

TABLE TENNIS

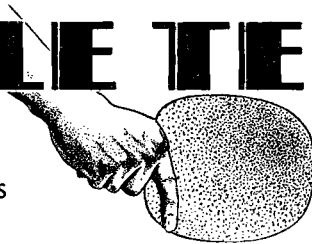
DECEMBER, 1946
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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

TABLE TENNIS

Official Magazine
of the
ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS
ASSOCIATION



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Edited by JACK CARRINGTON

Vol. V. No. 3

DECEMBER, 1946

From the Editor's Chair

Welcome Signs

By some imperceptible process the centre of gravity of the playing season seems to have moved. The Christmas lull, which once might have been regarded as the "half-time" of the season, now resembles more closely a pause for second-wind after the first mad dash from the kick-off.

A glance through these pages will show that the last month has been a time of intensive activity. But this is nothing to the flood of matches, tournaments, meetings and functions which will start with the Metropolitan Championships on New Year's Eve and roll on unceasingly until May or even June.

It is, therefore, too early to pronounce judgment on many aspects of the game and its post-war organisation. But we may be permitted to remark certain welcome signs that health and vigour are returning to table tennis.

* * *

Amongst these are :—

● . . . The great improvement in Press publicity. In this respect the organisers of the recent Central London Championships deserve special praise. By intelligent presentation, both of the personalities taking part, and the "statistics" of the competition, they enlisted the interest of many nationally famous sports writers, who in turn drew the public.

* * *

● . . . The return of many pre-war "characters" to the game. Symbolic, no doubt, of many lesser-known exiles is the reappearance of such as Sears, Bergl, Joyce, Seaman and Marshall in the south, and Lurie, Stanley and Peter Rumjahn in the north. Ken Hyde and Harry Rosen are also amongst those who, if too busy to seek first-class form, knew where to find first-class fellowship.

● . . . The presence of the National Secretary, Bill Pope, and the Treasurer, A. K. Vint, supported by six other national executives of the game, at the Liverpool League's Coming-of-Age Luncheon.

Here they mixed with fans from all parts of the British Isles.

Here also were seen, for example, the Southampton representative in close consultation with the Northumberland representative.

Such meetings of the Frozen North with the Deep South can do nothing but good.

We learn again the old lesson, that the North is not, after all, so frozen—nor the South, perhaps, so deep!

* * *

● . . . The growing number of junior competitions and the marked advance in the number and quality of the entrants.

The vigour and freshness of many of these matches gives them an attraction all their own.

Much more must, and will, be done for our youngsters. Your own ideas may help—please study our special Prize Letter announcement on a later page.

Festive, Not Restive

And now to all our readers and supporters of table tennis everywhere, we wish a restful Christmas and a busy, happy, New Year.

Lock the bats firmly away in the cupboards, and swear not to inflict a single word of table tennis on your long-suffering family for two days.

Goodwill to all mankind; and this includes all Hon. Secretaries . . . the chap who beat you at deuce last week . . . and, we hope,

THE EDITOR.

1. Which comes first

DEFENCE or ATTACK ?

THE Editor has asked me to give my views on this age-old subject. In my opinion, it all depends what one terms a beginner. No, I am not begging the question, like the eminent broadcasting authority. For instance, a player who has played in an attacking style for three or four months and then decides to be properly coached could be termed a beginner, and it would be a crime to tell him to forget all about his attacking style for the following six months. It is probable that he has a natural attacking outlook, and the strain of learning the first rudiments of the game after he has achieved some slight measure of success in his own local circles may cause him to lose interest.

Let us assume the ideal beginner, a youngster of 16 or 17, who decides to be properly coached from the moment he or she first picks up the bat. Given these circumstances, I submit that there is only one answer. The two basic shots in the game are the backhand and the forehand push, from which all else must be built up.

