

Table

The OFFICIAL ORGAN of the E.T.T.A.

Tennis

VOL. I. No. 7.

JULY, 1936.

ONE PENNY.

REGISTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

“Retrospectively Speaking.”

By C. CORTI WOODCOCK.

Now that we can day-dream from the depths of our hammocks, it seems apparent that table tennis season 1935-36 bore more than its fair share of burdens and problems. Some of the walls to be scaled looked, from below, to possess Everest-like dimensions and slopes: and even though we cannot yet claim to sit astride the world, at least the occupation of camp four gives us a pretty fair perspective. Now we may coolly measure what has been done, and the more clearly see precisely the nature of the struggle which lies ahead next season.

What, then, stands to our credit at the end of 12 months work? The National Championships undoubtedly top the list. A year previously Wembley had cut through the undergrowth and prepared the way, and now did Earl's Court build a veritable highway upon which—if the mixed metaphor may be condoned—our supporters, our public, swarmed in black thousands. Barna lost his title, and in so doing, provided a “story” which was eagerly snatched at by every newspaper of importance. The publicity value to our sport was tremendous. Then there were the two splendidly organised tours, when the stars of Barna, Szabados and Bellak shone brilliantly down on 35 English towns in turn. This was a great treat, richly deserved, for the more enterprising of our provincial leagues and one imagines that many an Uncle George and Auntie Mabel and Uncle Tom Cobleigh are still mentally agape at all they saw at the “Barna Circus.” Not without reason, for toughened die-hards, too, can yet goggle with astonishment at Hungarian wizardry.

Last autumn the Association made up its mind to have an office in London: to publish a magazine: to conduct a tour: to send teams to the World's Championship at Prague: to pay off its £500 deficit: and, with continued expansion and development, to achieve a condition of financial well-being. Further, it was intended to encourage manufacturers to improve their equipment and to ensure that the “paid-player” position was carefully, though sympathetically, watched. All these things have been done, in the main, successfully. The number of open championships authorised almost certainly represents a new record, and far more inter-league and inter-city matches were played than ever before. This is surely a sign that the competition for the “Wilmott” Cup will be fought out very strenuously on its revival next season.

England is not the only country to reflect ruefully after the amazing events at Prague early in the year. Our performance was nearly very good; and even though we offer our cordial congratulations to Austria, Czechoslovakia, and particularly to America for carrying away the spoils of victory, yet we cannot refrain from a sad shaking of the head at sight of the humbling of the champions. Good and worthy world-conquerors have they been, individually and as a team; and the counter-attack they are certain to launch next year will carry dynamite with it. Hungary is very far from being a spent force.

“Dynamite.” English table tennis lacks it lamentably. Now that the old hands slowly begin to fade out of the picture, where are we to look to replace them? Where are the promising youngsters we need so badly, youngsters who are prepared to work, to learn, to practise, to become masters and potential world-beaters? Fitness, courage, determination, character; not only the will to win, but the *skill* to win—plus dynamite of, shall we say, the Gilbert Marshall brand—that's what we want. There are places ready and waiting in an England team for those of our 40,000 members who can contrive to fit themselves into a cap of that pattern.

In recent issues of TABLE TENNIS, Mr. Montagu has contributed remarkable, brilliant articles on the subject of pushing and “chiselling.” His facts, arguments and conclusions were stated not only with great force and clarity, but with the utmost fairness. No other pen could have been so effectively wielded in defence of the game's very existence. But we are inclined to question his wisdom in titling his second article “Last Words,” for it seems to us only too likely that controversy will continue and that, human nature being what it is, the strong measures expected to be taken next season to crush “poking” will be violently resisted by those who have neither the good sense or conscience to rank the broad interests of the game before their own narrow ones. But with a representative General Council, a strong Executive Committee and the powerful officership triumvirate of Messrs. Montagu, Pope and Vint, it is certain that it will be no easy matter to intimidate the Association: which is as should be.

Goodbye, then, to the old season. Let us now prepare to greet the new, sturdy in spirit—strong in arm.

For the mere scribe—back to that hammock!

EXPERIMENTS THAT ARE IN PROGRESS.

During these quiet months, when table tennis players are exercising themselves at the mother game, feverish activity is going on behind the scenes to find the ways and means of stopping this great threat to the game—stone-walling.

John Jaques, makers of the “Jaques” Tournament Table, have built a very ingenious table to help the Association in these experiments. The table at the moment is installed at Lane's London Club where trials are taking place each day.

