Table Tennis Problems.

By W. J. Pope, General Secretary, E.T.T.A.

The rapid development of table tennis during the past five years has presented the organisation with continuous problems. The influx of thousands of new players, the formation of scores of new leagues, the organisation of new open tournaments, have caused difficulties, chiefly because of the speed of development which has overwhelmed the administration. In addition, the growth of the game in public favour as a spectacle has thrown new responsibilities on the Association, and the arranging of public matches and tournaments, the setting up of relationships with other public organisations, the Press and the B.B.C., has compelled the creation of an organisation run on a modern business basis.

The growth of the game abroad has necessitated more intimate relations with other countries and, as we are the most powerful and influential member in the International Federation, this side of our country is to tryout various proposals, and to investigate. Messrs. Jacques have supplied the names and addresses of the subscribers with the necessary amount. Mr. Montagu's new book costs 2S. 6d.—it is the best book on the game which can be lowered, and extended in width and length; various suggestions are being considered, and if any alterations are decided upon they cannot operate until season 1937-38.

By contrast with some of these older sports there is in table tennis no autocratic legislative body laying down rules and regulations. As our difficulties surge around us they have to be settled by—ourselves. Everyone recognises that danger, but I am asked what new regulations have been adopted for next season? The answer is “none.” There is to be no lower net or longer table. The rules of the game can only be altered by the I.T.T.F., and as that body will not meet until February again this will be considered at the next meeting of the I.T.T.F. The E.T.T.A. is conscious of this question, as I know many players have strong views. One well-known player suggests that when the ball touches the net the striker should lose the point, and service should be taken behind a line three feet from the end of the table. What do readers think of this?

DRESS.

The Executive Committee have now laid down the rules with regard to dress at open tournaments, and as there appears to be some misapprehension in the public Press on the point, it might be as well to set out the present position.

For men players—rubber shoes (any colour); grey flannel trousers or shorts; sports shirt of single colour (not to be light or bright). For women players—rubber shoes (any colour), sports shirt of single colour (not to be light or bright).

The Women’s Committee formed to investigate the problem was against the wearing of shorts or trousers, but it was thought best to leave this to individual players.

Tournament Committees are to be asked strictly to carry out the new regulations, and sanction for tournaments will only be given if they are carried out.

THE PAID PLAYERS.

We have now had 12 months’ experience of the new rule, and it is proposed to institute regulations for the coming season after consultation with each League and the paid players themselves. The wording of the new rule has not been altogether satisfactory; it is suggested that coaches should be definitely authorised and be of a certain standard of excellence, that money prizes should be limited; large betting on matches should be prohibited, and that certain regulations should govern players employed by sports firms.

TRAINING OF PLAYERS.

The Executive Committee have given long and serious consideration to this question. We are concerned with our position in world ranking, which affects the popularity of the game with the general public. If we could only develop a player to win the world championship; if we could only develop teams to win the “Swaythling” and “Corbillon” Cups, what an effect this would have!

The game was born in England, we have by far the largest number of players, and we should
Mr. Montagu's New Book.

By W. J. Pope.

The publication of a book by Ivor Montagu is an event indeed in the annals of table tennis. This is his second book on the game, and since the first one it is evident the times have happened. Days were when Mr. Montagu's advocacy of table tennis was a voice crying in the wilderness, but now hundreds of thousands worship at the shrine. Mr. Montagu is well qualified to write the book on table tennis. He was the first Chairman of the Empire Table Tennis Association and founded the International Federation in 1926—his was the brains, the enthusiasm, and last, but not least, the pocket responsible for the first World Championships in London. He is the historian of the game, and whilst I know he does not believe in the "Great Man Theory," I am certain that without his personality table tennis would still be in the wilderness.

I am equally certain that if, when he was at Cambridge, he had not cultivated towards bowls (which by the way might have resulted in more trophies on his sideboard), bowls would now be a world sport, scheduled for the Olympic Games, with Finals at the Wembly Stadium with 90,000 spectators. But, praise be, bowls' loss is our gain.

