASTLE

A women's match is being arranged to take place at Newcastle on November 22nd. This will be either an England v. the North, or North v. South match, an effort to find our best players for the forthcoming Corbillon Cup matches at Stockholm. Holding the match in Newcastle is a tribute to the Newcastle women players who did so remarkably well in the J. M. Rose Bowl finals last

season. An announcement of the names of the players selected will shortly be made, and is anxiously awaited by the many players fighting for places this season.

VISITS TO STOCKHOLM

A team of players is to go to Stockholm in early December, and, of course, our Juniors are to go there in January. This is a return visit and, no doubt, the Swedish boys who toured England last season will be anxious to take revenge for the beating we gave them in the International.

THE WORLD CHAMPION

Richard Bergmann has been given special permission to play exhibitions in Spain. Spain is not affiliated to the I.T.T.F., but from reports I have received, it seems the game is very popular there, especially in Barcelona. Richard will go to Spain via France, where he also has engagements for exhibitions, and he will then go to the U.S.A. for six weeks to play exhibitions with Richard Miles. He will return to this country in December, and I understand he is certain to defend his title in the English Championships.

JUNIORS IN OPEN TOURNAMENTS

When the question of Open Tournaments was last under consideration, it was suggested that there were still far too many tournaments which did not include Junior events. It was agreed that an effort should be made to persuade organizations to hold such events, and I am certain that this will be received sympathetically all over the country. With the need to find young players to uphold the honour of this country in all sporting events, the need to develop our Juniors is obvious. Every tournament should have Junior events this season.

"Paid Players"—New Regulations

The E.T.T.A. regulations governing the working of the "registered player" system (under which certain players may be authorised to capitalise their playing skill of knowledge of the game), have recently been revised and some important amendments have been introduced.

Further details, with list of players accepted as registered players by the National Executive Committee, will appear in our next issue.

EAST OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS (September 25th-26th, 1948)

The first open tournament of the season, held in one of Butlin's spacious ballrooms at Skegness, found nearly 80 contestants battling for major honours.

A small group, headed by B. Crouch and Mr. Thornhill (Middlesex), upheld the southern flag by providing four of the eighteen finalists.

With J. Wrona (Lincs) unable to compete through ill-health, the likely winner of the men's singles title looked like being young Brian Kennedy, the Yorkshire international, who trounced last year's finalist, A. Abrahams, in the first round.

Bernard Crouch thought rather differently. Hitting from all angles, he stopped Kennedy in the third round (19 in the last game), easily disposed of E. Taylor (Lincs) in the semi-finals and wore down left-handed R. Allcock, 19-year-old Mancunian, now in the Army, to take the title in straight games.

Allcock, whose short, heavy chop defence and well-timed flick had disposed of English Junior Champion Thornhill in the other semi-final, wilted before that relentless forehand which had shaken Leach in last year's Wembley Open.

Thornhill, who hit too listlessly to trouble Kennedy in the Junior Finals, made amends when, partnered by Crouch, he took the men's doubles title from the grasp of the Yorkshire combination, B. Kennedy and Alan Thompson, the latter's lack of first-time hitting providing the key to the whole match.

Good defensive work by Miss M. Lightfoot gained for her the women's

singles title against the highly spirited Miss N. Queskey (now Mrs. Bishop), and, partnered by promising young Miss S. Woods, annexed the women's doubles title from the holders in a match which started grandly, only to settle down to chanceless chiselling.

In the last match of the tournament Miss Lightfoot gave an improved display to share mixed doubles honours with Alan Thompson.

Due to the sterling work of Mrs. Merryweather, the tournament was well organised and, while the condition of the six tables in use left something to be desired, the glitter of the really magnificent trophies, presented pre-war by Mr. Butlin, almost made up for this.

On the whole, a good send-off to the season.

RESULTS:

Men's Singles Semi-Finals—

B. Crouch beat E. Taylor 21—9, 21—13.
R. Allcock beat M. Thornhill 21—19, 21—18.

Final—

B. Crouch beat R. Allcock 21—8, 21—19.

Men's Doubles—

B. Crouch and M. Thornhill beat A. Thompson and B. Kennedy 15—21, 21—11, 21—9.

Youths' Singles—

B. Crouch beat M. Thornhill 21—8, 21—14.

Ladies' Singles—

Miss M. Lightfoot beat Miss N. Queskey (Mrs. Bishop) 21—12, 21—14.

Women's Doubles—

Miss M. Lightfoot and Miss S. Woods beat Mrs. Bishop and Mrs. P. Wiles 15—21, 21—11, 21—16.

Mixed Doubles—

A. Thompson and Miss M. Lightfoot beat A. Abrahamson and Miss J. Hamilton 21—7, 21—18.

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CANDIDLY SPEAKING

WITH the coming of October we can say that the Table Tennis season of 1948/9 has really commenced, and it might be well to review the prospects of the coming year.

