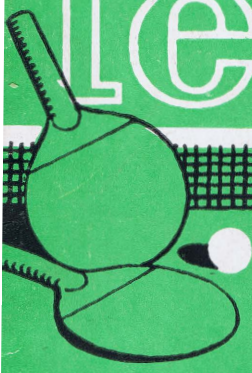


# Table Tennis REVIEW

Vol. 6 No. 1  
SEPT.-OCT., 1951



**NEWS**

★

**VIEWS**

★

**HINTS**

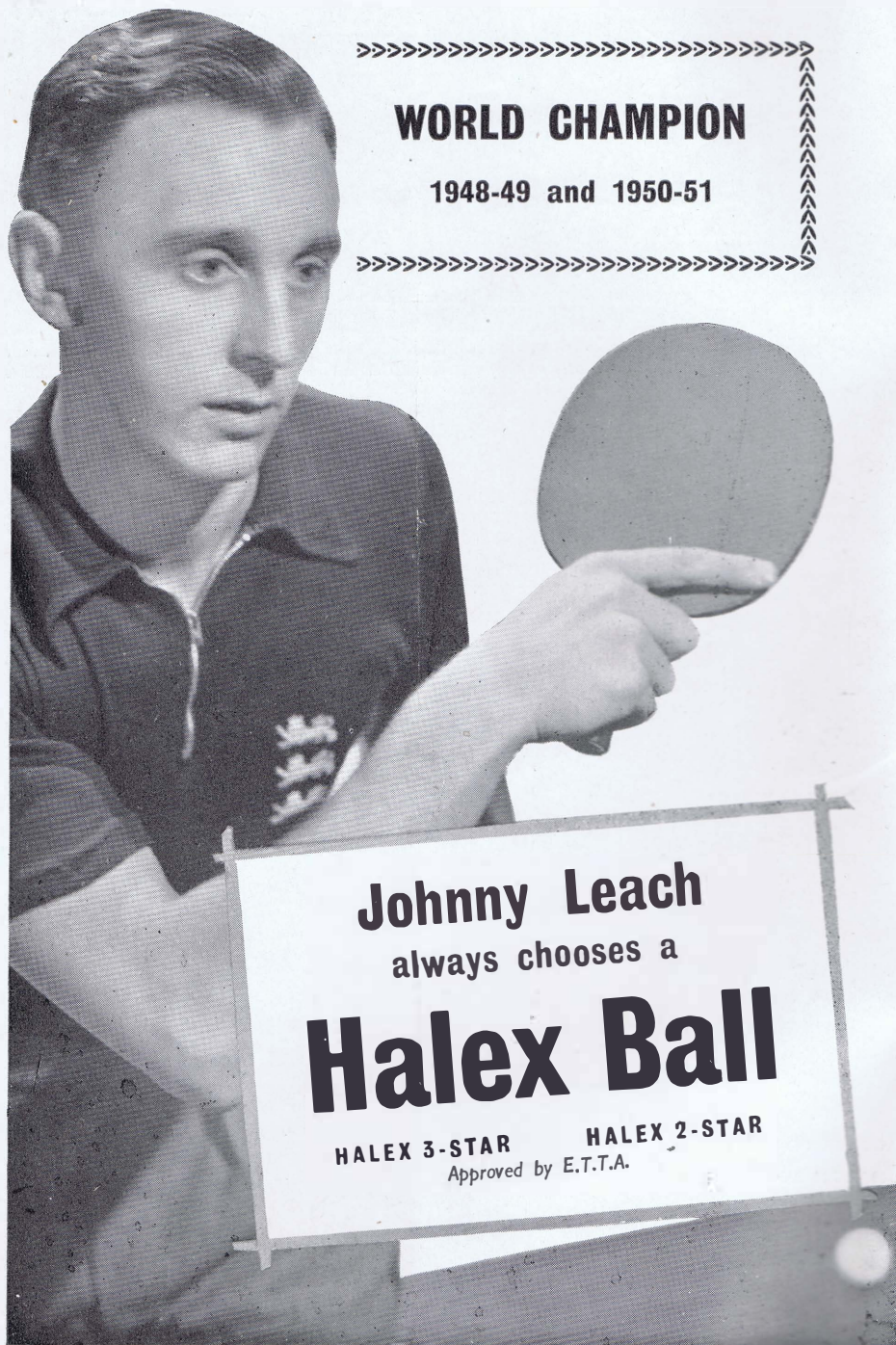
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# TABLE TENNIS

## REVIEW

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Vol. 6 No. 1

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 1951

One Shilling

## Editorial Notes

FROM a glance at our *Season's Diary* it will be seen that it is going to be a busier season than ever. There are more open tournaments and most players will want to enter as many of these as possible. Unfortunately the deciding factor on where to go is generally the all important one of finance. Travelling to tournaments well away from home can be a pretty expensive hobby what with high fares and costly hotel accommodation.

If you are one of the stars of the game you don't have to worry so much about funds for travelling and one or two nights' accommodation. You generally get most of this paid for you. Just a few of you are even luckier still and get paid to play in tournaments and walk off with the prizes. You lucky people! When I was a lad we paid our own fare—international or no international—but in those days people seemed extremely helpful and kind. It was never difficult to find a person to give us bed and breakfast. In fact many people seemed to take a pleasure in entertaining visiting competitors.

Now I've been thinking if this could be done again (and people haven't changed) in an organised manner. It would surely encourage players, especially youthful boys and girls, to enter more tournaments in various parts of the country. First we need the people to come forward and offer accommodation. Second we require local Tournament Secretaries to O.K. these addresses as being worthy of their own sons and daughters.

How about it, Tournament Managers? Could you solicit a few names and addresses to supply to long distance competitors? We are willing to act as a bureau if necessary and to help to develop the idea. We invite competitors to contact us if they require accommodation for any tournament and we shall do whatever we can to arrange matters for them. (Please enclose stamped addressed envelope.)

The idea is a good one and there is no reason why Tournament Secretaries could not eventually offer a reasonable amount of accommodation. It could do a great deal of good in many ways, including the building up of new friendships.

ARTHUR WAITE.

## WORLD RANKING LIST (Official)

The following provisional ranking list for seeding has been established by the Ranking Committee of the International Table Tennis Federation:—

**Men:** (1) Leach (England). (2) Andreadis (Czechoslovakia). (3) Sido (Hungary). (4) Tereba (Czechoslovakia). (5) Koczian (Hungary). (6) V. Harangozo (Yugoslavia). (7) Vana (Czechoslovakia). (8) Roothoof (France). (9) Fritsch (Austria). (10) Ehrlich (France). (11) Haguenaer (France). (12) Tokar (Czechoslovakia). (13) Turnovsky (Czechoslovakia). (14) Cartland (U.S.A.).

**Women:** (1) Rozeanu (Rumania). (2) Farkas (Hungary). (3) L. (Thall) Neuberger

(U.S.A.). (4) Pritzi (Austria). (5) Wertl (Austria). (6) Elliot (Scotland). (7) (Fuerstova) Krejcova (Czechoslovakia). (8) R. Rowe (England). (9) Beolet (France). (10) (Kolosvary) Szasz (Rumania). (11) D. Rowe (England). (12) Karpati (Hungary).

The following players, unranked owing to lack of performance during season 1950/51, are to receive special attention when the list is revised prior to the World Championships, February, 1952.

**Men:** R. Bergmann (England), Soos (Hungary), Miles (U.S.A.).

**Women:** Beregi (Australia), Monness (U.S.A.).





# DOWN THE WHITE LINE

By GOSSIMA

COLIN FORTH, the Doncaster League Secretary and Sports Outfitter, who emigrated to Southern Rhodesia at the end of last season, won his first Open championship in July when he took the Rhodesian Singles title. There was a total entry of 146 coming from Central Africa, Transvaal, Kenya and Northern Rhodesia. In the semi-final he beat the reigning champion Dick Robson, and just managed to scrape home in the final against Jack Evans of Bulawayo, the score being 21-19 in the fifth game. Colin gave up his sports business to try his hand at tobacco farming. Recent *Table Tennis Review* articles set out to prove that it is generally the non-smoker who carries off the championship titles. What do you intend to do now, Colin, conduct a campaign proving how Rhodesian tobacco helped you to win your first open? Bet you don't smoke, anyway!

The year 1951 has brought illness to quite a few table tennis personalities. First we had the editor of this mag. down for a long spell, followed by Leslie Forrest, Yorkshire County Match Secretary, having an unpleasant spell of general debility. Essex stalwart, Bill Parker, has been through a serious illness, from which he is now making good recovery, while the summer was none too kind to Swaythling Cup player, Ron Crayden. In May Ron had two minor operations, but these were followed by complications that kept him immobile until August.

Newcomers into the English National County Championships Premier Division is the Welsh County of Glamorgan. One might almost look upon them as the representative team of Wales as they are able to call upon a number of internationals.

Junior champions are always possible international stars and so it will be interesting to watch for further news of the new American Junior Champion, seventeen-year-old Ronald Liechty from South Bend. Ron is a protegee of the well-known U.S. coach, John Varga.

From America comes news of the retirements of Elmer F. Cinnater from the office of U.S.T.T.A. President, and of Mrs. Helene Cinnater from the post of General Secretary, offices they have held for the past five years. New address of the American Association is 22, West Monroe Street, Chicago 3, Ill.

Now getting on in years Horace Needles, who captained Wales in 26 internationals, has decided to retire from the playing side of the game. He won the Welsh Closed in 1932 and in 1939 he added to a number of his other titles the North Wales Open Singles and Doubles championships. Like so many other T.T. diehards he cannot cut himself adrift from the game completely and he will continue to act as Treasurer of the Rhyl and District League.

Prior to the recent Leach-Haguener tour, the New Zealand Association estimated that an exclusive visit of four weeks to New Zealand alone would mean an outlay of approximately £1,790. This would be based on return air fares and a playing fee, but would not include internal travel and accommodation. Had not the Australian and Singapore Associations joined in the circuit and so helped to share the costs the visit could not have been arranged.

The two Australian Associations, Parkside T.T.A. and Western Australia T.T.A., are both to be congratulated on the bright and informative duplicated news-sheets which they put out regularly for their members. From "Twenty-One-Up," the W.A. Bulletin, we quote a Victor Barna statement which reads, "I have always sought two qualities in a T.T. bat. First, pimpled rubber which grips the ball firmly and yet has sufficiently thin backcloth to allow the plywood to play its part. Second, a resilient plywood giving the greatest effect to one's hits and drives."

We have two appeals from readers. One comes from Mr. J. F. McQuillan of Victoria, Australia, who is anxious to

secure a copy of *Table Tennis Review* featuring the 1948 World Championships report. The other appeal is from Dutch Swaythling Cup player Will van Zoelen who requires the 1948 World Championship (London) badge to complete his collection to date. If any reader can oblige either of the above we shall be pleased to forward address.

Geoffrey Harrower, the Middlesex stalwart, who enjoyed a spell of the limelight as a table tennis player during the postwar years, is now climbing the approaches to the veteran stage, but as we see less and less of his displays at the table we see more and more of his capacity for administrative work. Geoff now holds the following formidable list of official titles: Chairman of the Equipment Committee of the International T.T. Federation; Hon. Secretary of National Championships, Middlesex T.T.A., International Selection Committee, E.T.T.A. Open Tournament Committee, E.T.T.A. Grading Committee; Advertisement and Circulation Manager of the Official Magazine, and also Member of the E.T.T.A. Sub-Committees for County Boundaries, Disciplinary, Incorporation, Rules and Umpires. Geoff states "I expect a busier season than ever. Contrary to most people's belief I have been working harder than ever this summer and at the moment am bang on top of all my activities. I trust I will keep there, but we shall see."

The Champion County v. The Rest match will be held at the Aylesford Paper Mills, Larkfield, Nr. Maidstone, Kent, commencing at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18th. The Rest team will no doubt be Leach, Simons, Kennedy and also Peggy Franks and Molly Jones. Their opponents will be the Championship side, Middlesex.

Three international matches in the fairly near future are Ireland v. England at the Wellington Hall, Belfast, on November 13th, 1951; England v. France at the Colston Hall, Colston Street, Bristol, on December 4th, 1951; and Scotland v. England at the St. Andrews Hall, Glasgow, on December 17th, 1951.