This book is so comprehensive that it is difficult to do it justice in a short review. It is the standard work on table tennis, and will remain so for many years to come. Its scope can be seen from a brief review of some of the subjects covered. The first chapter deals with the History of the Game, and then Mr. Montagu deals with "Material," the table, the ground, net and posts, the ball, racquet, lighting and clothes. In a chapter of 29 pages the author covers the whole ground, and professional publishers. All the work is done voluntarily and our reward is a successful publication. It is no secret that we were disappointed in the response of our friends last season. With our registered membership of approximately 10,000, we should bring it within the means of every amateur. Financial difficulties of many players would be overcome if the final rounds of the "Wilcott Cup" could be played in London.

The National League.
The Executive Committee has sanctioned the institution of the proposed National League, and the Committee now draw up a set of rules. The idea is to divide the country into areas, with a Division for each, and Leagues will be formed. During the season, top teams at the end of the season playing off for the Championship. Further particulars will be published in the next issue of the Magazine.

The Foreign Tourists.
The popularity of the tour of the "Three Hungarians" was such last season that it ensured a repeat invitation, and I am pleased to say that arrangements have been made for another tour, which will probably commence on 16th November. An International match, England v. Hungary, will be staged in London to open the ball, and it is possible that a part of this match will be broadcast to all stations of the B.B.C.

The National Championships will be again held in London and the Finals will be staged at Wembly, so that a feast of good spectator table tennis will be provided during the season—fans all over the country will be looking forward to seeing the best players in the world, and of taking their friends to see the modern game.

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The Spalding "VILLA" Table and Spalding Bats are the vogue Illustrated Catalogue from Spalding Bros., Putney, S.W.15

Continued from previous column.

PERSONAL BUT NOT PRIVATE.

And now I want to make an appeal to all our readers, and to table tennis enthusiasts generally, in connection with our official Magazine. It is published for the player to bring news and information to all interested in the game. It is written by amateurs for amateurs. We have no pretensions to journalistic ability or to be professional publishers. All the work is done voluntarily and our reward is a successful publication.

I feel that something should be done to help to bring players from various districts to London for our National Championship-Finals and Final should be fixed for London. Financial difficulties of many players will remain so for many years to come. Its scope can be seen from a brief review of some of the subjects covered. The first chapter deals with the History of the Game, and then Mr. Montagu deals with "Material," the table, the ground, net and posts, the ball, racquet, lighting and clothes. In a chapter of 29 pages the author covers the whole ground, and professional publishers. All the work is done voluntarily and our reward is a successful publication. It is no secret that we were disappointed in the response of our friends last season. With our registered membership of approximately 10,000, we should bring it within the means of every amateur. Financial difficulties of many players would be overcome if the final rounds of the "Wilcott Cup" could be played in London.

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Marshall Wins International Tournament at Lane’s.

The International Tournament held recently at Lane’s London Club, Baker Street, was a great success. It was held primarily to test out the new slate table manufactured by W. C. Briggs and, secondly, to give the London Internationals a chance to test their own capabilities in midsummer.

Various scratchings owing to holidays were inevitable, but the final line-up included the following players:—G. Marshall and C. Nelson (America), M. Ayub (India), I. Schaterovitz (Latvia), and T. E. Sears, H. H. Bridge, Eric Findon, T. Dawn, A. D. Brook (England).

The Hon. I. M. Montagu and Mr. C. Corti Woodcock played in the tournament so as to get first-hand information as to the merits of a slate surface. The non-internationals playing were M. Marcus, H. H. Bridge, W. Stennett and E. Bulley.

The surprise of the first round was the defeat of E. Bulley by C. Nelson. The game was painfully slow at times, but Nelson occasionally came out with a forehand and backhand smash and eventually won by 21–19 in the final game.

H. H. Bridge nearly caused another surprise when leading E. Findon in the last game by 20–11, but Findon could not find the necessary punch to break through Findon’s defence, and lost after being completely beaten by a forehand smash down his forehand that raised considerable applause.