There is a special net post attached that enables the players to lower the net by half inches at a time. Further, the legs are so constructed that it is possible to lower the table by inch steps to 2 feet 6 inches. That takes in the height of net and table.

Various cleverly constructed leaves enable one to lengthen the table by 6 inches or 1 foot. Thus the table can be used as a 10 feet by 5 feet. Other leaves can be adjusted to make it 10 feet by 6 feet. There has been no report submitted as yet by those who are responsible to the Association for these experiments.

A Table made of Slate.

Another firm, namely Walter Briggs, Ltd., makers of “Barna” equipment, have been having a slate table put to many tests. A week or two ago Victor Barna came to London, and together with Eric Findon, the English “Swaythling” Cup International, made exhaustive tests on this new surface.

Both Barna and Findon were agreeably surprised at the possibilities of playing on slate.

“There are no dead spots at all and the bounce is remarkably even throughout. Contrary to our expectations the table was not too fast but had that necessary ‘heart’ so important to the attacker.” These words were uttered after the games by the players.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

Experiments of this nature necessitate many hours of hard play. It is impossible to test these suggested innovations in a week or even in eight weeks.

However, directly any decisions have been reached with regard to possible changes our readers will read full details in this, The Official Magazine, in due course.

**DON'T FAIL TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!**

Table Tennis . . . By Ivor Montagu.

By ERIC FINDON.

Congratulations, Mr. Montagu!

It is with deepest regret that I have to admit at this stage of my review of "Table Tennis," by Ivor Montagu, that I cannot find words vivid enough to describe this brilliant work on our game. There has never been a volume so thorough—so comprehensive—and so instructive. Each page contains paragraphs of great interest and help. It is a book for the beginner and a book for every international to read and study.

Mr. Montagu is connected with the British Film Industry. Therefore let us deal with his book in the way the publicity department of the studios deal with their super pictures—a written trailer, so to speak. For a few minutes I will turn over the pages and give my reader some idea of the treats he has in store for him.

"... some players were playing slowly and he mocked them by saying 'Ping-pong, ping-pong.' The idea struck him that this would be an excellent name for the game, and he presented it to his friend and neighbour who happened to be in the sports goods business, John Jaques, of Croydon, receiving in return a silver tea-service or coffee-service."

That explains how the game got the name of "Ping-pong." In following pages the development is explained and the battles that were fought between rival bodies.

"Tournaments, rival associations and codes of rules, treatises (no fewer than 14 works on the game appear in the British Museum catalogue for the period) sprang up like mushrooms; and then, sudden as the snuffing out of a candle, the game was dead."

And so Mr. Montagu deals with every phase of the game from its conception to the present day of fierce international tournaments.

Of recent date articles have been appearing here and there to do with this "chizzelling" game. Experiments are taking place with wider tables, lower nets, &c. Mr. Montagu refers to rather an interesting point to do with these trials.

"... As a matter of fact a 6-inch net was used by local rule in Sunderland until several years after the War, and all the stalwarts there, including one English Champion, were feared in the South as notable stone-wallers!"

Ivor Montagu, you have great courage! This matter is as delicate as the finest china. Personally, as a player and one who has studied the theoretical side of table tennis, I consider a 6-inch net as being a move in the right direction to "speed up" the game.

However, this is not a debate but a "taster" of the greatest book yet written on Table Tennis. Let me turn over a few more pages and pick out a paragraph at random.

"Rackets have been made of gut; . . . A possible apocryphal racket consisted of a large mirror, so that the opponent constantly saw two balls, one going and one coming."

The book is filled with interesting facts dealing with every department of the game. On the next page he explains the technique of rubber.

"It is like playing billiards with an unchalked cue. The rubber on the racket at Table Tennis is the chalk on the cue at billiards."

Mr. Montagu then goes on to explain the origin of the present laws of the game. It is an interesting fact to note that of the three people who drafted the rules two are still active members of the game. The author is one and Mr. G. J. Ross, who led the Slough Y.M.C.A. through a brilliant last season, another.

Dealing with doubles Mr. Montagu writes:—

"... a court the same size as the singles table surface, 9 ft. by 5 ft. Such a size can, at a pinch, be defended by one player. Of two, therefore, the superior would poach and 'hog' the whole game. Accordingly there is no alternative in Table Tennis doubles but striking by the partners in turn."

But I could go on for many pages picking and choosing from "Table Tennis," by Ivor Montagu, and as there isn't enough space in this whole issue to deal faithfully with every department of the book, I must leave it for the thousands of table tennis enthusiasts to peruse for themselves.