Basic Drill

The instructor should, for the first few hours of coaching, push good length balls on to his pupil's backhand, aiming to get the top of the bounce at a spot about two feet behind his pupil's baseline. The pupil (hereinafter called "X") should be instructed to play an orthodox forward push, until he has achieved a measure of accuracy, not only in returning the ball on to the other side of the table, but to the approximate spot to which the coach desires. Next step, the coach introduces a slight top-spin into his shots, which cause "X" to push the ball off the other end of the table. To counter this, "X" has to learn the chop stroke, pushing downward instead of forward. This is the most heartbreaking stage, for "X" is likely to miss the ball completely for quite a while, until he learns to time his

stroke to coincide with the top of the bounce of the ball. And please, Coach, now is your big chance to give "X" the opportunity to become a world class player. Teach him to push and chop on the back-hand WITH HIS BODY FACING THE TABLE. This is much more difficult, but in my view is essential. I know this is a controversial point, but I hope to explain my reasons in a later article.

Where To Stand

To return to "X." He is now (we hope) able to deal with your flat pushed and moderately hit topspin drives on his backhand. You will note that all this time he should be taking the ball at the top of the bounce. Therefore he must be standing a couple of feet behind the table. This is something that you can never teach the player who has first learned to attack to do. He is always on top of the table, and either taking the ball too early, causing it to fly off the far end of the table, or else moving backwards to take his stroke, probably pushing it into the net, and certainly being off balance for the next shot.

Now, assuming that "X" has been instructed to keep his weight on the ball of his feet, and not stand flat-footed, he can be on top of the table with one short stride, and the next logical move is the backhand drive. "X," if a right-handed player, moves his right foot forward to the short ball, and instead of pushing forward or downward, pushes upward.

This stroke is the forerunner of the backhand flick, and is quite easy to teach at this stage, providing "X" has good ball sense and has made satisfactory progress.

Now Try The Same On The Forehand

"X" should by now have a reasonable backhand game, and we can now repeat the performance on the forehand. Forehand push forward, push downward (forehand chop) and push upward (beginning of forehand top-spin). Here, of course, is the basis of the attacking forehand strokes, and you will note how easy this is if he is facing the table for his backhand shots. Move the right foot

a series for the inexperienced

by Geoff. Harrower

English International
& Scottish Champion



Geoff Harrower discusses a "knotty point" with Middlesex Chairman, Mortlake Mann.

backwards, or backwards and sideways, according to the angle of the ball, and only one easy foot movement is needed. Whereas if "X" is taught backhand defence sideways to the table, he will need two foot movements to get into position for a forehand stroke, one too many in modern Table Tennis.

"X" Comes To The Cross Roads

"X" has now (praise be) learned the basic elements of the game, and the coach can decide now whether or not "X" is cut out to be an attacking or defensive player, or an all-rounder. If an attacking player, however, "X" will always be able to fall back on his first learned strokes when he meets an opponent who gets in first, and a spell of defence is necessary.

One final word. Success can only be achieved by hard work. There is no easy road to glory to become an International. Practise, practise, and still more practise, if possible with slightly better players all the time, and don't be afraid to take a licking.

SCOTLAND UNLUCKY

Before the largest crowd in the history of Scottish table tennis, Switzerland beat Scotland (Men) by 3-2, at Edinburgh on 22nd November.

TRAINING OF YOUTH

Have you any Prize Ideas

ALL are agreed that youngsters should be encouraged into the game, and helped to reach the higher standards. Few, however, can agree as to the most efficient method of achieving this aim.

Because we feel that a consensus of opinion might help organisers to tackle this problem, we offer

TWO PRIZES of ONE GUINEA each, to the senders of the two most helpful and practical letters under the heading

"What should be done for the young player?"

Letters must be addressed to:—

The Editor,

TABLE TENNIS,

69, Victoria Street,

London, S.W.1.

And must be received not later than 25th January, 1947.

EUROPEAN CUP

WALES FIGHT HARD AGAINST OUR MEN

The European Cup match between England and Wales at Cardiff on 9th November, was considered by most authorities to be the finest match yet played between the two countries. The Welsh singles players seemed to be inspired by the quality of their opponents, Johnny Leach and George Goodman. Sweetland, a neat defender with a well-placed backhand attack, hung grimly on to Goodman in the first event. The tightness of the score reflects credit on two good fighters: Goodman won 21-19, 25-23, 23-21.