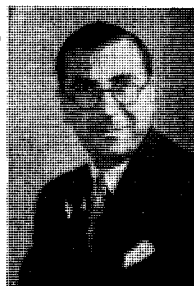
There will be no World's Championships in England this year to take the whole of the energies of the National Executive Committee, and I am sure they will welcome this respite; but I am certain that the person most happy about this prospect is the Treasurer. He had to face a loss on the World's Championships, and also a fairly heavy one on the English Championships in place of his usual profit from the English Open when staged at Wembley, and he will be truly grateful for a return to normality.

ALTHOUGH it is a subject that does not attract headlines, the most important happening in the coming year is the proposed Incorporation of the Association. This will necessitate many alterations in the rules, and these will have to be carefully examined. There are several alterations long overdue — no doubt many readers have some in mind — and I propose returning to the subject and discussing it more fully in a later article.

WHAT are our prospects of winning the Swaythling Cup and a Men's World title? Personally I don't think we have much chance. Certainly better prospects can be hoped for from our women players. They have a good chance of retaining the Europe and Corbillon trophies, and a World's title is not, in my opinion, out of their grasp. I do earnestly hope that the Selectors will this year select only British-born players.

Last year, in their effort to win, they played Miss Beregi and Messrs. Barna

A
FREE
FORUM
Conducted
by
Jack
Kurzman



and Bergmann. After our defeat by America in the Swaythling Cup I overheard a foreign player suggesting that we should now endeavour to persuade Vana and Miles to become naturalised

Part of the job of "TABLE TENNIS," as the official journal of English Table Tennis, is to keep the ordinary man-in-the-Club informed of the decisions of the National Association, and where necessary to enlarge upon the reasons which have prompted such rulings.

This does not mean, however, that unofficial views or "revolutionary" ideas should be frozen out of our columns. Far from it; any reader who considers that his fair arguments are being overlooked, or that important matters are being neglected, is welcome to a hearing.

We are therefore planning to reserve space in our future issues for a candid commentary, which, we hope, will contribute to fair play and good government of table tennis, and in the process provide interest for all readers.

To conduct this forum we have invited Mr. JACK KURZMAN, a previous member of the National Executive Committee and Referee of the English Open Championships, and Secretary of the Selection Committee, but at present holding no official position.

Southern readers know Jack Kurzman as a blunt critic of what he considers to be inefficiency or hypocrisy; Northern readers will know him better if we compare him to their own outspoken legislator, Billie Stamp.

Although Mr. Kurzman is known best as an official, it is his plan to cast a critical eye on every branch of the game and speak his mind freely on play and administration, players and organisers. Of course, any whom he may comment upon will have similar freedom of reply.

British subjects. My sympathy goes out to British-born players who have worked hard to get recognition and selection for our Swaythling and Corbillon Cup teams, only to have their hopes dashed by the selection of players who have already represented other countries in these competitions.

I ask players and officials who agree with my views to write to me so that I can place before the Selection Committee a petition. I feel that only the weight of public opinion will bring the Selectors back on to the right course. One last word which should be encouraging is that I have heard that the Selection Committee themselves were divided over this question.

FINALLY, I propose placing this page at the disposal of all readers of this magazine as an open forum for their views and criticisms. Anyone having opinions on matters of general interest on any aspects of the game should communicate with me, and if I think their subject is of sufficient importance, they can be assured that their views will find expression in these columns.

NORTHERNER'S NOTE-BOOK

by STANLEY PROFFITT

Chief interest in Northern table tennis circles at the moment is in the newly formed Lancashire Y.M.C.A.'s Association. In short, this means that the star performers, as well as the up-and-coming players, are going to get increased competition with the network of matches arranged throughout the county. The idea may even spread across the Penines; if so, the wealth of Yorkshire talent who are Y.M.C.A. members will get the opportunity of pitting their skill and getting much-needed experience against their friendly rivals.

Meanwhile, rumours are afoot of notable transfers to clubs for the coming League encounters. Each season for years this sort of speculation has occurred—proof that the fervour is as keen as ever. I've got a hunch (mark this down in your diary)—Manchester Y.M.C.A. for the double, League and Richardson Cup.

* * *

Nevertheless, before activities get well under way, let us iron out the situation by asking ourselves the question, what exactly constitutes "first-class table tennis" these days? If National County Championship matches in the Premier Division are dubbed as such, it is indeed a flattery.

The play, with exceedingly few exceptions, was nothing like it was last term. Up and down the country these fixtures drew reasonable gates, but did not by any stretch of imagination serve up first-class displays. They received the support of twice as many people as in the early days before the sport was established and offered table tennis at half the value.

These are not merely my views. From leaders of the game in the big centres I have heard similar whispers. If this continues it is going to have a damaging effect on the competition, which to my mind is the greatest enterprise the E.T.T.A. have yet ventured. It holds the possibility of becoming the backbone of the game, but unless the standards of the majority of counties improve, the exceptional administrative efforts of the authorities will come to nought.