In his capacity of Official Coach to the Swedish T.T.A., Jack Carrington, with his wife Elsie, have spent most of the summer touring Sweden. They are due back in mid-September. In a letter from Stockholm, Jack mentions that he would enjoy writing for "Table Tennis Review" regularly.

## Sam Kirkwood's Start-of-Season Wishes

Ivor Montagu, in the hope that he will never again leave himself open to criticism re England team selection, as he did during 1950/51.

Stanley Proffitt, in the hope that he will continue to fight tooth and nail for the rights, privileges and recognition of North of England players.

Tony (A. R.) Miller, in the hope that next season will see him firmly installed in Surrey's premier side, and that an England badge will come his way.

Micky Thornhill, in the hope that he will progress to become Leach's natural successor as England's leading native-born player.

E.T.T.A.'s Selection Committee, in the hope that they will disprove the generally held theory that they do as they're told, and not as they decide.

The Rowe Twins, in the hope that they will follow up their spectacular doubles successes with noteworthy achievements in the singles' sphere.

Peggy Franks, in the hope that, at 25, she'll yet prove that she is the most complete stroke player of any woman in the world.

Brian Kennedy, in the hope that his English Open success won't be shown to be a flash in the pan.

## Cover Girl

Sharon Koehnke, 16-year-old Glen Ellyn, Ill., High School student, picked as 1951 ALL-AMERICAN GIRL by Illustrator Wendell O. Kling, actress Kay Westfall, and athlete Coleman Clark. She will reign as Queen of Table Tennis in 1951. The girls were judged on looks and athletic accomplishments. Sharon is National Junior Miss Table Tennis Champion, Chicago Speed Skating Champion, besides titles she holds in tennis and swimming. She also won All-American Women's Title.



# Readers' Letters...

## FREE TABLE TENNIS BATS AND BOOKS

The pages of this magazine are open to all readers to state their views and opinions of the game. Naturally we like to feature articles by well-known players and officials, but we fully realise that the ordinary fellow or girl may have something just as interesting to say. You may have no talent for writing, well don't let that stop you from putting pen to paper. Your literary efforts will be sub-edited before they are put into print.

THE SENDER OF EVERY LETTER WHICH WE CONSIDER WORTHY OF BEING PUBLISHED WILL RECEIVE A FIRST CLASS T.T. BAT, OR A BOOK BY JACK CARRINGTON. AUTHORS OF PUBLISHED EFFORTS, HOWEVER, MUST WRITE AND CLAIM THEIR PRIZE.

WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT. Keep your ears and eyes open at matches and tournaments. You should be able to pick up many a good idea for a letter. If you wish, criticise articles which appear in this or any other table tennis magazine. Maybe you are an overseas reader, in which case we should be glad to hear of activities of your own table tennis circle.

We especially welcome amusing stories of your own or your friends' T.T. experiences. Nearly everyone has at least one novel or amusing experience which is worth telling. Let us have it, will you?

We also want Gossip paragraphs and photographs of players who are at the top, or of players who are on their way to the top.

If your letter reaches 400 words or over we shall be glad to make payment at our usual rates. It is impossible for us to acknowledge or reply to unpublished letters, so please understand if you do not hear from us. If, however, you require advice or information without delay, then please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Send in your letters and watch in subsequent issues for your effort appearing in print so that you may claim your prize. Address to: The Editor, *Table Tennis Review*, Kenworthy Buildings, 83, Bridge Street, Manchester, 3.

### T.T. Acrobatics!

As an enthusiastic amateur photographer and a keen follower of "big time" table tennis I feel I must protest at the antics which the professional photographers ask the stars to perform when taking their photographs for the national press.

I was an interested spectator behind the scenes at Wembley during the last "English Open" while the vivacious Rowe twins were being put through it by the "Gentlemen of the Press." Such acrobatic leaps and blind swipes were recorded as would never be seen in match play in a hundred years. At the "English Open," in 1949, I also saw Johnny Leach, fresh from his Stockholm victory, obliging the press with enormous leaps and bounds—was that how he beat Vana and the rest? The photographers apparently thought so. Yet another example, looking through Richard Bergmann's excellent "21 Up" one comes across the T.T. picture to end all T.T. pictures—the great Barna very inelegantly poised in mid-air, well above table level, and seemingly being helped on his heavenward way by "Dicky."

No doubt some very spectacular pictures

result, but surely when they appear in the press a false impression of our grand pastime is bound to occur in the mind of the uninitiated. To the person who's only knowledge of T.T. is what he has seen in the latest illustrated weekly, a first visit to Wembley or any first class match is bound to result in disappointment when no acrobatics materialise, while all T.T. fans view such photos with amused tolerance.

While the game can do with all the publicity which the paper-starved press can give it, surely the E.T.T.A. and the stars themselves can see to it that when photographs are required some realistic as against "phoney" action pictures result.

**B. Denis George.**

*"Weltevreden," Bellevue Road, Simonstown, Cape, S. Africa.*

*Mr. Denis George is a first class photographer and we are indebted to him for the photographs which appeared on pages 3 and 19 of Vol. 5, No. 3, and also the cover photograph and page 31 of Vol. 5, No. 4. Mr. George is now acting as "Table Tennis Review" agent for South Africa and readers in that part of the world should contact him at the above address regarding subscriptions, etc.—Editor.*

### Choosing A Bat

I have seen so many different types of bats that I am at a loss as to which one to have when I buy a new one. Is it possible to buy a reasonably light bat with the so-called "attacking" rubber on one side and a "defensive" rubber for a heavy backhand chop on the other side? What points do you look for when choosing a bat? They have such a large choice of all shapes and sizes at my local shop, but they will not allow me to change after purchase. I should be grateful for any advice you can give and I am sure your reply will be of interest to others.

*R. V. Owen.  
St. Albans, Herts.*

*On another page of this issue international Alec Brook and himself a Sports Dealer gives you some tips on purchasing a bat. I will add, however, that few if any first class players will advise you to have two different types of rubber on your bat. Itakeit that you mix defence with attack, in which case medium grade rubber pimples should prove suitable. Make sure that you are not over-fastidious. Remember a good workman never blames his tools. Before the war I once knew a fellow who changed his bat almost weekly. He never rose above a mediocre club player but*

*when war broke out he had a collection of over 50 bats. Imagine the small fortune he made in 1946 when pre-war bats were bringing a pound and thirty shillings a time. Will you claim your bat or book, Mr. Owen? The bat is a good one and could see you through to the final of the English Open.—Editor.*

### You All Know Him

I was at a tournament last season and a group of young fellows and girls were talking with contempt about the conceit and overbearing attitude of one of the players who was then in action at a table. "The conceited ass!" remarked one girl. "Conceit isn't the word for him," came a reply from one of the brighter boys who then added, "It was his birthday last week and do you know what he did? He went and congratulated his parents."

Is that little episode funny enough to win a bat?

*J. S. Wilkinson.  
Southampton.*

*Yes, but don't let it make you conceited, will you? Please write and claim your bat or book.—Editor.*

*Continued on page 24*

## Introducing a different bat . . .

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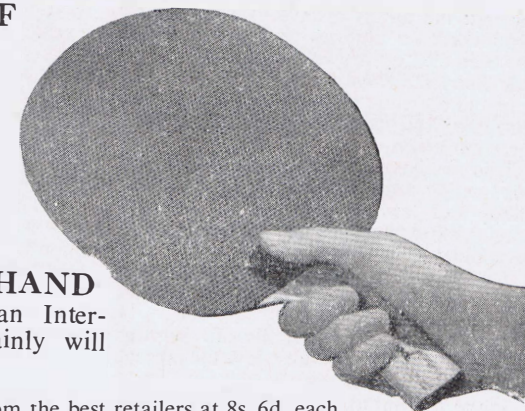
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# SERVICE WITH A SMILE

## The Service Rule

THE Dutch Table Tennis Association has adopted this slogan for 1951/52: "THE OPEN HAND THROUGH-OUT THE LAND."

Very creditable and necessary, this attempt to enforce the rules.

But surely, there is something wrong with a rule which needs slogans and circulars and conferences to enforce its observation? We cannot say to *ensure* its observation, because the most eagle-eyed umpire cannot lay his hand on his heart and say this: "I, Samuel Bloggins, have actually seen a 100 per cent. correct service."

He cannot swear this, because no ball can be delivered from the open hand in such a way that the human eye can guarantee it has neither deviated one degree from the vertical, nor rotated one degree of its circumference. Yet, that is what strict observation of the rule demands.

My personal experience is this—the service which really satisfies every umpire is the one which is thrown really high in the air. Although this might be well off the vertical, as it rises, it is likely to *drop* in a true vertical line, by natural force of gravity.

The fact that it is also likely to develop some spin during its relatively long journey through the air, is always overlooked, so hypnotised are umpires by the ball which has been clearly thrown "upwards."

### Fair Service Vetoed

In the previous phase of this experiment with rules, the player was permitted to drop the hand away.

This in my contention was the *only fair service*. By withdrawing the pressure of the hand, and leaving the drop to nature's gravity, almost no spin, force, or angle could be applied to the ball.

Thus everybody's service would be nearly alike—which is presumably the so-dull objective of our planners.

But then they vetoed this fair service. The hand must lift *upwards*, says the present rule.

In the attempt to find a service which was fair and technically correct, I reasoned that if I struck the ball about an inch above my hand, it would have no time to spin, nor deviate much from vertical.

Yet this, which in my heart I know is my most correct service, is the one which has earned me reproachful looks from umpires, and my only two "faults." (One was in

"Two prominent examples of good open-hand services," writes Jack Carrington, "are Johnny Leach and Geoff. Harrower. Both are noted for slow, relaxed stroke-play and serene approach to the end-of-game points."

On the other side of the fence, two unintentionally "bad" servers are Bo Vana and Adrian Haydon. Both are noted for dynamic un-relaxed stroke-play and the intense approach to the end-of-game points.

I am sure the effort to serve perfectly legitimately costs the second two far more than the first-named pair.—EDITOR.

favour of Richard Bergmann, who hardly needed the gift !)

In other words, when the motion of the bat, the hand, and the ball are very close together, the umpire's eye cannot with certainty analyse the sequence of events.

## By JACK CARRINGTON

Of course, the eye cannot do this. There will always be a point technically within the rules but incapable of scientific judgment by the human eye.

So what do we do next? Make more and more rules, circulate still more interpretations until players are almost afraid to serve and umpires afraid to umpire? Naturally not—that would be absurd—and many of us say that the point of absurdity has already been reached.

Do not let us regard this latest change of rule as heaven-sent. It is experimental, imposed by reasonable men and capable of being removed by reasonable men.

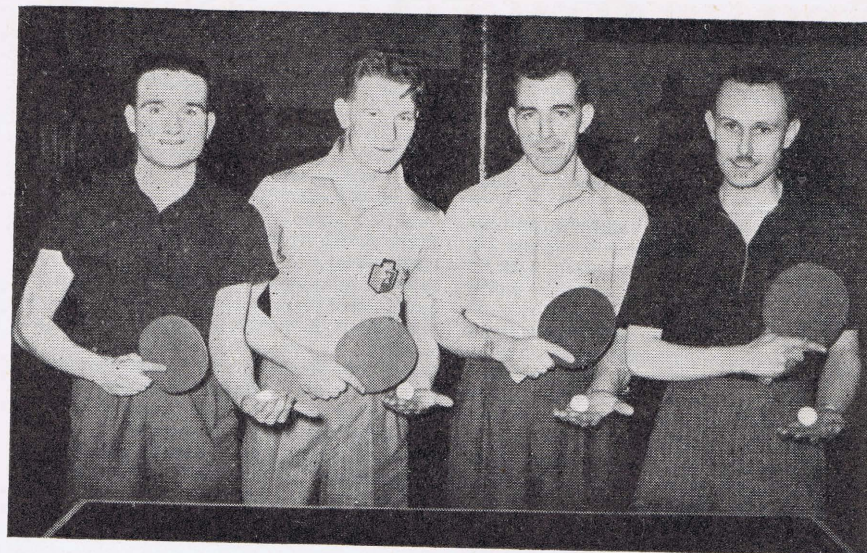
Every change so far has been in the direction of rigidity. Let us recognise that we have gone one step too far and go back to the previous position.