LEACH EXTENDED, TOO

Undeterred by this disappointment, Stan Jones "got stuck into" Leach, for all the world as if he had never heard of Johnny's unbeaten record. His plan, too, consisted of an agile "floating" defence, punctuated by first-time kills off any short ball. Jones lost first game at 19, won second at deuce; in the third he was losing 11-15, then leading 18-15! At this stage he became over-eager, trying to drive two balls in succession instead of mixing it as before. Johnny pulled out 21-18, and in so doing ensured moral supremacy for the fourth game, which he won 21-7.

Followed the doubles, Milsom and Lewis v. Leach and Carrington. The Englishmen, with an old score to settle against the Welsh Champion pair, took matters very seriously. They won 21-19, 21-14, 21-17, but the Welsh team was always "there"—witness their second game score of 14 after being 14-0 down!

England thus qualified for the third round to meet Switzerland in an away fixture.

Remaining singles: Leach beat Sweetman, 21-19, 21-17, 21-10; Goodman beat Jones, 21-13, 27-13, 21-13.

ODD



SHOTS

by "The Umpire"

Wives Please Copy

Barna won a table tennis tournament last summer. But surely that isn't NEWS? Well, in this case it is, because it happens to be the first tournament this particular Barna has ever won. We refer, of course, to the charming Mrs. Suzy Barna, and the tourney she won was the weekly affair at a famous holiday camp. The illustrious Viktor was performing his stage exhibitions at a nearby theatre, and so he and Suzy were "campers" for a week.

Whether out of modesty or to avoid scaring the other competitors we are not sure, but the fact remains that Mrs. Barna entered under an assumed name. The name she chose was "Miss Barnes," and in the circumstances it is a good thing that she managed to win, thus sustaining the reputation of the better-known Miss Barnes—English International.

Can't you just imagine all the World Championship trophies in the Barna household, nudging each other and turning green with jealousy as Suzy's prize was installed in the place of honour?

* * *

Quick Marsh

Slough Social Centre, with five tournament tables available almost all day and every day, should prove a good nursery for new talent. Their leading man, Eric Marsh, a West Ealing junior star just before the war, is now beginning to make his mark again in tournaments. Eric managed to play in places as

far apart as Syria and Berlin during his army service, and in fact, won a competition in Berlin against 170 other entrants. Once in Damascus he saw a heap of "XX" balls in one of those holes in the ground which are dignified by the name of "stalls" in a Syrian bazaar. It was not a mirage, only a miracle. Although in a stall of this type it must be very difficult to get under the counter, he was able to buy a few dozen at 6/9d. each. However, there were compensations. Eric's unit managed to get a $\frac{3}{4}$ in. table made for the price of 20 "Wood-bines!" *Details of fares to Syria may be obtained from the E.T.T.A. office.*

* * *

This Bunny Is No Rabbit

In Town last month. "Bunny" Chernock, from the Champion Scottish team, the Gambits.

Bunny is an Englishman, but after seven years residence North of the Border, was chosen to represent Scotland in their Europe Cup match versus Switzerland. He brought into the office a Scrapbook nearly as large as himself, full of interesting cuttings relating to the game in Scotland. One thing is clear, although the number of clubs in that country is small, the game gets a wonderfully "good Press," as the theatrical folk say.

Chernock has a strangely mixed game. With clever half-volley play à la Bublely, he combines a fore-hand drive taken almost at the finish of the ball's bounce.

He must be the only person who can make a complete exhibition item out of his service alone.

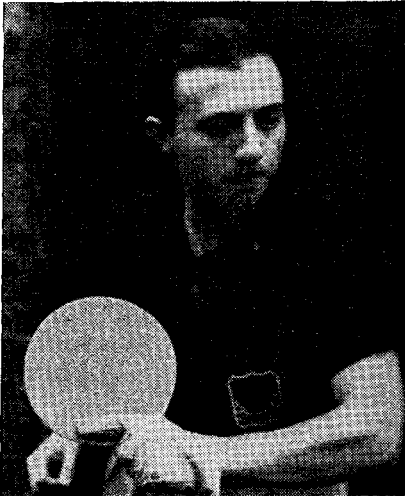
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Youth-shire ?

This season Yorkshire are running a Youths' Inter-league competition in order that the best young players in each league may pit their skill against one another. Bradford, Halifax, Dewsbury, Barnsley, Hull and Sheffield are taking part. This is a good scheme, as it is not fair to judge a young player's temperament when he is up against more confident senior players.