* * *

Table tennis is only a pale and unsatisfactory shadow of yesteryear. Forgive me for saying so; believe me, I'll be only too pleased to eat my words if events take a turn for the better. Table tennis is finding what other fields of

activity have found—the will to work isn't what it was. Granted adequate playing facilities are hard to come by. With too few halls and a vast influx of players the opportunities to get down to concentrative practice are minimised. But for those ambitious youngsters who aim to gain high honours, the opportunity has never been greater. Present top-notchers cannot hope to hold the fort for many more years to come. Barna, Carrington, Bublely, then Leach, Stanley, Casofsky, to mention a few, are hardly likely to maintain the pressure of big-time table tennis for long.

But the youngsters must make their opportunity occur. The early teen-agers intent on this pursuit must forego the countless alternative pleasures within easy access to-day. The real hard work is on the table. Even such great exponents as Barna, Szabados, Bellak had to work hard and relentlessly to earn fame. Never for one moment did these cracks deviate from their task. If the ambitious youngsters will work like that, with a county coach to supervise and instil confidence, which appears to wane at a crucial stage in the keenest of young blood, the threatened slump will be checked.

BUSY MIDDLESEX

In order that Yorkshire may play Middlesex and Surrey in one week-end, and save travelling, the Middlesex/Yorkshire match, due for October, has been postponed till January 20th, which means that the first Middlesex fixture in the Premier Division of the County Championships is away to Essex, at Romford on October 18th.

First fixture in the Home Counties Division is also away, at Bedford against Bedfordshire on October 22nd. The honour of staging the first home county match goes to Belling and Lee, Great Cambridge Road, Enfield, where Essex 2nds will be playing on Tuesday, 23rd November.

The match with the Czech Touring Team (October 25th) is being televised. The capacity of the Paddington Baths is sure to be taxed to its utmost, but 5/- and 3/- seats are still available.

Twelve Leagues have entered the Senior Inter-League Championships, and nine Leagues the new Junior Inter-League Championships, in which all players must be under nineteen years of age on October 1st. Entry forms have been sent out for the new Middlesex Club Championships (separate competitions for men and women) and entries close on October 29th. Plans for the Junior and Senior Touring Teams are also well advanced, and full information of all Middlesex activities can always be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, G. R. Harrower, 34, Gallants Farm Road, East Barnet, Herts.

OUR GUESTS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The visit of the Czechoslovakian players during October will be the first official tour of foreign stars since the war. Prior to 1939 it was customary to have such a tour annually, and this policy did much to improve the game in England. Our own leading players benefited by the sterner opposition, and the interest of the public was stirred by the advent of the new names and personalities.

We may be sure that similar good will result from the appearance of this party of players who not only have led their country to its present pre-eminent position in the table tennis world, but also have won the respect of all sportsmen by their friendliness and natural dignity.

Any guests from a war-time ally will be welcome, but this team from Czechoslovakia will be specially welcome because of the unparalleled hospitality extended by their countrymen to our own touring team in their country two years ago.

(Descriptions of this tour appeared in this Magazine, October and November, 1946.)

Who are the players who may be confidently expected to thrill our crowds? Final nominations have not been received, but we learn that the final choice of 4 men and 2 girls will be made from the following:—

BOHUMIL VANA

Has shared with Richard Bergman the pinnacle of table tennis fame ever since the Barna supremacy was interrupted.

World Singles Champion in 1937/38 and 1946/47, and runner-up this year; World Doubles winner four times; English Open Champion in 1945/46.

Noted for the piercing speed or baffling side-kick of his forehand drives, you will yet admire his crisp chop defence when he calls it into action.

At 27, his lightning footwork, which earned him the nickname "The Electric Man" is still to be noted. And to all who aspire to learn a drop-shot—just study Bo Vana.

First seen in England at the age of 15, he has been a welcome visitor many times since. His poker-face concentration in match play is relieved by his love for solemn little jokes in his limited English, off the table.

Confidentially, fancies himself as a "jitterbug"—and confidentially, it's worth encouraging him just to see how fast the human foot really can move.

IVAN ANDREADIS

English Singles and Doubles Champion, 1946/47.

"How beautiful they are, the lordly ones." So runs the old chant, and watching Andreadis you will feel that you understand these words. For Ivan is the aristocrat of the table; he dictates and humbler men scurry about on his errands.



IVAN
ANDREADIS

No need to describe his strokes; whatever can be done with a table tennis ball, he can do, and, to quote "TABLE TENNIS" of June, 1948, "Rhythm and Grace flow through all his movements."

Are you a heavy man? Let 23-year-old, 13-stone Ivan show you how to move lightly.

The fact that less inspired players preferring points to poise sometimes dare to beat our artist, does not seem to worry him—so why should it worry you? Go and watch him.

Vana and Andreadis, these are the immortals. In their wake move these other splendid players.

LADISLAV STIPEK

This very effective young attacker, the latest recruit to international play, has yet to overcome the slight inferiority complex caused by being "the boy" to such a company of super-stars as the Czechs have mustered in recent years.

Possibly because of this, he is the only one who shows any emotion on the table; this human trait, combined with his con-

stantly changing tactics make him a splendid foil to the "masters"—and a perfect nuisance to them when they really want to clinch a match.

Partnering Vana, Stipek won the World's Doubles at Wembley last season. In this he played his full part; drawing confidence and stability from his partners, he rarely makes a mistake in doubles.