With regard to illustrations the book is definitely not lacking. In all there are 72, which by themselves are worth far more than the cost of the book—2s. 6d. There are strip photographs dealing with all the famous shots. On page 28 we find Barna in front of the camera demonstrating every movement of his famous backhand and "flick." And so, dear reader, please do me the honour of taking my advice and securing a copy at once—you cannot afford to be without it.

Mr. Montagu, as a last word, let me quote from the second paragraph of your excellent book.

"It does not set out to teach the game. The author has seen so many 'unconscious' players, that is, brilliant players who can win matches without having the slightest idea . . ."

We have all also seen "unconscious" players but they are no good and never win!

BOURNEMOUTH.

The past season has been a great success from a playing point of view. Four Inter-league matches were played against Salisbury and Portsmouth. Bournemouth only suffered defeat against the latter at Portsmouth.

Bournemouth Y.M.C.A. won the first division championship for the first time, having a margin of six points to spare over their old rivals St. Michael's.

It has been decided to hold the individual championships early during the coming season owing to the postponement this season caused by the illness of the League Secretary, Mr. Lawrence.

NOTICE.

This issue has been reduced to four pages owing to the fact that it is in the middle of the closed season. Directly the season gets under way the full quota of eight pages will appear regularly.

Returned to Birmingham.

Haydon, by the way, has returned to Birmingham. He was employed, as we all know, by Messrs. F. H. Ayres, the sports manufacturers, in London. He was not happy in London and rumour has it that he is now agent for Messrs. J. Jaques' equipment in the Midlands.

Now that he has returned to his native heath perhaps he will settle down and justify, in the eyes of the public, his selection as Captain without trial. A burst of the old form will carry him through most English Opens.

Professionals and Others.

Questions relative to the professional angle of the game were also discussed by the Committee. It is hardly possible to review the situation in a few words, but an indication of the way the wind is blowing would not come amiss.

Last year the E.T.T.A. decided that players could play for financial remuneration without incurring the penalty of suspension. It was stipulated however that it was only for one trial season. This has passed and the matter was again brought up before the Committee.

Only one professional player returned an account of income to the E.T.T.A. This was a lamentable state of affairs, especially as the Executive hoped to base their decisions to a certain degree on these reports.

One or two definite stipulations are to be considered for the future. One is that the Association must be notified of any financial remuneration exceeding £1. Another is that no player may stipulate that he must play on certain makes of table, &c. He can recommend the use of equipment but cannot insist on its use.

By

IVOR MONTAGU

Former President and Chairman of the English Table Tennis Association; Non-playing Captain of the English Swaythling and Marcel Corbillon Cup Teams; Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the International Table Tennis Federation since its Foundation.

TABLE TENNIS

Strip photographs demonstrating the correct way to play every stroke in the game, shrewd comments on styles of play, interesting discussion on the methods of champion players, and sound instruction are the outstanding features of this fine book. The author's name alone commends the book strongly to every reader of this journal, while the interesting method in which he has treated the subject will delight all who seek to improve their game or their knowledge of the game by following his advice.

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Manchester and District.

There is very little doubt that the dominating influence in the game in Manchester and district has been the Grove House team. It was evident at the beginning of the 1935-36 season that the Y.M.C.A., holders of the League and Team Knock-out Championships, would find their position seriously challenged by Grove House, but very few players were prepared for the overwhelming advance made by Lurie and his colleagues. Now that the season has closed, it is possible to review the results with detachment, and it is at once evident that the Grove House team, individually and collectively, have won almost every possible title.

Grove House won the League Championship without sustaining defeat, they took the "Richardson" Cup Team Championship in their stride, and in the newly inaugurated "George Hardman" Hospital Handicap Team Trophy, with a scratch handicap, they beat the Rusholme team (plus 8) in the Final by 19 games to 10.

Individually, of course, Lurie deserves most mention. He holds the North of England Open, Cheshire Open, Midlands Open, and North Lancashire Open Singles Titles, and with his team captain, F. Cromwell, he is the holder of several Doubles titles. Cromwell won the North Wales Open Singles, whilst another member of the team, G. Phillips, won the *Evening Chronicle* Singles Championship from over 1,000 entries.

From this recapitulation of the triumphs of Grove House, it would appear that the success achieved by other teams and players has been overshadowed, but this is not the case. L. Cohen (Three Courts) has made several appearances in the Yorkshire Championships, bringing Singles and Doubles Titles to Manchester. In the team-of-three Tournament at Runcorn, the Manchester team, which included C. W. Davies (Y.M.C.A.), successfully defended their title.