* * *

Congratulations to Ernie Bubley, probably our most successful International in the seasons just before the war, on his latest success. His engagement is announced to the charming Miss Jacqueline Alge, of



North London, and they are planning to be married in the spring.

Bubley's recent 2—1 win over Leach in a London League match, was the first decision gained by any Englishman against our No. 1 player for over a year.

KAY STAMMERS, all-England Lawn Tennis star, in her weekly article on women's sport in the "Sporting Record," usually gives table tennis a mention. We take the liberty of quoting one of her comments after attending a table tennis tournament "...the smoothness and precision with which these table tennis tournaments are run is something the Lawn Tennis and Badminton people could study with benefit, it all went off like clock-work." And yet the entry fee for a table tennis tournament is usually 5/- for all three events, compared with 15/- for one event in a Lawn Tennis tournament. It is no wonder that we never, never hear tournament competitors complaining!

* * *

Manchester's Gift to London.

George (Eli) Goodman took up residence in London during the month, thus adding one more excellent player to London's tally, and depriving Manchester of perhaps their best match player.

Always a likely fighter back in 1939, Goodman remained in some obscurity until last season, when a sudden spurt of form brought him the Cheshire Open and the Yorkshire Open, Singles titles.

Capped for England against Wales and Scotland last year, he was first reserve this year for the Czechoslovakian tour, and was No. 2 singles player against Wales last month.

* * *

Listening to the "Inkspots" singing that lovely song, "Is it Love?" we thought the words very appropriate for Table Tennis players in the early stages. They sing, "What is it that makes my head go round and round while my heart stands still?" The table tennis player's version reads: "What is it that makes my arm go round and round while my feet stand still? Is it love?" No, chum, just nerves.

A Quest for Rhythm

by Ron Crayden

DISPIRITED and sick at heart, I fastened the latch of the club door and wandered out into the dimly lit street. What a night I had had; three vital games lost through an unaccountable patch of bad form. Even my team-mates had shown disgust and had made incisive remarks about my child-like "PING-PONG." If only I could account for my miserable performance.

Reaching the cross-roads, I veered to the right — an unusual route for me—hoping that the cool night air would ease my troubled feelings. Less than a hundred yards had been covered when a wave of sound cut the gloom and disturbed my train of thought.

The Inspiration

From a neighbouring house came the fugitive wisps of a clarinet, swelling and falling, and floating in and out of a driving brass section — possibly a bunch of impetuous youths huddled around a radiogram. At first I took little notice; then suddenly I stopped as though the victim of a seizure. RHYTHM! that was it, that was the reason for my failure. My game was lacking the essentials of continuity and rhythm.

The pulsating beat was still audible as I wandered aimlessly on, but my mind was in a whirl. It was caught between a cross-fire of table tennis shots and rhythmic outbursts. Both these youthful obsessions seemed far removed from each other, and yet, from a social aspect, they were closely allied.

The needle-pointed excitement, the close-shuttered atmosphere, the hushed expectancy and the spontaneity of it all. Gradually my mind sorted out the important factors and formed a picture from which I was able to extract favourable comparisons.

The Vision

I saw before me a brightly lit arena, and there in the middle a table tennis tournament was in progress. The players themselves were casually knocking up like musicians tuning and busking before the ping and zing of the beginning. The preliminaries over,



Jazz-fan Ron Crayden, 6ft. 3in. South Londoner, served 6 years in R.A.F.

the atmosphere became more tense and electrified, and we were off to a flying start. The metronome-like tick-tock of the celluloid at the outset was similar to the throbbing beat of a drum; then suddenly the

quickenings of the tempo brought about a series of heavy smashes like a jazz-man interpolating fantastic passages of melody with no apparent relation to the fundamental beat. The whole picture was a fusion of table tennis and jazz music, with rhythm as the guiding factor. The delicacy of touch and timing, the fluency of strokes and the rhythmic poise of the contestants; even their scampering feet were like patterned music. The occasional pushing of the ball had a lulling effect, and at times became annoyingly monotonous like a hackneyed repetitive riff; then in complete contrast ensued a frenzied free-for-all, with here and there a drop-shot which was as surprising as a blue note. Yes, table tennis was essentially a branch of rhythm — the life of mind and body in full accord, the building up to a climax, and the unfettered joys of vitality and freedom of expression.