Specialising in disguised forehand flat hits and drop-shots, followed up by a wicked push-flick backhand, his crouching will-o'-the-wisp style reminds one of our own keen youngster Brian Brumwell.

FERENCZ TOKAR

This determined Slovak, although lacking quite the world class of his team-mates, yet produces the most amazing and consistently good results in domestic play. From time to time score-cards reach us which show that Tokar can hold his own not only with the best of his country but also with such as Sido, Soos, Amouretti, Flisberg and other Continental champions.

Solid, patient and aggressive in turns according to the needs of the moment, he is an encouraging player for the average club-man to watch, because he does everything "as per book."

There is nothing in his game which you could not achieve yourself with practice—that's the impression you get from Tokar. His speed about that table will tell you nothing about his age, but nor will his hair! Probably he has reached that age-less age into which all good players dissolve once they have admitted to passing 27.

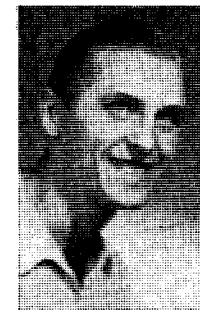
STOP PRESS!
INTERNATIONAL MATCH
England v. Czechoslovakia
at
The Stadium, Liverpool
on
23rd October, 1948
starting 7.30 p.m.

Tickets: 5s. and 3s. 6d. Reserved; 2s. 6d. Unreserved.

Applications should be made without delay to:—

Mr. W. Stamp, 3, Farndale Close, Liverpool, 18.

For other Czechoslovakian fixtures see page 16.



LADISLAV
STIPEK

Ladies in Czechoslovakia do not flaunt their Christian names, hence you will find our guests all rejoicing in that puzzlingly anonymous suffix "OVA." O.K.? "Ova" to you then. . . .

FUERSTOVA

Most promising successor of the grand epoch of Czechoslovakian women's table tennis. Claimed a win (since "re-venge") over Vera Dace in her own country, and won the singles in the last national championship of 1947/48, the Netherlands Open.

All-round style, somewhat temperamental (by Czech standards at any rate), and still improving.

DEPETRISOVA

An outstanding winner of the World's Singles in 1938/39, deprived possibly of her finest seasons by the war, but still a player of masculine force. Our girls could study her backhand drive, not necessarily for exact copying of style, but to get an idea how fast a girl's backhand drive may become.

VOTRUBCOVA

Partner of "DEP," and therefore rather irreverently known as "VOT" by the English teams who have learned to appreciate the fine sportsmanship of these two girls.

"DEP" and "VOT," incidentally, play for the town of Pilsen, traditional home of light beer, and of late the champion team of Czechoslovakia. Votrubcova has achieved most fame as a fierce doubles hitter, claiming World titles with Depetrisova in 1936/37 and 37/38, and with Vana in 38/39.

HRUSKOVA

Another of the post-war generation, who varies the modern Czech women's style by relying mainly on heavy chop on both wings, punctuated by an occasional attacking stroke.

This young guest will charm you by her friendliness, and with a little persuasion may be induced to lead the rest of the party in some of those delightful harmonies for which their land is famed.

NATIONAL COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS PROSPECTS

Reviewed by Geoff Harrower

IT would be a bold prophet who hazarded opinions as to who is likely to finish at the head of the four divisions of the County Championships this season. Not only is the form of one or two of the new counties comparatively unknown, but there has been a minor "general post" amongst players from the Premier Division Counties.

PREMIER DIVISION

The Champions, MIDDLESEX, will be without Peggy Franks, who has decided to play for Essex, for whom she has a residential qualification. Maybe Victor Barna will also not be regularly available.

ESSEX, having gained Peggy Franks, have lost Jack Carrington, now eligible for Surrey, whilst Vi Patterson has married and is not playing, and Doris Rivett is reported to be not all that keen. Ronnie Hook, with a residential qualification, is expected to play for Essex 2nds. SURREY are fortunate to have Pinkie Barnes, as Vera Dace will not be available.

LANCASHIRE now consider young Adele Wood their No. 1 lady player, and the men (Casofsky, Stanley, Goodman, Lurie, etc.) look capable of more than holding their own.

Neither YORKSHIRE or WARWICKSHIRE have either gained or lost players, but Brian Kennedy now plays at No. 1 for Yorkshire.

Newcomers to the Premier Division are GLOUCESTERSHIRE, who can call upon Aubrey Simons and Molly Jones, which should enable them to finish in a respectable position in their first season.

NORTHERN DIVISION

If Lancashire turn out their best available 2nd team they look capable of again winning this division, but stiff opposition can be expected from LINCOLNSHIRE who again have A. Hall, the only player with a 100 per cent. record and NORTHUMBERLAND, who appear to have the strongest lady players.

HOME COUNTIES DIVISION

This is a bit of a teaser.

BEDFORDSHIRE have those well known stalwarts, Randall and Ironmonger, whilst the former Middlesex player Leo Thompson is now the leading BUCKINGHAMSHIRE player.