### What is Flat?

Although the service rule can be assailed on several other points, let us consider this clause as an example:—

"The free hand shall be open and flat."

How flat is flat? Anyone who coaches will tell you how widely individual positions of muscular repose can vary. Some people "at rest" are much more relaxed than



"Will this do for service?" asks the Bradford team  
L. to R., G. Jackson, E. Murgatroyd, P. Sharp and A. R. Lund

others—women generally more so than men.

To some people, a flat hand means an easy relaxation of the muscles.

To many others it means a considerable bracing of the muscles at the back of the hand. You can see their hands shaking with the effort. What you cannot see is the mental effort also required to remember to keep the hand braced at 17-18 or deuce!

So the "flat hand" requirement imposes a burden which is *not* equal for all men.

As for the effect of these stipulations on umpires, it is by no means uncommon to see an umpire checking some "new-rule" point while overlooking the fact that the server is striking the ball well outside the side-line. (This common fault is hardly ever noticed).

### General Agreement

Almost every leading player seems to agree on these items:—

(1) The rule and its interpretation are too rigid.

(2) The unnatural supervision of the service by umpires is disconcerting to play.

(3) The slight deviations in the opponent's service are less worrying than the intervention of the umpire to check them.

Continued on page 8

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# Forehand Drive—American Style

THE past decade has witnessed the rise of a new school of hard, spectacular hitters in U.S. table tennis circles. Headed by Dick Miles and Martin Reisman, the younger Americans have developed a whip-like forehand drive that carries tremendous speed and pace.

Although there are individual variations of grip and backswing, the new American forehand drive is hit in essentially the same way by all its leading exponents. Let's analyse the stroke.

The player stands slightly crouched, in the orthodox sideways position to the table. The ball is met at approximately three-quarters arm's distance. Dick Miles employs a roll backswing to start his drive, while Reisman and Garrett Nash snap into the shot with little or no swingback. The ball is hit early with an upward, whipping motion. The stroke is compact, crisp and rhythmic, and comes from outside in, the bat finishing just above the right ear at the conclusion of the swing.

It must be emphasized that each ball is treated differently. Against a low, heavy chop the bat angle is slanted back and the swing starts well below the ball, coming up with a vigorous brushing motion. Against higher balls or softer chop, the bat angle may come up as far as the vertical, the swing starts higher, and there is more forward motion as the shot is flattened out. Thus any ball can be hit all-out—the adjustment of bat angle and stroke motion within the framework of the drive permits the proper margin of safety.

## SERVICE WITH A SMILE

*Continued from previous page*

(4) The INTENTION of the rule is nevertheless excellent and desirable.

The conclusion usually is on these lines, so let's frame the rule simply, thus:—

*"The ball shall first rest in the open palm of the free hand. It shall then be released without spin, by a direct propulsion from the palm, or a direct withdrawal of the palm. At no time shall the ball touch any part of the fingers or thumb."*

This might leave some liberty to turn the palm from its horizontal plane. It is just possible to do this and still propel the ball without spin.

A sharp customer could perhaps roll a little spin on to the ball, but not enough to pay dividends. Anyway, the umpire has the whip-hand. He can say, "You are spinning the ball, old man. Fault!"

By **GEORGE SEMPELES**

*Sports Writer and U.S.A. State of Maryland Singles, Doubles and Mixed Champion. Also Player-Coach to Five South Atlantic Championship Basketball Teams.*

The wrist flows smoothly in the shot, accelerating the speed of the bat just before the impact. It is this lack of wrist motion that robs veteran Douglas Cartland of speed in his extremely accurate topspin strokes. At the start of the shot, the wrist should not droop but be cocked in natural position, with bat slightly higher than wrist level. The swing is smooth, not jerky, and the wrist swivels over naturally to generate the racket head speed that is essential to hard hitting. But remember that the chief fulcrum of the drive is the elbow, and that the wrist is secondary.

The ball is met early and the weight shifts from the rear foot to the front with the swing. It is important to hit crisply and compactly, neither dragging the stroke too lazily nor crashing into it too flatly.

This modern drive is distinctly different from the forehands of Sol Schiff and Jimmy McClure, hitherto the models for American youngsters. It stresses early timing, compactness of swing, and plasticity permitting each ball to be hit on its merits. It is not inconceivable that the blazing forehand drives of Miles or Reisman will pave the way for either to succeed Johnny Leach as the next world's champion.

The umpire's judgment in that respect would be just as likely to be right or wrong as it is now, but play could start in a less emasculated fashion, and good-hearted players could sleep at nights.

Until we wake up and press for improvements, we shall continue to get incidents like the following (true):—

Umpiring in one closed tournament, I asked a venerable competitor if he knew about the new service rule. "Oh yes," said he, "but I don't use it myself."

A ladies' league match this time. One of our home umpires tried bravely, and often, to impress a visiting lady with the necessity of serving correctly. The only response was a smile or occasionally a wink. During the refreshment time, the charming defaulter came up to the stern umpire and cooed, "You think I don't know about that new rule, don't you?"

# IT HAS BEEN WORTH IT!

By **RON CRAYDEN** (English Swaythling Cup)

IT seems only like yesterday when I was introduced to the Ravensbourne Club; then a mecca of table tennis players in the South London district. Outside it was shoddy, tottering and unkempt. Inside, warm and friendly. A hive of vigorous activity. The table game as I knew it, was nothing like the fast and exciting game I saw there. I was captivated. That evening I became a member, little knowing the adventures awaiting me.

For the next 12 months I existed only for table tennis. I practised assiduously three and four hours a night. Even in crowded streets I went through the motions of backhand flicks, without any feelings of self-consciousness. The bug had bitten me—deep and hard.

I progressed rapidly and the control I was beginning to exercise over the little white ball was an added incentive—a tonic not to be found in a doctor's surgery. Then suddenly—the War! Six lotus years, lightened only by a chance, but all too short, meeting with the Carrington-Leach combination.

## The Struggle—and the Goal

The featherbed joys of demobilization soon passed, but table tennis was deep rooted and it flowered again. I joined the Albion Club, and encouraged by the indefatigable Jack Carrington, soon started making strides. As the Ravensbourne had been my basic training ground, so the Albion became my finishing school.

Perhaps it is because memory has a way of magnifying our first successes, however small, that I remember vividly the first open tournament I won. How I lay awake half the night peering through the gloom at the cup on my mantelpiece, reassuring myself it wasn't all a dream. Yes! There still vibrates the music of those hours.

Young success spurts like a fire cracker and that season I listed a string of tournament wins. It was at this stage, largely due I feel to the glowing words I had written about me and of the assurances of my friends, that I began to think about an International Badge. It became an obsession with me, "a worldly hope on which I set my heart."

I can still recall the mental agony I went through while struggling for those "Three Lions." No matter what successes came my way, the coveted goal seemed no nearer. Dispirited and with fading hopes my sense

of proportion became distorted. I imagined I was being side-tracked, that my defeats were magnified and my wins lightly dismissed. In this frame of mind it was no wonder my form became topsy-turvy. I played with the ever constant thought that "I might lose." Never confident of victory. I was seeking always to stave off defeat. Naturally I lost! Continual worry did not help. I sank into the depths of despair, my form sinking with me.

These symptoms I have noticed in others striving for International recognition, and similarly have watched their high standard of play decline. It appears to me that in an effort to hide acute disappointments and to preserve a sense of sportsmanship, rational thinking and playing ability take a one way ticket to chaos. To play any game competitively, the mind and body must work in full accord.

Fortunately, lady luck came to my aid and my slide down the ladder was checked—I was picked to play for England against Wales.

## Don't Give In

Those of you who are passing through the period of frustration, never give in to that last defence of pessimism; "Oh! what's the use!" Remember that success usually comes when all seems lost.

Travelling the stony road to success, however, has its consolations. To mention but one: it teaches that retention of poise is the finest answer to disillusionment.

The paths I have trod since I joined the Ravensbourne in 1938 have been diverse. I have experienced despair and self pity. I have known friends to my face, push me purposefully, in the back. I have shaken hands with disappointment and disillusionment. And I have lost hours of sleep through worry and pessimistic perplexity. On the other hand, I have tasted the pleasures of success. I have felt the all embracing warmth that follows coldness and emptiness. I have enriched my life with many true friends. I have enjoyed the experience of foreign travel. I have known the thrill of playing for one's country—perhaps something to be experienced rather than explained. And I have created memories which I feel sure will bring a smile of satisfaction to my face in later life.

The assets in my opinion completely outweigh the liabilities, and it is an understatement when I say, "It has been worth it."



# Some Open Tournaments Criticisms . . .

With Detailed Suggestions  
for Improvement

★

A SUB-COMMITTEE of the E.T.T.A., after lengthy consideration of Open Tournaments, have issued certain directions, together with the introduction of a Grading Scheme, with an initial list of some 250 players, grouped according to playing ability.

The scheme has three stated objects:—

- (1) Undefined possible future uses.
- (2) To guarantee graded players acceptance in any open tournament, provided they enter before the closing date.
- (3) To assist tournament organizers who receive a larger entry than can be accommodated.

The scheme has undoubtedly been well-considered and the details are comprehensive, but, without wishing to appear hypercritical, I doubt the value of the initial effort, or the future effort implied by its maintenance. I cannot visualise future uses of any real value, and I do fear the creation of a white elephant.

The immediate effect of the scheme is that the tournament organiser must examine each entry against the current grading list, and wait until closing date before he can finally decide his accepted entry. Should entries exceed accommodation he is instructed to consult the sub-committee.

## No Preferences

I contend that it is a primary duty to every entrant that rejection be notified promptly, and no scheme should be put into operation which delays such notification.

For this reason I submit that the preference to graded players should be withdrawn, and all entrants be accepted by posting or receipt dates/times only. The organiser would then be enabled to close immediately accommodation becomes filled, and notify rejects.

Open tournaments are a major table tennis project and they are still liable to unsatisfactory promotion for the reason that the real problem has not been effectively tackled. Organisers continue to demonstrate that they will assume the responsibility of an open tournament, and accept entries out of all proportion to the conditions, with deplorable results.

It is a poor return to competitors, after

*Mr. Wood has been a club secretary, the lowest but most onerous official position in table tennis. Now he is the present Hon. Tournament Secretary of the Lancashire and Cheshire Associations, and has served in this and other capacities on the Manchester Committee. He has attended most of the Open Tournaments held in the Midlands and North during the past four seasons, and his general experience as spectator or official at these and many other table tennis events places him in a sound position to offer constructive criticism and advice. He is the father of Corbillon Cup player, Miss Adele Wood.*

incurring large travelling expenses, to be refunded a paltry shilling or two for abandoned events, or to have to switch from a tournament running too late for their return journey.

The crux of the matter is the question of maximum acceptable entry.

## By W. E. WOOD

The main considerations are: the number of tables in use, the estimated average number of sets per hour, and the number of playing hours. I refer to tournaments run on a knock-out basis, sets best of three games, each 21 pts. up, and fix the maximum estimated sets per table at three and a half per hour.

A safety margin must be allowed for later rounds when all tables cannot be occupied, and I suggest a minimum of one hour before the time fixed for the finals.

This maximum estimate and minimum safety margin should be an official ruling.

To make this ruling effective no allowance can be made for late arrival, irrespective of the reason, or status of the player, and organisers should receive official support by a ruling to this effect.

## One or Two Venues

Efficiency of control is reduced if rounds are played in more than one venue, and allowance should be made—e.g., by reduction of estimate to three sets per hour.

I quote two examples:—10 tables; estimate  $3\frac{1}{2}$  sets per playing hour; Saturday play from 12 noon, finals 7-30 p.m. =  $6\frac{1}{2}$  playing hours. Maximum permitted Saturday entry,  $10 \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2} = 230$ . For the same conditions played in two venues:  $10 \times 3 \times 6\frac{1}{2} = 200$ .

The majority of open tournaments must necessarily cater for the competitor who can only attend on Saturday, unless within a short travelling distance from the venue. Such tours should be split into two separate events, related by transfers, preliminary rounds being played before Saturday, to a certain stage, and successful players transferred to Saturday.