The Divisional Championships of the League have been won by:—2nd Division, Waterpark; 3rd Division North, Manchester Jewish "A"; 3rd Division S.E., Birchfields, and 3rd Division West, St. Luke's, Weaste. Lurie had no difficulty in winning the Individual Singles Title, and with F. Cromwell, the Doubles Championship.

Perhaps the most promising feature for future notice is the number of youngsters who have earned the right to serious consideration. At the Y.M.C.A. every effort is made to bring out promising talent, and on practice nights the six tables are besieged by budding Internationals. In every class of sport old favourites are soon ousted by the new, and in Manchester there are at least twenty youngsters, who, in the course of a single season, could be brought in to fill the top places in Table Tennis.

It is encouraging also to note that, up to the present, the dreaded "chiseller" has yet to make his appearance. Whilst several teams have always had a reputation for prolonged defensive play, it has not earned any disrespect from either players or spectators, simply because it has been a tradition of certain clubs to encourage the outstanding use of an orthodox defence. Of

pushing, poking, and chiselling, very little is known. In particular, it is characteristic of the play of almost every aspirant for junior honours to bring out his attack on every possible occasion. Possibly this arises from a desire to emulate the feats of Lurie and Ken Hyde (Liverpool), who seem fated to meet in nearly all the Northern Finals.

Mr. S. W. Richardson, after five years as General Secretary, has resigned in favour of Mr. J. Batty. Mr. Swann continues as E.T.T.A. representative, and Mr. H. Summerfield (Y.M.C.A.) will control the Executive Committee as Chairman, in place of Mr. H. White.

Perhaps it is not out of place here to mention the unstinted service which has been rendered to the game in the North by Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Bunbury. Mr. Bunbury is President of the Manchester League, and Mrs. Bunbury, quite apart from her splendid activities in the interests of the women's game as a member of the E.T.T.A. Executive, is Chairman of the Manchester Women's League. They are both actively interested in all the broader aspects of the game, whilst their efforts on the administrative side have helped to raise the game to its present outstanding position.

In an endeavour to create more interest in business and professional circles, the Manchester Business Houses League was started at the beginning of last season with a membership of 30 teams. It has had a very good send-off, and intends to increase its membership for the coming season. The League Championship and the Handicap Team Competition were won by the Royal Insurance Co.'s team. C. Brayley (National Boiler) won the Men's Singles Title, and Miss E. Smith (Taxes), took the Women's Individual Championship. Mr. Colin Browne (Taxes) is the new General Secretary.

(Next Issue: Liverpool and District.)

A. A. HAYDON, CAPTAIN.

Following the meeting of the Executive Committee of the E.T.T.A. on Saturday, 11th July, A. A. Haydon was appointed Captain of the English Team and member of the Selection Committee for next season.

This bare statement will surprise many table tennis enthusiasts, especially those who saw Haydon play before he left for the World Championships. However it is not for us to question why but to follow in the footsteps of the Executive Committee who control our game.

It must not be overlooked that Adrian was only beaten twice in Prague. That proved his return to form. In fact he is considered by many prominent officials to be the only international in England—or rather English international—who is in World class.

IN THE BARBER'S CHAIR.

Hungarian Championships.

It is interesting to note that Szabados, the Hungarian Swaythling Cup player of great repute in this country, won the National Championship of his country.

And now Table Badminton.

There is every possibility of a new indoor sport following in the footsteps of table tennis.

Table Badminton appears to be striking a popular note in many quarters. Two of the English Table Tennis Internationals, namely Eric Findon and H. Shalson, are finding it a most relaxing game after the strain and concentration of a table tennis match.

Messrs. Pope and Woodcock in form!

Now that the closed season has reduced the efforts expended by Mr. W. J. Pope and Mr. Corti-Woodcock, the well-known officials of the E.T.T.A., their return to health is a source of pleasure for all enthusiasts of this great indoor sport.

Mr. Pope is diving into preparations for next season with that great gusto which has made him a favourite everywhere he goes. It is to be hoped that he will reserve enough energy to face the coming season which will be the greatest, in our opinion, the game has ever seen in this country.

Mr. Woodcock is still resting but his article on the front page is ample evidence of the urge to get busy again.

Congratulations to them both!

An International Tournament.

On the 16th of this month many internationals will be under the green shades again fighting every point of the way against each other.

The rendezvous is Lane's London Club, King Street, Baker Street, and the tournament is being held in order to test the new slate table that is making its appearance on the market.

Spectators are cordially invited by the above club to witness the match. All they have to do is to ask for Eric Findon and he will arrange for their comfort.