ESSEX 2nds have Brian Brumwell and Ronnie Hook, whilst MIDDLESEX 2nds, although possibly losing Bernard Crouch to the 1st team, cannot be considered

weak with such as Ken Cragie, Jack Glickman and Michael Thornhill to call upon.

The CAMBRIDGESHIRE players are not known in London, G. Lawrence, L. Betterman and F. Jeffrey being their first three registrations, whilst HERTFORDSHIRE will have to improve on last season's form if they are to rise.

SOUTHERN DIVISION

HAMPSHIRE, KENT, SURREY 2nds and SUSSEX all have potentially strong sides, and this small division should provide one of the most interesting struggles, with Hampshire not being at all certain of retaining the leadership this time.

Another factor that must not be overlooked in trying to assess results is that many counties will be trying out their juniors in the hope of developing a future champion. Many older, and perhaps at the moment better, players will be glad to stand down to encourage the youngsters, so do not sneer at the county that loses with a young team to-day, for who knows? Maybe they will have the last laugh in a year or two.

FIXTURES, 1948.

Premier Division :—

	Venue
Oct. 15—Essex v. Surrey	Plaistow
Oct. 16—Warwickshire v. Lancashire	Birmingham
Oct. 30—Lancashire v. Gloucestershire	Liverpool
Nov. 6—Yorkshire v. Warwickshire	York
Nov. 18—Essex v. Middlesex	Romford
Nov. 30—Gloucestershire v. Yorkshire	Gloucester
Nov. 26—Lancashire v. Surrey	Oldham
Dec. 4—Surrey v. Warwickshire	
Dec. 11—Yorkshire v. Essex	Leeds

Home Counties Division :—

Oct. 22—Bedfordshire v. Middx. 2nds	Bedford
Oct. 29—Cambridgeshire v. Essex 2nds	Cambridge
Nov. 23—Middlesex 2nds v. Essex 2nds	Enfield

Northern Division :—

Oct. 2—Northumberland v. Cumberland	Newcastle
Oct. 16—Lincolnshire v. Lanes 2nds	Lincoln
Oct. 30—Yorkshire 2nds v. Lincolnshire	Bradford
Nov. 6—Northumberland v. Cheshire	Newcastle
Nov. 27—Cumberland v. Durham	Carlisle
Dec. 11—Lincolnshire v. Northumberland	Grimsby
Dec. 18—Cumberland v. Yorks 2nds	Barrow

Southern Division :—

Oct. 14—Surrey 2nds v. Kent	Wimbledon
Nov. 13—Sussex v. Surrey 2nds	Brighton
Dec. 11—Kent v. Surrey 2nds	Canterbury

A Champion Remembers . . .

Last year Table Tennis came of age. One of the events arranged to celebrate the 21st year of World Championships was a special invitation competition for those who had taken part in the first championships in London, 1926.

Amongst the players in this event was **ZOLTAN MECHLOVITS**, father of Hungarian Table Tennis, World Champion 1927/28, and the first winner of the English Veterans' Singles as long ago as 1932/33. This great and respected old champion was a guest at the I.T.T.F. Congress Lunch in London, where he made a very moving speech to his old and new friends.

Space does not permit us to report this speech fully, but certain extracts will be of interest to all who are interested in the history of table tennis.

Mechlovits said:—

"My personal friendship with England, the home of the first World Championships, is eternal, and cannot be shaken by any present wave of political tendency.

. . . the beginning, the start, is necessarily the most interesting memory and the recollection is enhanced when one sees what a huge tree has grown from the seed which we planted together, Ivor Montagu, Bill Pope, Mr. Rose, the Swede Carl Linde and the German Dr. Lehmann. From this insignificant first step has come to-day the I.T.T.F., which includes the table tennis fans of the entire world.

. . . At the founding meeting in Berlin, 1926, my greatest surprise was the appearance of an enthusiast, even more confident and far seeing for the future of table tennis as a sport than I myself. This was the young British player, Ivor Montagu.

. . . at the London Congress that year, these few enthusiasts were joined by the worthy



1927-28 : MECHLOVITS, the Champion

Czechoslovak leading figure—Zdenek Heydusek. Dear Heydusek, I owe a confession to you! I never dreamed that you would succeed in developing the World's No. 1 team, indeed 21 years ago only one placing was certain, that Czechoslovakia would be placed bottom! Now, your work and the Czechoslovak team is a shining example to the sportsmen of every country.

. . . And you, dear Bill Pope, do you remember that you were my opponent in the first round of the Men's Singles? Now, twenty-one years later, I confess that I was very afraid of you, not only because you were my first opponent, but because you used the same penholder grip as myself. And I could never play against players who used my style!

. . . The leadership of the I.T.T.F. could not be in better hands; may God grant you all, health and energy to maintain your sporting activity for many years to come, in the best interests of International Table Tennis."

Facing, left to right: A. J. Wilmott, W. J. Pope, Z. Heydusek, A. K. Vint, I. Montagu, H. Corbison, E. Chen.



1926: the rivals of Mechlovits' younger days are now the side sitters of the highly organised International Table Tennis Federation. Here you see leading members of the I.T.T.F. at the Congress attended by representatives of over 20 member nations.