Separate charts should be prepared for preliminary and tournament rounds, the tournament charts leaving scattered spaces for transferred players.

## Details to Submit

Certain principles should apply to granting of applications for open tournaments—e.g., the same organising body should be restricted to one tournament per season; not more than one tournament should be held in the same venue; the total number of open tournaments should be kept within reasonable limits.

The E.T.T.A. should require the following details on applications, in order that they be reasonably satisfied that the tournament should be properly conducted:—

- (1) The venue or venues, including fines.
- (2) Where more than one venue, the distance between them, and transport arrangements, if over, say, 300 yards.
- (3) The number of tables to be used.

(4) The run-back and side-space, and when not consistent, details of each difference.

(5) The events to be promoted.

(6) The dates and times of all sessions and finals.

(7) The maximum number of entries calculated as acceptable for each session (to include transfers).

There should be a minimum eight tables and maximum 16, a minimum run-back 12 ft. and side-space 6 ft. The minimum number of transfers should be one per 32 preliminary entries, subject to increase should the Saturday entry fall below maximum.

A report should be furnished to the E.T.T.A. immediately after the tournament stating whether the conditions declared in the application were applied, with detailed reasons if not; also the total numbers of entries received, accepted and rejected. In addition, details of any complaints made to the referees.

Should the points raised herein be embodied in an official instruction, I am convinced that we shall have gone a long way towards the promotion of open tournaments satisfactory to all the interests mutually considered—i.e., the E.T.T.A., tournament organisers, the competitors, the general public and the dignity of table tennis.



At the South African 1950-51 Open Championships  
L. to R. (Top) Rex Edwards (winner), Ron Litten (semi-finalist), Theo Paitaki (finalist), Hymie Sofaer (semi-finalist). (Bottom Row) Miss Kaplan (finalist) and Miss Betty Blackburn (winner)



# The Progressive Play System

(As Used at the Royal Oak Club, U.S.A.)

If you live in a locality where there's a T.T. club, and can play whenever you wish, you are fortunate indeed. But in many parts of the country there are numerous clubs where members can only play one or perhaps two nights a week. In places like the latter, it is sometimes difficult to use a form of play that will suit everyone. Here in Royal Oak, we can only have the use of a school gym for two nights a week. One night for adults and one night for teen agers. During the past six years, we have tried several systems, but the one now in use has proved most satisfactory. We will pass it on in the hope that it will benefit some of *Review* readers. Here's how it works in our case.

We have five tables for regular play, and one practice table which is sometimes used to cope with an overflow. First, we assign five players to each table. The better players occupy the No. 1 table, and the next best five, the No. 2 table, and so on down the line. Each week, the winners on each table move up one table while the losers move down. The five players on each table play a round robin, and record their win or loss on a specially prepared card. It makes no difference whether we play 2 out of 3 games or just two games, because only one point is scored for each game won. The number of games played is governed by the amount of time we have. In our case, we just play two games. If there is any time left we play doubles. If a tie results on any of the tables at the conclusion of the evening, the players tied will play a one game knockout to decide who shall move up or down, but this knockout game does not count for or against the individuals rating. You will see why, with further explanation. We also have a rule that if a player is absent more than two weeks, he automatically moves down a table.

Over a period of, say 10 weeks, we are then able to determine the relative ability of each player. All ratings are based in relationship to the No. 1 table. There are just three things to take into consideration, the number of points made in that period, on what tables they were made on, and the number of weeks played. Here's the simple formula: Smith played on tables 1-2-1-2-3-0-3-2-1-1. Now we add these together and obtain 16. You will notice he was absent on the 6th week. Next, he made 37 points in the 9 weeks he actually played, so we do this:

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \text{ (times played)} \times 37 \text{ (points)} \\ \hline \text{(tables played on and added together)} \\ 333 \\ \hline = \frac{\quad}{16} = 20.8. \end{array}$$

Suppose in that same ten weeks period Jones played on table No. 1 all the time and made 50 points. That would be

$$\begin{array}{r} 10 \times 50 \\ \hline 10 \\ \hline = 50. \end{array}$$

Now then, Evans played on table No. 2 all of the 10 weeks, he too, made 50 points, thus:

$$\begin{array}{r} 10 \times 50 \\ \hline 20 \\ \hline = 25. \end{array}$$

It is obvious, therefore, that the rating is governed by the table on which the points are earned. This method is ideal for working with a handicap chart. The system was devised by Allan Diehr, an 18 year old member of the Royal Oak T.T.A.; and not

Yours truly,  
Edward J. Dickinson.

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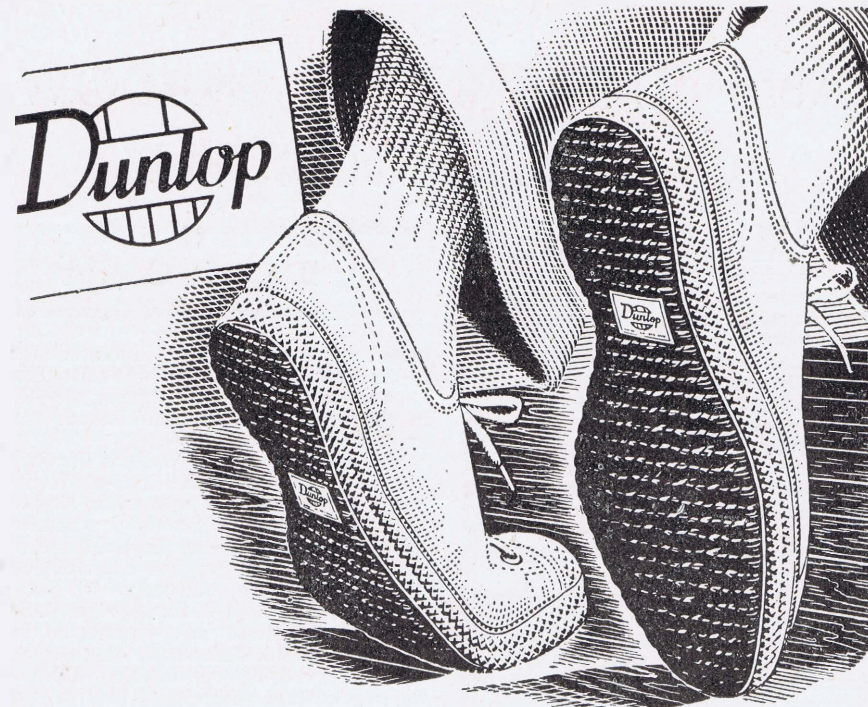
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# TABLE TENNIS IN THE SHADOW OF TABLE MOUNTAIN

THE 1951 season in Cape Town, headquarters of the Western Province T.T. Association, has shown that the heightened interest in the game aroused by the visit last season of Richard Bergmann has been maintained. While no new stars have been added to the local firmament, the old ones still continue to shine brightly.

The Annual CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS tournament was held before a large crowd in the City Hall on June 6th. This year the number of contestants was confined to four—Rex Edwards, the National Champion for the past two years; Theo Paitaki, National Champion in 1948; Monty Shotland, National Champion in 1947; and Eddie Van Heerden, the 1950 Western Province Champion. Edwards, who possesses a good all round style, retained the title he won in 1950, but only after three set games with Shotland and Paitaki, both of whom took the first set and it was not until the second set that Edwards was able to master their respective styles. Shotland, the S. African Bergmann, relied solely on his remarkable long range defence and agility, while Paitaki, playing close to the table, preferred the half volley and quick hard hitting game. It was Edwards's sustained attack against the former, and his steadiness against the latter that carried him through the dangerous periods to ultimate victory. Best match of the evening, however, was Shotland's defeat of Paitaki, these two W. Province players have met on innumerable occasions and on this occasion Monty's retrieving powers triumphed over Pat's more direct methods. Van Heerden, although hitting well, lost all three games.

Results: R. Edwards beat Van Heerden 21—11, 21—14; beat Shotland 19—21, 21—12, 21—14; beat Paitaki 15—21, 21—16, 21—7. M. Shotland beat Paitaki 21—13, 15—21, 21—15; beat Van Heerden 21—14, 21—19. T. Paitaki beat Van Heerden 21—11, 21—14.

The Western Province Championships were held during August, and Miss Betty Blackburn won all three Ladies' titles. In the Ladies Singles she defeated Miss "Bubbles" Whittle, the holder, 21—18, 21—19, won the Mixed Doubles with T. Paitaki, and the Ladies' Doubles with Miss Whittle. Theo Paitaki, playing at the top of his form, was much too fast for Shotland on this occasion and won the Men's title

By B. Denis George

quite easily; however, he failed to attain the triple crown by losing the Men's Doubles final, partnered by L. Strumpman, 18—21 in the fifth, to Eddie Van Heerden and Dave Goldberg.

Last big event of the Western Province season was the Foster Cup inter-provincial match with Northern Transvaal on August 17th. For the first time the tournament has been confined to men players, teams of three playing 9 singles and one doubles. The Province team consisted of M. Shotland, T. Paitaki and L. Strumpman, while Northern Transvaal were represented by Rex Edwards, Joe Katseff and Alan Berger, Ron Litten being unavailable. Despite the temperature which tried to rival the Empire Pool for chilliness, play was of a high standard. The Shotland v. Katseff game was of great interest, being the first clash in this competition between S. Africa's best defensive players. However, Katseff took the Roothoof role and decided on slow topspin with the occasional smash, while Shotland emulated Erlich and defended grimly. After a long struggle which kept the crowd on its toes, Shotland was the victor at 21—19 in the third. With the score at 5—4 in Province's favour Paitaki played Edwards in the final game. Maintaining his championship form, Paitaki won the first 22—20 and led 19—16 in the second, but Edwards fought back to win that set without losing another point and the final set 21—16 to draw the match.

## SUCH GOINGS ON!

"I never did think she was much good," said Mrs. Tittle, "and now comes this table tennis tournament affair."

"Still, the tournament is 'open,' isn't it?" put in Mrs. Tattle.

"I have me doubts about that," added Mrs. Tittle lowering her voice and drawing a little closer to Mrs. Tattle. "You know that she's just as much married as you and I, yet she goes and puts her name down for the singles events."

## Victor of the Green Table

by BILL PARKER

THE restaurant was quiet, and we had enjoyed a pleasant chat with our refreshment. The street below was noisy, but we knew how to get away from the din of London's traffic. We crossed the road into Hyde Park, where we listened awhile to the soap-box orators, then strolled on, past the scores of deck-chairs, all occupied, on that lovely summer evening. And now we were on our own—with the strains of the music from the band-stand acting as a faint background to our conversation, which drifted from subject to subject. We discussed the freedom of speech, music, television, Goodwood races, entertainment in general and so on to one specific entertainment—Table Tennis! And what could be more natural, since my companion was Victor Barna?

Victor talks easily on many subjects, but as those subjects rarely included Victor Barna, there must be much that even the Table Tennis public does not know of him. Over the course of several years I have seen and learned many things about Victor. I have heard other facts from his oldest acquaintances. I have also browsed through his scrap-books, here and there popping a question which he has answered—sometimes grudgingly. And I have put two and two together.

### Early Days

On leaving high school, Victor spent some time learning the mysteries of advanced chemistry, but as was natural in a youngster who at the age of 15 had been awarded his junior international soccer cap as Hungary's outside-right, he felt the urge to play games. The game he played best was table tennis, so he resolved to play it better than anyone else in the world. Many a happy time did he spend with Miklos Szabados and Laszlo Bellak, and this trio of carefree youngsters became known as the Three Musketeers. When they left the dressing-room, the lusty war-cry they gave told spectators and opponents alike that they meant to win. And win they did—yet always serving up a brand of table tennis that would send the modern spectator crazy with delight. Victor's backhand flick became famous throughout the table tennis world.

Victor believes that Szabados, who was six months his junior, and partnered Victor to win the World's Men's Doubles Championship in 1929, was the youngest player ever to win a world title. Strangely enough both Szabados and Bellak were bald by the

time they were about 21, and the general mistaken impression was that Victor was by far the youngest of the three.