The players invited to date are:—A. D. Brook, A. A. Haydon, M. Ayub, N. K. Contractor, M. Bergl, Eric Findon, H. Shalson, H. J. Hales, R. D. Jones, T. E. Sears, G. Marshall, J. Joyce and others.

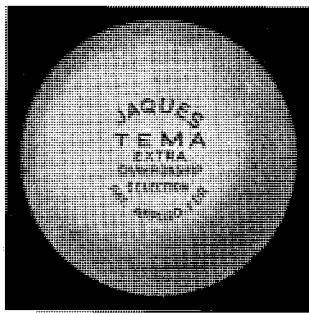
Victor Barna's Opinion.

Victor Barna is of the opinion that next season the American Women's Team will walk away with the "Corbillion" Cup. (That is, he remarked, if the Hungarian women get beaten!)

Michael Haguener, Barna's pupil in Paris, beat Barna in the English Open last season. He has brought out an autographed bat on the strength of it, and rumour has it that he allowed the following heading to appear on the propaganda leaflet:—"Victor over Barna."

While we appreciate the play on words we ask ourselves the question, "Does one do that there 'ere'?"

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SUMMER PRACTICE.

The necessity of quick movement in table tennis is amply illustrated by the distance one has to cover from long defence to attack and the short space of time in which to do it. It is a great asset to be able to run in and attack without hesitation. Therefore a few simple guiders in this direction will help the enthusiast to cultivate more speed for the coming season.

Footwork is the secret of speed. When making a forehand smash carry your weight from the right to left foot and follow through. The big mistake made by inexperienced players is "holding" the final position too long. Once the stroke has been made come quickly back to the neutral position thus giving yourself every chance of moving speedily in any given direction.

In long defence move to the ball and get your body over the shot but never stay on one particular side. Your opponent is watching your play and although he may not take the first chance of forcing you on to one side or other and then making a winner down the other it is more than likely that he is planning your defeat with a cold calculating brain. Don't give him the chance to out-position you. When the return is made take up a central position immediately in preparation for the next smash.

The above remarks are not intended to dampen the spirits of those players who anticipate shots. By all means move in the direction you think the ball is coming but don't over-anticipate and give your opponent time to change his shot and leave you standing yards away from the ball. Footwork again comes to your rescue. If your footwork is in order you should never exert yourself to any state of exhaustion by defence. It is the easy movement in itself that controls the ball—and very often the game.

Tactics of attack and defence can be studied away from the table. To the on-looker they seem the obvious strokes to make and the most simple, but the experienced player knows that the best tactics require a steady hand and a cool nerve coupled with mastery of stroke production.

The unorthodox direction of a forehand smash is to the backhand court. Try smashing the ball hard at the forehand and then cross quickly, with the same action, to the other side. If your opponent is defending as he should he will jump across and return it but the following smash should be a winner. Watch your opponent carefully and you will notice no confidence in his play after that. He doesn't know which way you are going to smash and is always on the look-out for that cross-hit. Consequently his game suffers to a small extent giving you chances here and there to make clever winners.

Cultivate a winning drop-shot and your game has improved 50 per cent. This simple but effective return has made champions—and ruined them. In the next issue we shall dive deeper into the theory of the game.

A Star in the making.

Marcus, the young player of Wembley fame, is practising hard for the coming season. His attack is formidable on the forehand. At the moment of going to press he is perfecting a backhand. With a good defence he should reach the high spots next season.

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Other Business.

We understand that other items of interest to the playing public were discussed by the Committee.

It is going to be suggested and proposed by the English Table Tennis Association to the International Federation that the "Swaythling" Cup be played in the same way as the "Davis" Cup—making the World's Singles and Doubles events into a separate tournament.

This is definitely an advance in World management. If it is carried out the "Swaythling" Cup matches will be in progress between one country or the other all through the season. What excitement will be caused by the results as they trickle through the columns of this magazine!

The Dress Question.

As may have been noticed in the Press lately there were no drastic steps taken in the direction of dress for the game. Nevertheless certain points were proposed at the meeting.

In the event of a pullover or top-covering used for the knock-up the undershirt or playing shirt must be of the same colour.

Rubber-soled shoes must be worn. There is no stipulation as to colour.

The shirt or blouse must be of one colour only. Stripes and spots or any design are barred, except the badge.

Women may wear skirts, trousers, or any other garment for the lower section of the body, provided they are coloured grey.

It is understood that an official circular dealing with all the decisions arrived at will be published in the next issue.