And The Lesson

Such were my thoughts as I turned the key in my front door lock; but I was soon brought back to earth with a bump. Wafting along the passage came a wailing noise, tuneless and discordant. It was my young brother practising his saxophone. My first reaction was to scream with despair, but I managed to control such an impulse. After all, he too, was only seeking fluency, control and rhythm.

E.T.T.A. EXHIBITION TOUR

The English Table Tennis Association has organised a short tour by well-known International players, who will visit various provincial centres during January for the purpose of playing exhibition matches and giving instructional demonstrations.

Most dates have now been filled, but odd vacancies may still be available, and any organiser who is interested in sponsoring a visit by the official team should apply to E.T.T.A. office promptly.

Merseyside Thrills

Barna - Leach Epic

The finals of the Merseyside Open Championship were staged this year at the Liverpool Stadium before a very large crowd.

The Men's Singles final produced one of the most thrilling games of table tennis seen in this country for a long time. Johnny Leach, who had lost to Barna in the Central Tournament in three straight sets, was determined to have his revenge. He won the first two games 21—17, 21—18. The third set was a gruelling struggle, and after 18-all had been called, Barna won the next three points to take the set. In the fourth set Barna led all the way and was a comfortable winner at 21—15. The fifth set produced the most exciting play of all. Leach took a slight lead at the beginning, but it was 10-all, and from then on Barna gradually forged ahead to win 21—16. Both players fully deserved the terrific ovation they received from the crowd, and I am sure this game will be remembered in Liverpool by all who were fortunate enough to witness it. Previously, in the semi-final, Barna easily disposed of Leslie Cohen, and Leach had beaten Benny Casofsky.

In the Women's finals, Elizabeth Blackburn defeated Helen Elliot 21—9, 21—18. There were some thrilling rallies but Helen obviously lacked the experience to worry a player of Elizabeth's class.

The Men's Doubles final was won by Viktor Barna and Adrian Haydon in two straight sets. Leach and Carrington never got into their stride and did not produce the form of which we know they are capable.

It was good to see Mrs. Roy Evans appearing in a final once again, but in partnership with Elizabeth Blackburn they were just not good enough to win against Helen Elliot and Pinkie Barnes in a very close game.

The Mixed Doubles was won by Johnny Leach and Elizabeth Blackburn in two straight sets against Jack Carrington and Betty Stevenson.

Historic Gatherings

On the following day a reception was given by the Liverpool League to celebrate the League's coming-of-age. A large number of players and officials were present, including W. J. Pope, A. K. Vint, N. M. and C. A. Kemp, of the Irish Association, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Evans, of the Welsh Association, Viktor Barna and other well-known personalities.

The League's Chairman, Mr. T. G. Brandreth, welcomed the guests on behalf of the League, and several short speeches were made by the League and E.T.T.A. officials recalling the growth of the Liverpool League and the work done by those officials who had been connected with its development.

JACK KURZMAN.

HULL'S BUSY MONTH

In addition to organising the very successful Hull Open Tournament which attracted 170 individual entrants, the Hull & West Riding T.T.A. entertained a party of 20 players from Rotterdam. All the visitors were billeted with hosts in the town, and the visit was a real success from both the sporting and the social aspects. Organised tours were arranged and, of course, two inter-city matches. Hull men won 6—4 and their ladies 7—3. Congratulations to Tournament Secretary Harry Flinton and his colleagues on this double feat of organisation.

"Special Credit" Girl



PEGGY FRANKS, of Leyton,

European Cup International,
Tournament record to date this
season:—

Winner, Birmingham Open.

Winner, Eastern Suburban Open.

Finalist, Thameside Open.

Finalist, Central London Open.

Recently announced her engagement
to Ronnie Hook, well-known Kent
player.

METROPOLITAN OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Details for Spectators

The "Met," most popular war-time tournament, and the first championship of the season directly organised by the English Table Tennis Association, will be staged in

THE POLYTECHNIC EXTENSION,
LITTLE TITCHFIELD STREET,
LONDON, W.1.

on December 30th, 1946, and January 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1947 (no play on December 31st).