TIMING IN ATTACK

No. 2—The American Way

By JACK CARRINGTON

In last month's article I referred to "Miles and the Americans, and Barna in good form" as early hitters.

Can it be that they have something in common, the suave and debonair ex-Hungarian and the gauky, jack-in-the-box Americans?

Yes it is there, the mark of the ball-genius, the ability to take the ball aggressively or defensively just a little earlier in the bounce than ordinary players.

Victor Barna shook the table tennis world of 1929 by showing the new approach to the game; the Yankees Miles and Reismann shook our "world" of 1948 by showing us another new approach . . . the all-out method of forehand hitting which I will now discuss.

Now the special interest and importance of the American style, to my mind, is that almost anybody can follow their technique. It is rather different from

what we have come to regard as correct hitting in England recently. We have been inclined to preach CONSISTENCY, with Richard Bergmann as the great example, followed by Johnny Leach, but our trans-Atlantic rivals preach VENOM!

It may make my point clearer if I quote the remarks of Garrett Nash, the shock-attacker whom the Americans call "The Dizzy Dean of table tennis."

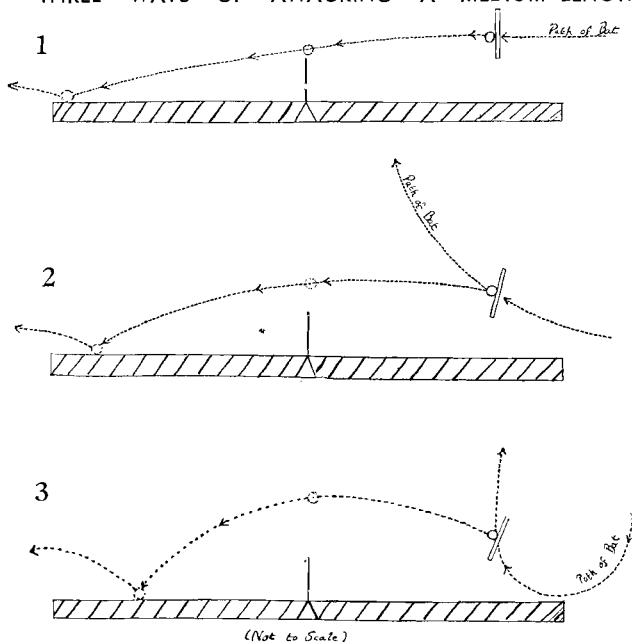
"It seems to me," said Garrett, "that when you Englishmen see a big ball, you hit it NOT TO MISS, but when we see a big ball, we hit it NOT TO COME BACK."

There, in those few single-syllable words, is a wealth of philosophy. Almost it sums up the difference in temperament between the two nations. Is not the Englishman mostly the compromiser, the middle-course man; is not the American still mostly un-subtle, brave, and a chancer?

Now those who adopt the all-out system will not *all* make good. The road is littered with unsuccessful "bashers"

(Continued on next page)

THREE WAYS OF ATTACKING A MEDIUM LENGTH DEFENSIVE RETURN



1.—FLAT HIT. Very little spin imparted. Ball taken at top of bounce. Very narrow margin of error at net and at baseline.

2.—TYPICAL "ENGLISH" DRIVE OF SAME BALL. Fairly strong top-spin combined with a certain amount of flat-hit ("through" the ball). Ball again taken at top of bounce. Rather better margin for error at both net and baseline.

3.—AMERICAN "ALL-OUT" TOP-SPIN HIT OF SAME BALL. As much top-spin as the arm can possibly impart by sharp vertical whip. Ball taken BEFORE reaching top of bounce, therefore little need for conscious forward hit "through" the ball—the rebound of the rising ball, added to the tremendous "glancing" blow of the upward-moving bat, gives the necessary forward speed.

Note: Still better margin for error at both net and baseline.

NEWS FROM ABROAD

TIMING IN ATTACK—contd.

steadily defeated by our consistent Englishmen. But the top few of the "bashing school," those with champion's blood in them, will make good, and come through with a weapon capable of out-gunning the consistent though worthy Englishman.

Already they have come through in America; their names are Miles and Reismann, whom we have seen, and we are told there are others hot on their track.

"O.K.," I can hear you say, "that's enough philosophy. I'd like to join this ALL-OUT SCHOOL. What do I have to do to hit that ball so that my opponent retires hurt?"

For the answer to that one, we will go to the American captain, the quiet-spoken buddy of the garrulous Garrett—Bill Price.

Bill himself is the most English-looking American, both on and off the table (please note, Bill, that's a compliment, really!). A model of style and orthodoxy, a clever student of table tennis, and he says:—


"We've lots more big hitters like these two back home, and the secret is . . . **RACKET-HEAD SPEED.**"

And of course he's right. What he means is that you must train your muscles, concentrate every effort, on having your bat-head moving at the fastest possible speed **upwards on the surface of the ball** at the moment of striking.