### Victor in Name and Deed

Of Victor's conquests, we all know. Twenty-two world titles (including team events) is a record that will for ever live in the annals of Table Tennis. It was shortly after winning the world's singles title for the fifth time in 1935, that he was involved in a motor accident in Brittany, which resulted in a broken right arm—the arm. A steel plate was inserted, which was not removed until 1942. Eminent specialists have since stated that the steel plate retarded recovery and probably permanently affected the arm. Even so, Victor became a world class player again and with Richard Bergmann, won the World's Men's Doubles Championship in 1939 at Cairo, after being runner-up with Bellak, in England, the previous year. He has won international titles throughout the world and as recently as 1949 was only narrowly beaten by Martin Reisman in the English Open Men's Singles final.

### Red Letter Days

The spring of 1939 brought great happiness to Victor, in the form of marriage to the charming girl so many of us now know as "Suzy." They were wed in London and their best man was the E.T.T.A. Hon. Secretary, the late Bill Pope. They would have loved to celebrate their tenth anniversary in grand style, but Victor was due to give two evening shows with Alec Brook, at the Wood Green Empire, so the "love-birds" had a quiet lunch together in the West End and spent the afternoon at a matinee, nearby. I was with them in the evening, but it was hard that Victor and Alec could not join Suzy, Tony Joseph (the compere to the act) and me, in the celebration drink we had between performances.

### The Dark Years

Whilst war clouds were gathering fast over Europe, Victor was on business in America. Then the great disaster came, and sport in England came to a standstill. Soon, however, it was realised that the Forces must have recreation and the little celluloid ball was conscripted to play its part in helping to provide it. When the British Red Cross Society appealed to the various national organisations, including the E.T.T.A., for entertainers willing to



tour the camps, Bill Pope cabled Victor asking if he would take on the job. Victor's reply was to return to England by the first available boat, early in 1940, and place his services at the disposal of the Red Cross.

As the dark years dragged on, table tennis, under great difficulties, gradually revived, and happy was the T.T. player who could work his leave to coincide with an open tournament. Victor, however, played in very few tournaments, for he was kept busy with Red Cross and other charity shows, and later, the theatre, in addition to a job of work in the supplies department of a North London engineering firm. But at last the war came to an end and in 1946, Victor joined the great Dunlop organisation with whom he still enjoys a very happy association.

#### Proud Moments

June, 1947, was an important month for Victor, for it was then that he was granted British citizenship. Victor told me the great news a few days later at an exhibition in which he was playing at the Assembly Hall, Walthamstow, and he made no secret of the fact that this was something to which he had for long looked forward.

Another great day was November 8th, 1950, when a presentation was made Victor at the Royal Empire Society, to mark his retirement from international and practically all competitive singles play. From various parts of the country came officials and friends, to toast the man who had shown the world the possibilities of table tennis.

#### Victor's Ambition

Victor has of recent years added to his long list of honours, in captaining England and his county of residence, Middlesex, so one might think he would now rest content—but he does not. He is keenly disappointed that England has never won the Swaythling Cup, and *his greatest ambition is to be able to help in some way to bring this trophy to England.* He has happy memories of his visits to various parts of the world, one of the most successful being the tour he made with Richard Bergmann in 1949, of Australia, India and Ceylon. It was as a guest of an Indian rajah on that tour that he was presented with a heavy Indian gold tray which is one of his most prized possessions.

#### A Good "Mixer"

A great quality of Victor's is his ability to make friends and appreciate little things that others might well overlook. On more than one occasion, when I have been backstage, I have heard theatre folk, from top-ranking star to stage-hand, thank Victor for the splendid tip he gave them for the "two-thirty," for Victor has a flare for

picking the winners. Indeed, few things give him greater pleasure than putting a friend on to a good thing—especially if the friend can "do with a bob or two."

When playing in tournaments or exhibitions, Victor's sense of observation is surprisingly keen. I remember one Finals night of a semi-rural league, when he had been presented to everybody who was anybody, during a lengthy refreshment interval. After the show, by the time Victor had changed, the crowd and most of the officials had melted away. As we made our way out, we had to pass the kitchen, the door of which was ajar. Inside was a little white-haired old lady, who, armed with tea-cloth, was tackling a huge draining board stacked with crockery and cutlery. Without more ado Victor went up to the old lady, took her hand and addressed her thus: "Thank you very much for all you have done this evening. Goodnight—and keep well!" We left the old lady with a face that was radiant—and eyes that were suspiciously misty.

#### When Will Victor Write His Autobiography ?

That, then, is Victor Barna—unassuming, generous, sincere—and not afraid of admitting to 40 years. Those with aspirations in the next English Open Veterans' event, need not worry, however, for he is not eligible to play as a veteran this season. Furthermore, the winning of veteran titles does not as yet figure in his plans for the future, but he will continue to play, for as long as he can, the game that keeps him fit and gives him such enjoyment. And maybe, some day, he will satisfy the wishes of so many friends and players all over the world—and write "The Barna Story."

#### HAVE YOU A PLAYING PROBLEM ?

*We invite readers to send us their playing problems. This is a service which no table tennis magazine has ever done before and we realise it has its difficulties. You will help us if you describe your difficulty or playing weakness as clearly but as briefly as possible. The invitation is in the experimental stage and for the time being we have in mind only the printing of queries and replies in this magazine, a stamped addressed envelope therefore need not be enclosed. However, by our next issue on November 15th we hope to clarify the position and maybe offer advice by post. Printed queries will bear only the sender's initials and town, but we do insist on you sending your correct name and address. Address to The Editor, and post before October 15th, 1951.*

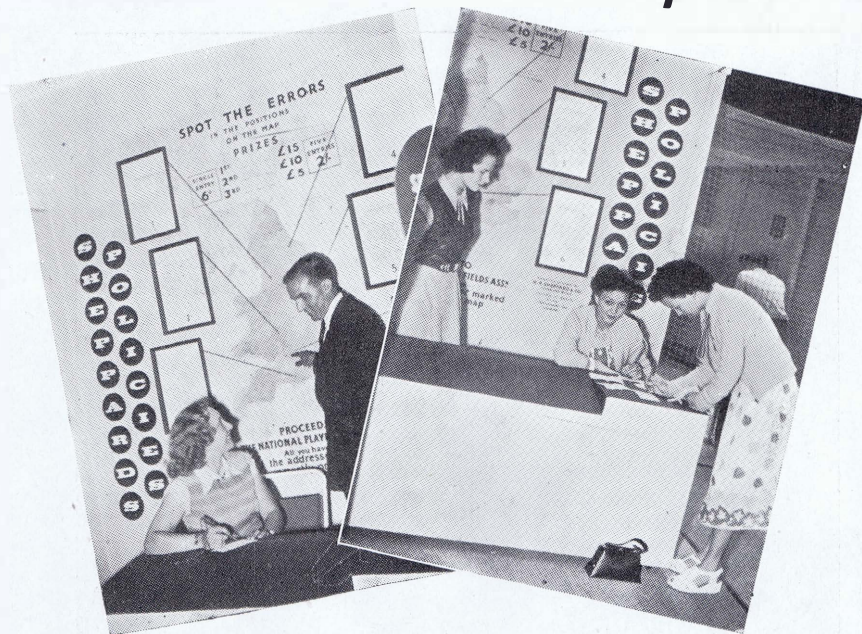


VICTOR BARNA



*At the*

*Sports Fair*



*At the British Sports and Games Fair held at the Horticultural Hall, London, from July to August, a novel competition was arranged by H. A. Sheppard and Co., of Tunbridge Wells, the well-known insurers of hundreds of amateur and association football clubs throughout the country. Every year Messrs. Sheppard and Co. receive letters of appreciation from soccer and other sports clubs and for this competition six were reproduced and displayed on a map of England with a tape running from each letter to a position on the map. Competitors had to find those letters not correctly shown on the map. The competition was in aid of the National Playing Fields Association. Seen on the left above are Corbillon Cup table tennis star, Peggy Franks, with her husband and county player Ron Hook. Congratulations, Peggy, on winning the third prize of £5. On the right (above) are two unsuccessful competitors, the Rowe twins.*



## *Glamour Girls Wanted*

A number of times last season we received letters from readers asking for photographs to be published of attractive table tennis girls. One reader went so far as to state that he believed they were "few and far between." Now on top of this comes an appeal on another page by our popular contributor Sam Kirkwood. Personally we believe there are lots and lots of good-looking girls in our sport and we should like lady readers to help us to prove it. We invite photographs from lady players and for each one published we will send 10s. 6d. Young ladies dressed in table tennis attire will, of course, be more suitable, but that point is not necessary and even head and shoulders will do. All photographs should have the name and address on the back and will be returned if a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed. If the response to this competition is satisfactory, we will extend it into a more ambitious contest with more attractive prizes being given. Send your photographs now to: *The Editor, Table Tennis Review, Kenworthy Buildings, 83, Bridge Street, Manchester, 3.*

**Miss Sheila Smith, 19 years  
(Middlesex)**



# Richard Bergmann tells why...

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(Signed)



*Richard Bergmann*  
*Undefeated World Champion, 1950*

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# Sam Kirkwood says . . .

WILL KELLY, popular and enthusiastic 19-year-old member of several clubs, including West Ealing, is not the luckiest of boys. Several years ago he was involved in a train accident and spent almost two years in hospital as a result. He recovered from his terrible injuries to such an extent that he developed into a table tennis player of considerable skill and looked like going places—high places. Apart from being a keen player, he took a great interest in the organising side of the game and was anxious to become, among other things, a first-class umpire, his ambition in this direction being to be elected official in charge of an English Open final at Wembley. At the last "English," incidentally, he was responsible for keeping the result chart up to the minute, and an excellent job he made of it, too. Now, Fate has seen fit to deal him another blow. Bill is in a sanatorium and will be there for at least a year. It is unlikely that he will be permitted to play table tennis when he regains his health. Nevertheless, his heart is still set on being of service to the game he loves, and he is more determined than ever to umpire at the Empire Pool. No, young Bill is not downhearted by his unlucky break, but he does admit that time hangs heavily at the sanatorium. He would welcome news from table tennis fans and friends. How about it, boys and girls? Send along letters and reading matter to our young friend and help him to pass a few hours more pleasantly than is normally the case. Bill's address is: E21, King George V Sanatorium, Godalming, Surrey. See you at Wembley, William—although I can't guarantee that I'll be one of the finalists!

\* \* \*

There's nothing wrong with Richard Bergmann calling himself "Undefeated World Singles Champion." He was reigning crown-holder when he received the brush-off from the E.T.T.A., and lost his title without having had a chance to defend it. The title does not imply that Richard is the current champion, but infers that he was kingpin up to the time he was in circulation in officially sponsored tournaments. We all know that Johnny Leach is the present champion, and none, least of all his immediate predecessor, dispute it. An unbeaten exponent at any sport has the right to and frequently does—label himself "undefeated champion." The privilege Richard arrogates to himself has been earned, heaven knows.



SAM KIRKWOOD

I thank Mr. W. Densham for not wishing to do a Dracula on me, but I think he has gone a little astray here and there. No one blames Keith Hurlock for being awarded an international cap. I blame the E.T.T.A.'s Selection Committee. Certainly Hurlock won last season's Metropolitan Open—against a field minus the country's giants. In the final Keith was given a hard tussle by a 42-year-old veteran. In any case, a single tournament success of itself hardly entitles a man to major honours. Consistent performance is needed, I submit. My "other aspirants?" Look at Tony Miller's "Open" record and compare it with Keith's, Mr. Densham. I think you'll be surprised. And Len Adams is somewhat more consistent than Hurlock, who sparkles on occasion to deceive. Vera Thomas is not the force she was a couple of seasons back. In the English Open she went out in three straight sets in the first round to Margaret Fry. Does that mean anything? Ronnie Crayden is an average English international who is too old to improve. Would it not have been better to have sent in his place a youngster to the World Series? The player involved in the "Pinkie" Barnes incident means nothing to the public and there was absolutely no point in mentioning him by name.