Entries have already closed. Spectators, however, may be admitted to the preliminary sessions from Monday to Thursday, price 1s. Admission to the Friday session, when all the leading players will be in action, will cost 2s. 6d.

Finals Night,

Saturday, 4th January, 1947

Play starts at 7 p.m. Tickets—prices 2s., 3s. 6d., 5s. 6d. and 7s. 6d.—may be obtained from E.T.T.A. Office, 69, Victoria Street, S.W.1. Telephone: ABBey 2165.

Meet Your Dutch Friends

The "Barna-Club" of Utrecht, one of the strongest in Holland, equivalent to a small town league in England, are very anxious to sample English table tennis. In return for hospitality this winter they can offer hospitality to their hosts at any time in Holland. Naturally they would prefer matches somewhere near the capital, but would be grateful for any suitable proposal.

Individual hosts or organisations interested in entertaining up to, say, 12 players, please send details to this office for forwarding.

Johnny Leach writes his impressions of

PLAY AND PLAYERS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

(Continuing "Sentimental Journey" from our November issue)

On arrival in Prague we were all anxious to begin right away acclimatising ourselves to the conditions we had heard so much about; the balls as hard as the proverbial bullet, and the fast tables which glitter like glass. These difficulties we were resigned to, and keen to tackle and overcome.

So a few hours after landing, at the conclusion of a long-drawn-out dinner two of us managed to persuade Vana to take us to their famous hall in the Capital, where they have 20 tables going all day. This was about 10.10 p.m. and the hall closed at 10 p.m., but a few words by "the master" on the phone, and the owner soon agreed to reopen especially for us. Before leaving we had strict instructions from our Captain to return to the hotel by 10.45 p.m. The rest of the team appeared not to be in the least anxious about joining us; they said that bed would do them more good.

OUR FIRST SET-BACK

As soon as we entered this massive club and saw the conditions, we had a most awful shock; the balls and tables were as expected, but the lighting was too bad for words. It consisted of one lamp about 6 ft. above the centre of the table, the bulb being not more than 60 watt. This was a great set-back and we soon lost our keenness to play; we were only too willing to comply with Ivor's instructions to return to the hotel by 10.45. Nevertheless, we came for a knock, and a knock we were going to have; so we hurriedly changed our shoes, discarded collars and ties and, with about 20 locals crammed in the doorway and Vana sitting in the Umpire's chair, looking on, we began our first game in Czechoslovakia. A few minutes after we started there was a scuffle in the doorway, and who should we see entering but the rest of the team, who were supposed to be in bed. They were as keen and anxious as we were, but I think they preferred to watch us make fools of ourselves before they did. As soon as they appeared we vacated the table to allow Geoffrey and Ron to demonstrate. Geoff. automatically went back on defence, and it was really laughable to see Ron hitting hard and the ball returning out of the gloom. We could tell it was Geoff. chop-

ping them back because at regular intervals we heard that well-known phrase of his, "Oh, yes!"

Naturally the girls couldn't leave without showing their talent, but like the men, they were easily satisfied, and we returned to our hotel.

NOTHING COULD SHAKE US

On going over to the reception desk for our keys, we found there was a letter from Ivor with a word of warning. He informed us to be ready for a shock the next night, as we were to play our first match on a table *made of glass*. Little did he realise what we had already discovered for ourselves, after which nothing could shake us.

Summing up the conditions on the whole of our tour, they were poor compared with ours, bad lighting, slippery floors and shiny tables; but credit must go to the organisers of each town we played in for the way they tried and did improve the conditions as near to our liking as possible.

So much for the conditions; now for a few words about the players.

THE TABLE TENNIS GENIUS

I call Vana the genius of table tennis because, to my mind, he is invincible. Observing him play the world's best

players, and not seeing one of them take a game from him, you will understand why I say he is in a class of his own. The speed and accuracy of his footwork and shots are a table tennis player's dream. I would need to play him many times before I could approach his speed.