* * *

Take a look at many strong English hitters: do you not see the arm maintaining its speed, almost accelerating, AFTER they have struck the ball? The American lightweight hitters have economised that effort, by

- (a) ensuring that their swing is accelerated to **FINISH on the ball, not half-a-second later!** and
- (b) taking the ball on the rise so that it does some of the work for them.

 And, for those who lightly dismiss the American style as "mad flat hitting," here is the true trajectory of their hits, showing a much safer state of affairs than with other styles.

HUNGARIAN HOPES

HUNGARY is going all-out to restore its table tennis fame in a big way. Look at these figures: Number of clubs in 1947, 110; in 1948, 380.

This is partly the result of a government-patronised nation-wide tournament in which no less than 41,000 players competed!

They have a rare Champion in the girl Farkas, what of the men? The crafty Soos gets no worse, the colossal Sido is hardly likely to weaken; inspired by the grizzled Mechlovits they claimed a late-season win over Slovakia (Tokar and the penholder-king Marinko).

Coming after a 4-1 victory over the Czech team of Vana-Andreadis, this has not unnaturally given the Hungarians tremendous hopes for the present season's campaigns.

TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

ON SEPTEMBER 8 the French Association organised a "tournament of champions" in which world-champion Bergmann, the Swede Grive, and the French players Amouretti, Haguenuer, Dubouille, Lanskoj, Collier, and Lucianu took part. Haguenuer took the second and third games from Bergmann and only lost the fourth after twenty-all had been called. In the final, Bergmann beat Amouretti comfortably by three games to one.

REISMAN BEATS MILES! Retains Canadian Title

At Toronto on 9th September, Martin Reisman retained the Canadian Open Singles Championship by defeating Richard Miles, first-ranking United States player.

With quick-fire style which prevented Miles from settling down Reisman won by:—17-21, 21-16, 21-19, 24-26, 21-15.

Peggy McLean beat her New York team-mate Leah Neuberger by:—21-15, 21-14, 19-21, 21-8, to take the women's title.

United States won the team trophy with a 6-2 win over Canada.

EUROPE CUP

England team at the Hague

England were due to play Holland (Men) in the first round of the Europe Cup competition, on 5th October, at The Hague.

The England team was nominated as under :—

**J. LEACH (Capt.), A. SIMONS,
G. V. BARNA, J. CARRINGTON.**

It is understood that Leach and Simons were likely to play the singles events. Barna has been spending a short holiday in Holland as guest of the Barna-Klub of Utrecht and will therefore be available on the spot.

LONDON LEAGUE—Emergency Plans

It is proposed to operate an emergency short-season programme to ensure continuity of London League this year.

All interested please write the acting joint secretary, Mr. Ross, 225, Dumbarton Court, Brixton Hill, S.W.2.

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The cost is 30 guineas and we have also a brother, which is for club players; not so solid but still fast, which we retail at £21.

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PARKER'S "PING-PONG"

About the racket it is written, "Ping-Pong rackets appear to be made of every imaginable substance of any size and shape." The advantages and disadvantages are given of the vellum racket which appears to have been very popular, though the rim was something of a nuisance. The parchment racket is classified as "merely the old battledore." Wooden rackets were in great variety, some of the heavier woods having holes drilled into them for lightness. Rubber on wood is just mentioned in passing. Aluminium rackets are condemned with glass ones as being too heavy. Cork is praised as having all the advantages of wood with none of its disadvantages. As for a gut racket, "All the players I have seen using it seem to be quite novices," writes Mr. Parker. There is a section comparing wood and vellum, the latter being criticised for altering according to the atmosphere but being praised because of its greater power in spinning the ball.

WOODEN BATS FOR GENIUS-ES!

"The genius may arise," the author prophesies, "who will be able to perform the same strokes with a wooden racket that are possible with a vellum, but at the present time players who use wooden rackets confine themselves to half-volleying, and very rarely hit the ball after it has risen to the top of its bounce." I should add that Mr. Parker had just taken out provisional protection for a vellum racket which, it was hoped, would overcome all difficulties.

Ball pickers-up are illustrated, as are ball-holders to fix on the side of the table. As for grips, Mr. Parker would have the racket straight across the body, no other, not even the pen-holder, being nearly its equal. Sections are given telling the correct position at the table, first steps and how to serve. This has a chapter of its own. "Very few players at the present time have developed a really hard service. Those that have are very erratic." There is a long chapter on styles of play and strokes to be used, the strokes being divided into two main classes, the half-volley and all others, because, "the great majority of players take every ball as often as possible at the half-volley."

IT'S STILL GOOD ADVICE

The general remarks on playing Ping-Pong could well be studied by most of

Potted by

HARRY MILES

us who play to-day. These remarks end with the advice, "*Always attack wherever possible. Many tournaments have been won at Ping-Pong by purely defensive players. I do not think this will be so in future. More will be needed than defence.*" Mr. Parker suggests.

BIRTHPLACE OF DOUBLES ?