\* \* \*

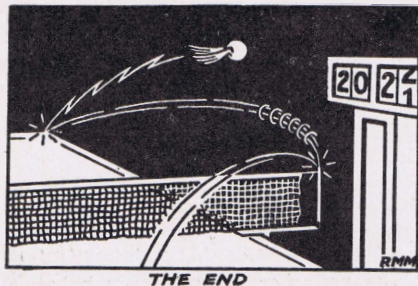
The Hon. Ivor Montagu is the game's outstanding figure. He is without a doubt the most brilliant organiser and executive in the world to-day, and without his services table tennis would be infinitely the



poorer. I have every respect for Mr. Montagu and would certainly never question his word. Yet I find it hard to believe he was serious in his statement that he has met no "yes-men" for nigh on 30 years. My information, which comes from sources as close to the Association's Executive as the seat of my pants is to my nether regions, is that the E.T.T.A. is suffering from a surfeit of the perpetually affirmative species. One member, who has actually attended big-shot meetings, states outright that individuals frequently spend a long time arriving at Mr. Montagu's decisions. Mr. Montagu invites me to find him "yes-men." Not for me to embarrass the parties concerned by naming them as suitable candidates for posts they already hold.

Marty Reisman, who has been touring with those phenomenal basket-ball players, the Harlem Globetrotters, playing interval table tennis exhibitions with fellow U.S. Swaythling Cup player, Douglas Cartland, is seriously thinking of settling in England. The sport offers more scope for his talents in this country than in his native America, and Marty has an idea he can make a comfortable living in England. Who knows, if he does take residence here and becomes naturalised, we may yet see him wear an England badge. Remember Barna and Bergmann?

Agreed I pulled an outside boner with Johnny Leach. I admitted in the May/June issue of TABLE TENNIS REVIEW that I was way off the mark on this particular occasion, but fans have lost no time and spared no breath in telling me what a cockeyed punk I am for passing the opinion that Johnny Leach is no dice. Johnny, of course, kicked my teeth in by winning the world title for the second time in three years. Now typically enough the sages are acting the parts of after-the-event-smart-guys.



One has even asked me, in a curiously naive fashion, if I intend to apologise. For what? For passing an honest opinion which has been proved wrong? I shall content myself with saying that I am really pleased that Johnny pulled off the championship—and I hope he'll do it again in India next year.

The scene is finals night of the Film Renters' League individual championships, held at the Duke of York Barracks, Knightsbridge, end of last season. Yours truly, who had fluked and fluffed his way to the semi-final of the men's singles, made a hash of things and suffered an ungraceful exit. Geoff Harrower, a bored spectator, commented on your columnist's display with cutting insight: "Anyhow, your service was correct." As a criticism, that is brief, descriptive, true and fitting. One up to you, Geoff, me boy! You owed me that, anyway, for my crack about your Fancy Pants.

Watching the antics—among other things—of the tennis girls at Wimbledon earlier in the summer, I thought how nice it would be if table tennis lasses were allowed to sport frillies and lacies and transparent whatnots. If our sport had its own "Gorgeous Gussies" and Nancy Chaffees, I'm sure there'd be bigger gates. People won't pay to watch the ping-pong served up by too many alleged table tennis players, but they'd roll up by the thousand to enjoy the spectacle of peaches in posh panties. Imagine the sporting headlines: "'Ravishing Rossie' Romps Home in Runaway Win"; or "'Devastating Diane' Deals Death-blow to Dane"; or "'Pulsating Pinkie' Pounds Plodding Ping-Pong Player." Perhaps someone will now suggest the most popular headline of all: "Korny Kirkwood Kills Himself."

Hush—I have a friend! Mr. L. Kloss, of Inner Park Road, Wimbledon, has sent me a note, in which he exhorts me to keep cracking. Says Mr. Kloss: "I don't always agree with everything you say, but, quoting a well-worn saying, I'd defend to the death your right to say it. As to your critics, I suggest they could best be answered by using, beneath the title heading of your column, that couplet of Byron's which reads:

'Without or with offence to friends or foes  
'I sketch your (T.T.) world as it goes.'"  
Bless you, fan. Them's my sentiments.

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What's happened to Manchester as a table tennis centre? There was a time when the city of rain and soot provided England with the majority of her internationals. Hymie Lurie, Benny Casofsky, Stan Proffitt, Eli Goodman, Leslie Cohen, Andy Millar—all these and many others were top of the bill. It was seldom that a national team didn't boast a large quota of Mancunians. Things have changed a lot. In fact, one wonders if there are any stars in the centre discussed. Not a Manchester man has hit the headlines in several seasons. Perhaps the Northerners are suffering a temporary eclipse prior to a new generation stepping into the shoes vacated by those who set such a high standard. I hope so. London aces will fight all the harder if they're given competition from their erstwhile superiors.

Before I shut my big mouth for this issue, may I wish all table tennis players, old and young, men and women, expert and novice, specialist and dilettante, those who play and those who organise, umpire and officiate, an enjoyable, happy, sporting and successful 1951/52 season? Good luck to you all, and keep cracking away. Although I crib, grouse, moan and drivel, I think table tennis a wonderful sport, played by—in the vast majority of cases—grand people.

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# How To Improve Your Table Tennis

COMPILED BY ARTHUR WAITE  
*Ex-International and the Editor*

**M**OST readers of this magazine will have some desire to improve their standard of play and though there are now a number of excellent instruction books on the game written by leading players (all obtainable through our Book Dept.), these do not assist a player in his own particular playing problems. We have, therefore, decided to try an experiment in Personal Table Tennis Instruction. Throughout this present season we intend to feature articles which will compare the views of different players on the various departments of the game. Also, we propose to print the personal playing problems of readers together with our replies.

All players have their own individual style of play and on reading the published books on the game you can see that some of the experts differ widely on a number of points.

For instance, Richard Bergmann's ideas on footwork and other matters are not at all in harmony with those of Leach, Barna, and others. Your own personal style of play might lean towards the Leach model, so obviously you are not going to get full benefit from reading Bergmann's book. The same applies, of course, the other way round.

The idea, then, behind this series of articles is to lay down no hard and fast rule of how this or that should be done, but instead to give you the orthodox (or popular) method together with the opinions of the experts whenever they may be at variance, and also to suggest how the orthodox method may be adjusted (and it should be adjusted) to your own individual style. It is up to you, then, to experiment. Study your own strengths and weaknesses. With the help of this new feature you can add five or even ten points to your game, but remember the real secret of success will be in your ability to understand your own method of play and in making the most of it without having to resort to any really drastic changes.

Almost everyone, yes even beginners, has some natural gift for executing a certain stroke or phase of the game. If you are to

be our pupil in this series we shall strive to bring out that natural gift, discover any others you may have, and, of course, to cover up some of the chinks in your armour. Are you joining the class? Good, let's go.

## The Grip

First things come first, so let us discuss the grip. In so many instruction books the author gives scanty attention to this matter, yet during my coaching experience I have found that in spite of the usual straightforward instructions many pupils have their "grip" problems. I think the matter is important enough to demand the space for the remainder of this article. Let me tell you why.

Many mediocre players strive assiduously for the acquirement of a new stroke, or maybe for the improvement of an existing one, but eventually when little or no success is obtained they begin to lose confidence in their grip. Loss of confidence in any department of your game can bring about a gradual deterioration in your standard of play, but loss of confidence in your grip can shake the whole structure of your game.

Decide firmly on your grip and stick to it. The orthodox grip has a number of slight variations and whatever grip you favour to a certain degree it will have its limitations.

If you are an absolute beginner a description of the standard grip comes at the right moment, but what if you have been playing for quite a time using a grip that differs considerably from the one generally advised? The question is whether to change or not. In certain cases it is doubtful whether a change is likely to be profitable and the decision should rest on facts like your age, how long you have been playing, what you desire from the game, etc. If you are enthusiastic enough about T.T., then a change might be worth your while, especially if you are using the old-fashioned pen-holder grip. Maybe for a season you will have to endure being beaten by players who have always been your victims, but nothing ventured nothing gained.

## Grip Variations

The following is the orthodox grip and is



A Tip from Our Artist—"TRY TO APPEAR CONFIDENT"

designed to enable you to execute the maximum number of strokes. I quote the description from a book written by myself. (Incidentally, this book was the first one to be published on Modern Table Tennis. It first appeared in 1931 and ran into five editions. We hope to republish in cheap form in the near future.) "Very few players hold their rackets exactly alike, and though I am going to give you the orthodox grip I am sure that when your game has settled down to a certain style it will not be strictly the same. However, don't let this worry you unduly. Concentrate on this grip and do not experiment with others. Unconsciously you will find your own natural grip.

"Hold the racket so that the thumb rests on one side of the playing surface at an angle of 45 degrees to the handle and the first finger rests on the other side at not so great an angle. The pressure of these two fingers is as follows: For forehand strokes release the pressure of the thumb and put extra pressure on the first finger. For backhand strokes the pressure is *vice versa*."

Well, that was written 20 years ago and I have little to add to it except that the shoulder of the bat should fit firmly and snugly down into the base of the first finger and thumb.

I have said previously that the orthodox grip has a number of variations but one of them is *not* that of two fingers placed on the backhand surface. By variations I mean finger positions and finger pressure.

The only point on which star players differ is whether it is better to change the finger angles for various strokes. Victor Barna allows his thumb to slide upwards and his first finger to slide down towards the angle for his backhand flick. Johnny Leach also advocates a slight modification of the forefinger and thumb positions for backhand and forehand strokes. Jack Carrington says that it is better to learn all

the basic strokes with one comfortable grip, thus avoiding any flustered changing during fast match play. But Jack also adds that when the player is advanced he will be able to obtain some valuable results from a slight change of grip.

American international, Sol Schiff, approves a finger and thumb movement, but Richard Bergmann is most definitely against it.

Summarising these views I should say give the one single grip for *all* strokes a really good trial. If you find you can execute the various strokes with ease and without weakening *considerably* one wing of your defence or attack, then persevere with this unflinching hold on your bat. After all, table tennis is played so fast that it must be a distinct advantage if a player has not to worry about change of finger pressure or finger positioning. Personally I consider Bergmann to be the finest player in the world to-day. I wonder if that superiority can be because of his constant grip.

However, you may be like myself and find that by keeping the forehand grip for backhand shots you consequently take all the sting out of your backhand attack. Like thousands of others you should then accustom yourself to that slight shifting of the fingers, but keep it slight, half an inch at the most. The movement will come naturally and subconsciously after a time and I don't quite agree with Bergmann when he says that finger movement is likely to create a diversion of concentration.

When players adopt a grip they generally have in mind a grip that will allow them to execute kill shots on both wings. So very, very few ever do get a kill shot on both sides of the table. More players would reach a higher standard if they contented themselves with the possession of just one "ace" shot and realised that all their other attacking strokes were merely supporting



shots designed to maintain the attack and to pave the way for the kill.

#### Reader's Query

In addition to gripping the bat with the third, fourth and fifth fingers, should you also balance the grip by pressure from the first finger and thumb?

R.B., Bristol.

This will depend on whether your first finger and thumb remain stationary on the blade of the bat. If you have a Bergmann grip, then the two fingers will automatically give added firmness to the grip, although the main hold must be in the hand itself. On the other hand if you use slight change of finger position, then the less pressure these two fingers have on the blade the better. Sol Schiff states that the two fingers increase the firmness of the hold and are also used for bat control. Bear in mind, however, that though you hold the racket firmly in the hand there should be no tense muscles.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE I SHALL DISCUSS AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE FOREHAND ATTACK. I ALSO HOPE TO INCLUDE A NUMBER OF READERS' QUERIES.

### It's That Net Again!

Yet again players are urging that the net be raised to its 1938 height of 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  in., as opposed to the present 6 in. Contention by those pressing for the reform is that the lower net favours the attacker, that current

conditions permit the slap-dash hitter to win points and games out of all proportion to his skill.

This is a strange argument in view of the fact that defensive players are definitely top dogs, low net or no low net. Johnny Leach is more of a defensive player than a hitter, and he is world champion. The same goes for Angelica Rozeanu, woman's world champion, English Open singles champions "Al" Ehrlich and Trudi Pritzi could certainly never be accused of being slap-dash hitters. And neither could undefeated world champion Richard Bergmann. What slommicky hitter is getting away with murder, and where?