There is a gap of four to five points between Vana and the next class of player, namely, Slar, Andreadis, Tereba and Marinko, although I am told that these players have had decisions over the genius at one time or another. Most of you saw Slar, Andreadis and Marinko (the penholder) at the English Open. These players who are ranked next to Vana are definitely beatable, but, believe me, they want some beating. They are players whom our top notchers get very near to beating in a match and, when beaten, come off the table feeling that next time they could reverse the decision; when next time comes it is just the same. In other words, you are never satisfied that you have been well and truly beaten by them, whereas when beaten by Vana you have no false illusions as to who is the boss.

TWENTY TO BEAT

Tereba is something like Slar, only more of a stylist, a really good all-rounder with a very hard forehand attack. He is ranked jointly with Slar as No. 2.

Of the others I should say the next 20 players in Czecho, are all capable of defeating the players already mentioned. Nearly all have a devastating forehand hit, but not so consistent, thank goodness.

Summing up all the players as a whole, I shall have to use Ivor Montagu's own words:

"Table Tennis
Genius," Vana,
the Electric.



Johnny Leach's Impressions *continued*

"There are two types of players in Czechoslovakia, and they are—defensive players who can also attack and attacking players who can also defend."

The Czech system of umpiring caused us some headaches. It was bad enough to have to remember that 14—13 was something like "schtr-r-r-nashttzcheemasht," but on top of that the higher figure was always announced *first*, no matter which player was serving.

Harrower was the only one with enough confidence to start an argument in a language he didn't know; the rest of us hoped for the best. As for the girls, we were convinced that they hadn't a clue; they just went on bashing until somebody shook hands with them.

Whichever system was adopted the result was the same—a wonderful improvement in our match temperament.

THE MADING CROWD

Incidentally, when a Czech player reached 20 a roar went up from the crowd and you could feel them waiting for the kill.

When we got to 20 first, our Czech opponent would turn up his trousers, grit his teeth, and hit like a man possessed.

Small boys and girls often occupied the front seats, where they sat intent, without fidgeting, all evening. One thing I noticed: seldom did we have to wait while the loose ball was recovered from the 2nd or 3rd row, as in England. In Czechoslovakia every citizen, even old ladies, seemed to be able to "field" a table-tennis ball with ease.

Amongst players who have made friends in England we met war-time visitors Sebestak and Berger, both of whom "married English," Huml, Kohn, Rulrivger, Major Picka; also the brother of "our" Pasdirek.

Pre-war players will be pleased to hear that we saw such as Hamr, Kolar, Heydusek, Malacek, Votrubicova, Smidova, Lauterbach, of the heartbreaking defence.

THE CHAMPIONS

One of our last and best matches was against Viktoria Klub of Plzen, who are the champion team of Czechoslovakia. We played in Plzen, home of the Skoda war factories, and the town where the famous beer is brewed, and it was really enjoyable—the table tennis, I mean. The hall was packed to capacity, and they were a table tennis audience; every rally was applauded, irrespective of which player made the winning shot, throughout 13 best-of-three matches. All games were very close, and after a real set-to

we managed to win 8—5. One of their team named Vlk (Wolf) really impressed me as a doubles player; it is hard to believe, but he actually hit harder than Vana. If he has a good partner in the World's, I feel sure they will be a worry to all serious contenders.

OUR GIRLS PROVE THE MASTERS

Watching our girls playing the world's best, it was a pleasure to see them the masters. Although they have had much less experience than Ketnerova & Co., Vera and Betty went on the table in the big International and played like world champions. Not once were they in any difficulty, and I'm convinced that one of



our girls will bring back the title from Paris next March. What a pity we have to rely on the weaker sex!

Editor's Note.—There you have the impressions of our best young post-war players. Johnny omitted to tell you that the Czechoslovaks themselves conceded him a place near their No. 2 ranking. He confirmed this by beating Marinko, ranked No. 4.

It was interesting to see how Geoff. Harrower, in spite of attacker's conditions, managed to slow down all but the top few players. Our own youngster, Ronnie Rumjahn, spent a week or so adapting his game. Experimenting with half-volley and counter-hitting, he made a fine show in the second week. His bearing and personality made him very popular with our hosts.

LEAGUE NOTES

"NORTH" TEAM PICKED

Ashton-under-Lyne T.T. League staged the North trial match on December 6th, at which National Selectors W. Stamp and L. Jones were present.