Further short chapters give hints on handicapping and on how to run a tournament. One very brief note is given on The Four Game. "*Hendon is the only place where the game is played in this manner.*" The penultimate chapter is written by Mr. T. C. Figgis of the Mount Temple Ping-Pong Club, Dublin, where the game had only been introduced six months before. He mentions a tournament played at Sackville Hall, Sackville Street, under the auspices of the Presbyterian Association and he advertises the coming one at the Earlsfort Rink when prizes to the value of £25 were to be offered. A match was being arranged between Dublin, where all players used vellum rackets, and Belfast, where wood only was used.

TRAINS FOR NOT TREADING ON

Finally, there is a note on Ping-Pong for ladies. This chiefly concerns dress. "The skirt should be fairly short and clear the ground all round. *Trains are to be avoided.* Shoes and ornaments come in for comment and there is a final exhortation to ladies to take the game seriously. "For there is no other game which offers so many possibilities to women to excel and play on equal terms with men."

Such was Ping-Pong in 1902.

It's Sound Tactics

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1948/49 EARLY SEASON DIARY

Date	Tournament or Event	Venue	Tickets or Information from:
Oct. 6-9	Birmingham Open	Indoor Sports Stadium, Fersshore Road, Birmingham	M. Goldstein, 415 Moseley Road, Birmingham, 12.
Oct. 16	Hartlepool Open	West Hartlepool	W. Baillie, 24 Powlett Road, West Hartlepool, Co. Durham.
Oct. 23	ENGLAND v. CZECHOSLOVAKIA	The Stadium, Liverpool	W. Stamp, 3 Farmdale Close, Liverpool, 15.
Oct. 30-31	Sussex Open	Sea End Pavilion, Hastings	C. Senior, Flat 2, Quarry Bank, St. Leonards-on-Sea.
Nov. 1-6	Eastern Suburban Open	Ilford Lawn Tennis Club; finals, Ilford Baths	A. Potter, 176 Cambridge Road, Seven Kings, Essex.
Nov. 12-13	Yorkshire Open		
Nov. 20-21	South of England Open	Croydon	C. Bourne, 46 Elm Park Gardens, Seisdon, Surrey.
Nov. 24-27	Merseyside Open	Gordon Institute and (finals) Philharmonia Hall, Liverpool	W. Stamp, 3 Farmdale Close, Liverpool.
Dec. 3-4	Pontefract Open	Pontefract	
Dec. 10-11	WELSH OPEN	Drill Hall, Cardiff	Mrs. H. Roy Evans, 16 Ty-mawr Road, Rumney, Cardiff.
Dec. 13-18	Central London Open	London	G. R. James, 19 St. Ann's Villas, W.11.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK TOUR

Date	Fixture or Venue	Tickets or Information from:
Oct. 18	At Cheltenham	D. L. Thompson, 59 Rodney Road, Cheltenham.
Oct. 19	At Hartlepool	W. Baillie, 24 Powlett Road, West Hartlepool.
Oct. 20	v. Yorkshire	V. R. Wood, 27 Warrels Place, Bramley, Leeds.
Oct. 20	v. Surrey, at Manor Place Baths	Chas. Day, 34 Caldew Street, London, S.E.5.
Oct. 21	At Derby	W. Reeve, 58 Shaw Street, Derby.
Oct. 21	At Bishop Auckland	H. Dean, 40 Hestobel Gardens, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham.
Oct. 23	International v. ENGLAND, at The Stadium, Liverpool	See page 9.
Oct. 25	v. Middlesex, at Paddington Baths, London, W.1.	G. R. Harrower, 34 Gallants Farm Road, East Barnet, Herts.
Oct. 25	v. Northumberland	J. R. Waugh, 107 Links Avenue, Whitley Bay.
Oct. 26	At Birmingham	M. Goldstein, 415 Moseley Road, Birmingham, 12.
Oct. 27	v. Kent	L. G. Sadler, Aylesford Paper Mills Sports Club, Larkfield, near Maidstone, Kent.
Oct. 27	At Bolton	A. Howcroft, 30 Thorne Street, Farnworth, Lancs.
Oct. 29	At Southampton	Miss L. Ferguson, 20 Atherley Road, Southampton.
Oct. 29	At Denham Studios	G. Griffiths, Denham Film Studios, Denham, Bucks.
Oct. 30-31	At Hastings	C. Senior, Flat 2, Quarry Bank, St. Leonards-on-Sea.

SOME LATER LANDMARKS

Jan. 3-8	Metropolitan Open.	Mar. 1-4	Surrey Open.
15	Hull Open.	11	ENGLAND v. IRELAND (at Liverpool).
15	WALES v. ENGLAND (at Swansea).	19	West of England Open.
16	Hampshire Open.	19	Grimby Open.
20-22	Lancashire Open.	21-26	West Middlesex Open.
30	Kent Open.	Mar. 31-	
Feb. 4-10	THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (at Stockholm).	Apr. 2	North of England Open.
Feb. 16-19	THE ENGLISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS (in London).	Apr. 4-9	Middlesex (Herga) Open.
24-26	Midland Open.	16-18	N.E. England Open.
		25-29	Wembley Open.
		May 2-7	Thameside Open (finals).
		21	Bucks Open (finals).

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