It is interesting to note that Bergmann maintains that the current net height is better than the pre-war one. And if anyone should want 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. it is Richard!

It is unlikely that our authorities will revert to the higher net, which encouraged the chiseller no end and, indeed, was responsible for that ghastly rally in the World Series of 1936 at Prague, when Ehrlich and Paneth almost drove each other, and onlookers, raving mad with their 125-minute rally. That rally is a world record, but such records table tennis can do without. That's one of the reasons why the net was dropped.

The 6in. height, by the way, has by no means eliminated chiselling, which disease is more the result of a state of mind than due to physical playing conditions.

S. C.



Jack Carrington coaching two young Yorkshire players, F. L. Forrest (Bradford) and Miss Margaret Butler (Shipley)

# Barna exhibitions...

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## Readers' Letters . . . TABLE TENNIS FOR ALL

### Two New Suggestions

(a) I believe the top of the net should not be white as it usually is, but of light red or orange colour, contrasting with the white ball. This would give the player a better chance to see the short shots, close to the net.

(b) I believe that the width of the side and end lines should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch only and not  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch, as usual. This also would give a better sight of the ball when crossing the mentioned lines.

Major Joaquim Libanio.

Estado de S. Paulo,  
Brazil.

*A good idea, Major, but don't you think it is just as important for the player when striking to have a clear and well defined view of the top of the net and the edges of the table? Still, a  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch off the side and end lines might be helpful, what do you think, I.T.T.F.—Editor.*

### Undefeated World Champion ?

Bergmann now calls himself Undefeated World's Singles Champion. The term is an ambiguous one. Exactly what is an undefeated world champion? As Richard is not the present world champion, his use of a manufactured title which implies that he is still world champion is quite unjustified.

Regarding the stage act of Bergmann and Boros, much latitude is allowable when advertising such acts, and one expects music hall posters to contain exaggerated claims. Acts can be described as "colossal" or "stupendous," as fancy pleases, the sole object being to attract the customers. Therefore, although Bergmann and Boros are certainly not what they are billed to be—"The World Table Tennis Champions"—this departure from the fact may be excused, on grounds of expediency.

But for articles, exhibitions, etc., Richard Bergmann would be well advised to drop his adopted title. He should refer to himself as World Singles Champion, 1936/7, 1938/9, 1947/8, 1949/50. This is both impressive and dignified, it accords with usual practice and is uncontroversial.

H. A. Senior.

Darlington T.T.L. Hon. Sec.

By

JOHNNY LEACH

WHAT methods of stroke execution will win a world title? In his book *Table Tennis For All* recently published by Nicholas Kaye at 9/6, Johnny Leach describes in a clear and concise manner the orthodox style of play which has won him the world championship on two occasions. The beginner at table tennis will find the book a great help for no department of the game is neglected. Advanced players may find that some chapters go over well-worn ground, but even so if they use the book as a guide to be studied and not merely to be read once, then they should pick up a useful tip on practically every page, with the three chapters on Doubles play proving especially valuable. Johnny Leach has long been a master of Doubles and personally I found his remarks on *Tactics in Doubles* illuminating. If you are keen on Doubles play you will find that this book has something the others haven't got.

We quote a paragraph taken at random :

*Jack Carrington and I have played doubles together more times than I can count. We have always worked on the plan that, when we find we are fighting a losing battle, we play the ball straight down the centre of the table, if possible with slow topspin, until we can see a better way to build up rallies and win points. The principle is the same, whatever your system may be; you have a joint plan for use when things seem to be going badly. Apart from producing openings from which you can win points, this helps you to maintain confidence in each other and to realise that you are one team.*

Yes, Johnny, you have made a good job of your book and handed out a lot of wisdom to the average player. But credit should also go to your photographer, Peter Madge. The three dozen photographs illustrating the various phases of the game could not be improved upon.

## The Sports Outfitter Has His Problems

By ALEC BROOK

THAT sportsmen are fastidious about the choice of their equipment there is no doubt, but only when I entered the sports trade on the other side of the counter did I find to what extent, and I also found that T.T. players are no less discriminating than others.

The layman finds it difficult to understand why the rubber on the bat means so much to the table tennis fraternity, yet I wonder myself how many really understand the real value of the different types of rubber.

Most young players and many more experienced ones suffer from the delusion that fast rubber means a faster game. Maybe they are right, but certainly they have far less control of the ball.

The rubber is made in various types, with the size of the pips varying. The largest pips are on those rubbers called "slow," the smaller pips are called medium and the tiny pin-head pips are the fast. On the larger pips there is a cushion effect and the ball can be held and cut, but with the small pips, the ball is away before it can be felt. Very few first class players use the fast rubber.

Then with the bat . . . In my opinion the best bat is one which allows for the orthodox grip, is about 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. in weight, with a hard wood and slow to medium rubber, according to the player's choice.

I have seen some of the strangest ideas which have been given much thought and perhaps might one of these days develop. The late A. J. Wilmott used to build up his handle to such a degree that he maintained if the bat was held at a certain angle, the ball was certain to be returned over the net, providing it was hit.

Last week, N. Barafwala, who played for India in the early thirties, and with whom I have had many a battle, called in to see me. He is here on holiday and he showed me his new invention in bats. A piece of wood about  $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick and about an inch long has been stuck right in the middle of his bat.



ALEC BROOK

By this means he says his finger is kept into position and there is no need to change his grip for the backhand. I think it would take me the rest of my life to get used to it.

It is as well that we do not all agree and certainly I hear many divergent opinions. One team likes a matt finish on their table, the next prefers a shiny surface. Then another club likes the open mesh net and the very next customer will have only the close mesh.

With the balls, every other person has his own particular view. In one day I have heard various customers each in turn say that the worst ball is the Villa, Barna, Halex and Meteor, and each has gone to great lengths to explain why one of the other three is by far the best. One man on behalf of a league wrote me three pages on the demerits of a certain ball. I passed the letter to the firm concerned who in their turn replied to my customer. Whatever happened in the interim I cannot say, but he then replied to the firm, it was all a mistake, the balls had not been properly tested and undoubtedly they were far superior to any others.

# The Bicycle

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# Twelve-point Selection

BY LESLIE S. WOOLLARD

(Editor of the E.T.T.A. Official Magazine)

Last year the International Selection Committee was the main Aunt Sally in Critic's Alley. There's nothing new about that; it's a perennial custom, almost a tradition, of British sport: selection time is the grouse-shooting season for the followers of that sport. What is unusual, however, is that the criticism was mainly concerned with *how* the Committee worked.

Man to man, you might say "Then what the heck is all the fuss about?" But, remember, the E.T.T.A. is a democratic union founded on institutional lines (not unlike our Parliamentary system) and every member is *entitled* to know. It is his right and the N.E.C. welcomes the exercise of that right.

Last year's Selection Committee was heavily handicapped by not having a member with the time, facilities and experience to handle the volume of administrative work entailed. They cannot be blamed for that and it is something which cannot be remedied once the season has well started. By the fact that they reached selections which (with remarkably few exceptions) were generally approved, I honestly think they should be applauded for their courage and integrity in an unenviable job.

It may surprise many to know that the first "criticisms" came from the Selection Committee itself, together with many of the progressive proposals now embodied.

Much of the work of the National Executive must, of necessity, be dealt with by Sub-Committees, which must always report back to the full Executive for authority. Don't let anyone imagine that any of these meetings are merely matters of course. All are frank, some are quite lively and you cannot be sure what the final vote will be.

The National Executive went into this matter of Selection Committee very thoroughly, considering every proposal with scrupulous care.

## Plan for New Season

The Committee elected for the 1951-52 season is Hon. I. Montagu (Chairman), G. R. Harrower (Hon. Secretary), H. J. Amery, N. Cook, A. A. Haydon, T. Sears and Alan Thompson, with power of limited co-option.

A brief outline of the main decisions reached by that Sub-Committee can be summarised as follows:

1. To report the work of the Committee in the Official Magazine.

2. The results of Open Tournaments, County Matches, Willmott Cup and J. M. Rose Bowl matches to be collated and circulated to all Committee members.

3. To introduce a special form to record performances of players in the two upper groups of Graded Players, and provide for certain additions (which will include promising juniors).

4. Arrangements for Committee Members to attend a majority of Open Tournaments and selected County Matches. Organisers of such events to be advised in advance.

5. Members of the Committee will be given a letter of appointment which, when attending officially, should entitle them to free admission.

6. There will be at least three full meetings of the Committee before the selection of the Swaythling and Corbillon teams.

7. Junior Trials will be arranged.

8. By the extended coverage of all major events, there would probably be no advantage in the holding of Senior Trials.

9. Since the E.T.T.A. were endeavouring to include matches for girls in the Junior International matches, Girls' Junior Trials may be arranged.

10. Selection for the Swaythling and Corbillon Cups will be made at actual meeting. In other cases, a *final* decision may be taken by correspondence.

11. At the beginning of the season all players in the upper two groups of Graded Players will be advised (as a routine procedure) of the dates of all international obligations and asked to contact the Committee before accepting an engagement on applicable dates.

12. What might be considered as an extension of the National Coaching Scheme falls naturally into the province of the Selection Committee. This was by arranging a Practice Course at Lilleshall National Recreation Centre in early September. For this the Committee have selected 14 youngsters (8 boys, 6 girls). The principle of selection in this case was not so much of how good the player was *at present*, but their potential benefit and development from such a course. The Selection Committee would attend the Course as observers.

## TABLE TENNIS EQUIPMENT...

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# LONDON GOSSIP

by BILL PARKER

AS the 1950-51 T.T. season drew towards its close many players and most officials were looking forward to a few months rest. But in a district of S.W. London, the seeds of an ambition began to germinate, and with the birth of the Putney T.T.C., Bob Atherton and his attractive blonde wife, Doris, had achieved a purpose—to run their own club their own way.

The Athertons wanted to provide a place where one could get good practice and still retain the competitive spirit. So four match tables and the necessary lighting equipment were installed in a nicely appointed hall, and fortnightly competitions were organised. News travels fast in T.T. circles, and now, players from many parts of London and its suburbs are regularly attending the Putney Club. In each of the tournaments, five events are staged and winners go forward to an "all winners" tournament to be held in October.

Since the membership now includes several internationals and practically all the Surrey county players, Bob occasionally declares a tournament closed to internationals, or to past winners. It was, therefore, something of a surprise when one "open" held in July, was won, internationals chucked in, by young Bobby Stevens, the Essex junior champion.

If summer consistency at Putney counts for anything, Jimmy Lowe, the Middlesex lad who won the English Junior two seasons ago, is going to be among this season's leading lights. A somewhat amusing fact about Jimmy may not be generally known. When Leo Thompson was coaching him in his earlier days, Jimmy spoiled much of the good gained by his stroke-producing ability and sound temperament through his poor footwork. So Leo arranged for various strokes to be practised in sessions, stayed down Jimmy's end of the table and stood on his young pupil's "wrong" foot. Credit to Leo for an original idea that worked—and credit to Jimmy for taking it in the right spirit!

During the season proper, the Putney Club will be open three evenings a week and Sunday mornings and afternoons. Anyone wishing to go along—provincials visiting the Metropolis are especially welcome—should ring PUT 9965 for information and a certain invitation. A tenant of the same building is Jack Carrington (Albion T.T.C.), who has the hall one night each week and has some promising youngsters under his wing. Jack and Elsie Carrington left early in August for a several weeks stay in Sweden, where Jack is national coach.