The second-round matches were of a more interesting nature. W. Stennett proved his claims to International honours by beating A. D. Brook. Brook never really looked like winning, despite the fact that he won one game. Stennett is a greatly improved player who will have to be watched this coming season.

T. E. Sears beat Findon in the last game after an exciting finish. Findon down 19–16 picked up to lead 20–19 and then dropped the game 23–21.

Marshall, hitting as brilliantly as ever and severely beaten Sears. This was a different Sears to the one we all recognise. He was lethargic and painfully slow on his feet. One could tell before two points had been scored that he was doomed to defeat. This must not, however, rob any of the credit from Stennett, who played cleverly and severely beaten Sears. This was a game all. The third game Marshall shot ahead and stayed there to win by several clear points.

Meanwhile Stennett had turned out again and severely beaten Sears. This was a different Sears to the one we all recognise. He was lethargic and painfully slow on his feet. One could tell before two points had been scored that he was doomed to defeat. This must not, however, rob any of the credit from Stennett, who played cleverly and accurately right through.

The final was contested between Marshall and Stennett. It was quickly over in the American’s favour, but Stennett played a gallant game and must feel more than satisfied with the night’s play.

His lack of big match experience must go against Marshall, but he gave Marshall a very good game and deserved a better fate. Marshall was not really worried by Stennett and on many occasions smashed clean through his defence with the greatest of ease.

The final arrangements were completed when Marshall had received the congratulations of the other players and a handsome prize from Messrs. Walter Briggs. He thoroughly deserved his success, and we shall see his name on the headlines next season without doubt.

The slate table came in for a lot of discussion, especially amongst the players. Some found they liked it better than the normal wooden surface, but others found no difference. The weight of opinion, however, was that the slate surface did tend to speed up the game because the ball was inclined to “sit up” to be hit, thus giving the attacker a distinct advantage.

Many well-known members of the English Table Tennis Association were present, including:—Hon. I. M. Montagu, Mr. W. J. Pope, Mr. C. Corti Woodcock, Mr. D. Decker, Mr. Charlton, Misses Caplan and Smitz. In all the spectators numbered some 150–200.

The umpiring and organisation of the tournament proper were all that could be desired.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT.
Annual Report.

The untiring efforts of the officials and Committee of the Liverpool and District League have resulted in the past season being the greatest in the history of the game in that area—the Merseyside.

As to the numerical side of the question, an increase of four clubs and nine teams was registered. There has been a corresponding increase in the individual membership.

Ennismore, the First Division champions, claim the distinction of being the only club to complete their programme without conceding a point.

Keen competition prevailed in the Second Division when the championship, won by Breckside Co-op., was not decided until their final match had been played and won.

The “Readman” Cup Competition, won by Ennismore, again proved a popular event, and it is a credit to regional teams that four of their number succeeded in reaching the fifth round.

No fewer than 17 representative Inter-League matches were played, and the friendly relationship with other Leagues has consequently strengthened.

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TABLE TENNIS.

Mr. Leslie E. Forrest.

The appointment of Mr. Leslie E. Forrest as a permanent Assistant Secretary at the Headquarters of the Association in London was decided upon at the last meeting of the Executive Committee. Mr. Forrest, as Secretary of the Liverpool and District League, was one of the best known and popular officials in the country, and the position of Liverpool as one of the strongholds of the game is almost entirely due to his work. He started the Liverpool League in 1925 with seven clubs and last season it contained 79. He has been a member of the Executive Committee of the E.T.T.A. since its formation, and as an active representative of the National body has been responsible for the formation of many Leagues. The popularity of the Merseyside Open is largely due to Mr. Forrest, whilst regretting his departure, congratulate him that the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, London, W.C. 2 (Temple Bar 8444), is the firm responsible.

W. J. P.

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CORRECTION.

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF "TABLE TENNIS" AN ERROR OCCURRED IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS. EXHIBITIONS.

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W. J. P.

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