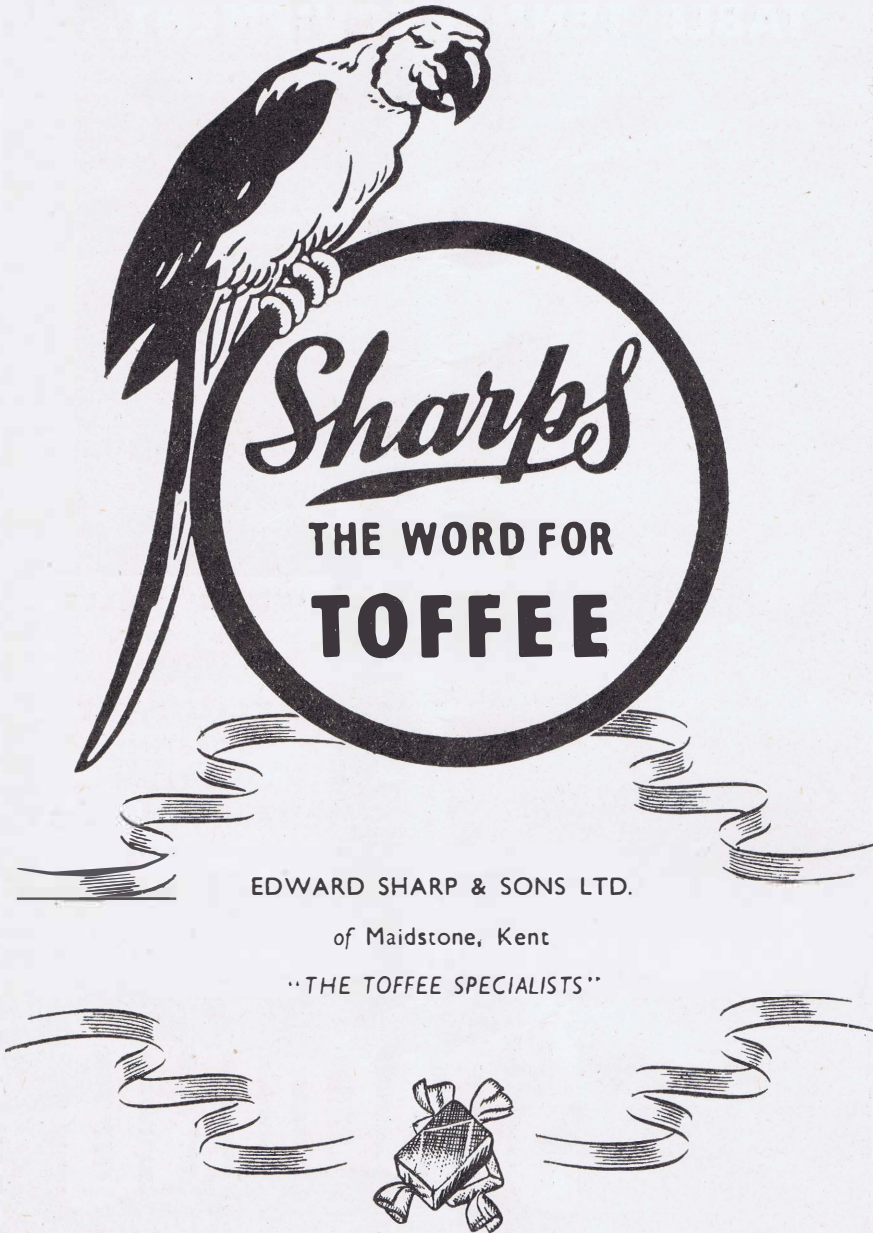
Since oil has featured so prominently in the news of recent months, a few words about the (Lensbury Shell-Mex—Anglo-Iranian group) T.T.C. may not come amiss. The men's 1st team, under the captaincy of Keith Burbridge, have developed the habit of becoming London Business House champions and they and the other four men's and four women's teams mean to go places this season. There is no lack of facilities for practice or match play, for members have the use of five tables at the Bishopsgate Institute, twice weekly, three tables at Lower Sydenham, six evenings a week and two at Teddington available every evening!

Founder-member of the Lensbury T.T. section in 1935 and present hon. secretary, Harold Pearce, seems to have plenty "on his plate," but modestly insists that the nine team captains and other committee members make his task very light. Harold also mentioned that teams visiting the Lower Sydenham club are given a *three course supper* after the match. Requests for friendly matches should not be addressed to me!

Man with less time on his hands since leaving the Civil Service is Geoff James, former County Umpires Secretary. On joining a private shipping company, in the early summer of 1950, Geoff soon found himself with leeway to make up on T.T. matters. Now he has decided, especially as he finds his work very interesting, that first things come first. Fortunately, the County Umpires' Committee will still enjoy the benefit of Geoff's advice, since he is remaining on the committee.

From Geoff James over to Geoff Harrower, who still manages to get through a fantastic amount of T.T. work, throughout the 12 months of the year. He must miss an awful lot of beauty sleep. Geoff tells me, very confidently, that following last season's lapse, Middlesex will once again be Junior County Champions this season. His tip for the season's discovery in the south is June Bottrill, who, like so many young stars of the last few years, hails from the Staines district and happily for Middlesex, has three years more in the junior ranks.

The Middlesex seniors will certainly be no weaker, especially as the Rowe twins have been working hard to improve their backhand under the supervision of Victor Barna. Victor hopes to play in the Eastern Suburban Championships early in November and during the first week in October, will be playing twice daily with Alec Brook, at Simpson's in the Strand.



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# "If England Wants Me I'll Play"

Says Stage-star RICHARD BERGMANN

"IT'S good to be back in competitive play," said Richard Bergmann reflectively, applying a touch more lipstick and rouge to his face.

"What are your future plans?" I asked, watching the ex-champ. with fascinated eyes. Dick expertly poked a spot of powder on his left cheek, pencilled his eyebrows and dabbed a dash of rouge on his right cheek.

The scene was Richard's dressing room at the London Palladium, and the player was preparing for his early evening performance, with Steve Boros, of the table tennis act which had drawn much favourable comment from National Press critics.

After a careful survey of himself in the mirror, and apparently satisfied with what he saw, Richard faced me. I told him he looked pretty enough to take on a date. He threw an impish grin, and said:—

"I have many stage commitments which are taking me, among other places, to Paris, Brussels and Antwerp, and further foreign bookings are in the offing. I shall be very busy, but I shall be happy to play in tournaments and give exhibitions, as distinct from this stage stuff, whenever I can."

"What about the world series?"

"I should love to play and regain the title I never lost at the table. And if I am wanted for the Swaythling Cup team, I will do all I can to obtain leave from my work to go to India."

Regarding England's chances in the Swaythling competition, Richard said, "Please don't misunderstand me when I say I think that if I play England has a good chance of winning the Cup for the first time. It will take a great team to beat a Leach-Simons-Bergmann combination. It would be a wonderful honour to be in the first English team to bring home the game's greatest trophy."

"I love the stage and I am earning a lot of money but my heart is in competitive table tennis. So much so, in fact, that I am prepared to sacrifice earnings in favour of tournaments and the usual run of exhibitions."

It was then time for Richard and Steve to do their act. Wittily compered by Mortlake-Mann, the turn earned noisy appreciation from the Palladium audience—

known as the toughest in the world to please. The boys' show was indeed impressive, packing punch, speed, humour and spectacle on a scale which left no doubt as to why the *Daily Express* stage critic rated it above £3,000-a-week, top-of-the-bill Red Skelton's turn.

Back in the dressing room and sweating profusely, Richard said, "Hear that applause? And yet some people say I play only dreary ping-pong! That audience paid good money to come and see entertainment, not Richard Bergmann, undefeated World champion. If I hadn't given them value, I'd have been hooted off, famous player or no famous player. A name means nothing in variety, and entertainment means everything. The Palladium management booked me for two weeks, with an option to cancel my contract if I proved a dud. After two weeks they signed me up for another two weeks. Not bad going for a 'chiselling, negative' player to please the greatest people in show business?"

"Still sore about the comments on your Budapest world final with Soos, huh?" I threw in.

"Sore as hell. Some of the remarks passed and written were grossly unjust and unfair, as well as betraying an ignorance of the finer points and strategy of the game. What some alleged critics can't or won't seem to understand is that it isn't always possible to play spectacular table tennis, even if one wants to. There are so many angles to it. Soos is a defensive player and so am I, so the result was a deadlock. We were both determined to win and neither could afford to take the slightest chance. One lapse into carelessness might have been fatal. I saw to it that I was going to come out world champion, and I did. What was I supposed to have done, anyway? Clashing styles can make or break a game from the spectators' point of view. I've been in some unspectacular games (who hasn't?) but isn't it also a fact that I've figured in some outstandingly thrilling matches? However, let this be clearly understood. I play to win. You have to play to win in big-time tournament stuff or you've had it. If you're going to concentrate on looking good, you'll never make a champion,

(Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 34)

believe me. There's a lot more I could say about this, but I'll content myself with the remark that those who rate me a punk chiseller are given the lie by the success of my stage exhibitions. Let them come and see for themselves."

Asked if he felt he could regain his World title, Bergmann said, "Certainly. I consider I'm the world's No. 1 player, even though I don't hold the official title. My work keeps me very fit and in trim, and I'm ready to prove I'm the champ. Johnny Leach? He's a good lad—but I'm prepared to play him any time, anywhere, to see who's the better player. That's a definite challenge, if Johnny cares to accept it. And that goes for any other player, English or foreign."

The tremendous faith and confidence in his own ability which has won Richard four world singles titles and kept him at the top of the tree for 15 years—and rated No. 1 player nine times during that period, at that—is still very much to the fore.

I left the salubrious backstage atmosphere of the Palladium thoroughly convinced that the table tennis world is going to hear a whole heap more of one Richard Bergmann and his championship wins.

SAM KIRKWOOD.

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# Season's Diary..

Sept. 10/15	Derby Open	G. H. Gilman, Y.M.C.A., St. Peter's Church yard, Derby.
Sept. 15/25	Tour of Germany by English team	
Sept. 22/23	East of England Open (Skegness)	Mrs. F. A. Merryweather, c/o Ruston Bucyrus, Ltd., Lincoln.
Oct. 4/7	Yugoslavian Open (Belgrade)	
Oct. 12/21	Indian Open	
Oct. 13	Yorkshire Open (York)	J. B. Leyden, "Cliffoney," Hartley Park View, Pontefract, Yorks.
October 13/14	Adriatic Cup (Yugoslavia)	
Oct. 16	CHAMPION COUNTY v. THE REST (Aylesford)	
Oct. 18/20	North of England Open (Manchester)	L. W. Jones, 261, Mauldeth Road, Burnage, Manchester, 19.
Oct. 20	Port Talbot Open	G. Heycock, 53, Talbot Road, Port Talbot.
Oct. 20/Nov. 3	Tour of Sweden by English team	
Oct. 27/28	Sussex Open (Hastings)	K. R. Hayward, Top Flat, 10, Wellington Place, Hastings.
Oct. 28/Nov. 2/3	Birmingham Open (Birmingham)	M. Goldstein, 415, Moseley Road, Birmingham, 12.
Nov. 2/4	Austrian Open	
Nov. 3	Hull Open (Hull)	H. Flinton, 28, Albert Avenue, Anlaby Road, Hull, Yorks.
Nov. 5/10	Eastern Suburban Open (Ilford)	T. Lawlor, 32, Ellesmere Gardens, Ilford, Essex.
Nov. 10	Hartlepool Open	S. V. Peppert, 10, Bently Street, West Hartlepool, Durham.
Nov. 10/11	Belgian Open	
Nov. 13	IRELAND v. ENGLAND (at Belfast)	
Nov. 16/18	South of England Open (Croydon)	C. A. Bourne, 46, Elm Park Gardens, Selsdon, Surrey.
Nov. 17	Swansea Open	K. Prosser, 684, Mumbles Road, Swansea.
Nov. 24	Bath Open (Bath)	
Nov. 30/Dec. 1	Pontefract Open (Pontefract)	C. Darley, Junr., 13, The Booths, Pontefract.
Dec. 1	Bournemouth Open (Bournemouth)	
Dec. 4	ENGLAND v. FRANCE (Bristol)	
Dec. 7/8	WELSH OPEN (Cardiff)	W. K. Milsom, 33, Pencisely Road, Cardiff
Dec. 10/15	Central London Open (Kentish Town)	
Dec. 17	SCOTLAND v. ENGLAND (Glasgow)	
Dec. 28/Jan. 1/5	Metropolitan Open (Polytechnic, W.1)	
Jan. 5/8	French Open (Paris)	
Jan. 7/12	South London Open (West Norwood)	
Jan. 11/12	South Yorkshire Open (Sheffield)	
Jan. 13 (or 20)	Southampton Open	
Jan. 19	ENGLAND v. WALES (Liverpool)	
Jan. 24/26	Cheshire Open	

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