Casofsky, Lurie and Cohen proved clearly superior to Proffitt, Millar and Peter Rumjohm, and were chosen to meet the South at Manchester Y.M.C.A. on January 20th, 1947.

The Ashton League, nursed to a 1939 total of 61 teams by its famous Secretary, Mr. A. Swindells, is now already 42 teams strong, and the Secretaryship is in the capable hands of Mr. H. Cook.

THE MATLOCK AND DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE has been reformed with nineteen teams in two divisions—Senior and Junior. The Derwent Club has an all-ladies' team who are holding their own in the Junior Division.

A team from Chesterfield and District League scored an overwhelming victory—8 sets to 1—at Matlock in the first of a series of friendly matches.

It is hoped to stage an exhibition by the E.T.T.A. touring team in January.

Permission has been applied for to hold the Third Derbyshire County Closed Championships at Matlock during the week ending 12th April, 1947. All interested are asked to contact the Secretary, Mr. E. A. Dakin, Morledge House, Smedley Street West, Matlock, Derbyshire.

The League is also interested in reviving the Derbyshire County League.

ST. HELENS AND DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE have a record number of teams, viz., 44 competing in five divisions.

The Widnes League is still a little weak, but interest is steadily improving, and there are now eight clubs and ten teams.

W. McDOWELL, Hon. Sec.

WESTERN COUNTIES T.T.L. (a league of leagues).—Winners of "closed" championships played at Cardiff, 23rd November: Men's Singles, A. W. Simons (Bristol); Men's Doubles, Narduzzo and Wharton (Newport); Women's Singles, Miss M. Jones (Gloucester); Women's Doubles, Mrs. H. Roy Evans and Miss A. Bates (Cardiff); Junior Singles, R. Griffin (Cheltenham).

Team positions to date.—Men's Section: Cardiff and Swindon, 6 pts. each; Newport, Bristol, Birmingham, 4 pts. each; Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bath, all nil. Women's Section: Cardiff, 4 pts.; Birmingham, Swindon, Bristol, 2 pts. each; Bath, nil.

"Rain Saved Middlesex" . . .

. . . said secretary Harrower, from having to turn crowds away on the occasion of the first county trials at G.E.C. Club, Wembley. Those who came saw seven hours of keen play and many notabilities. Best youngsters were Ron Smith and R. Sterlini; ladies who did well included international Phyllis Hodgkinson, the Association's hon. assistant secretary, Eileen Benstead, and the newcomer Mrs. Carruthers, of Ashford. Best seniors were Eric Marsh, C. Wilson and C. Richards. Viktor Barna, a resident of Pinner, Middlesex, met pre-war opponents in Bergl and Sears, who showed welcome signs of returning form.

County matches: Middlesex v. Surrey, 14th January, at Rotax; Middlesex v. Lancashire, 1st February, details to follow.

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IT'S HERE! IT'S NEW!
IT'S REVOLUTIONARY! IT'S BRITISH!
IT'S WORTH WAITING FOR

Central London Open Championships

by Stanley H. Kempster

The greatest gathering of "stars" in any tournaments since 1939, with the exception of the English Open, was seen at the Annual Central London Open Championships, organised by the Central League and held at the Memorial Hall from November 18 to 23. Thirteen Internationals appeared in the men's singles event and five Internationals in the ladies' singles. The "house full" notice went up even during the preliminary rounds, and again on Saturday evening, when over 800 spectators were present at the finals.

EARLY SURPRISES

The sensation of the early stages was the defeat of E. Goodman (Manchester), England's No. 2 against Wales, by R. S. Cooper, an Indian student, who plays in the Central League. Cooper, after losing the first game fought back to win, by steady defensive play; score, 17-21, 21-17, 21-17.

Later stages of the men's events produced some brilliant play and many surprises. Barna and Brook were beaten in the second round by Glickman and Hook, who, after losing the first set at 15, won the next two at 16 and 18 and encouraged by this success went on to reach the semi-finals of this event. Carrington and Leach, the holders of the title, reached the final after beating Bublely and Harrower in an exciting quarter-final 21-10, 19-21, 21-16, and then Fretwell and Seaman (Brighton) in the semi-final 21-13, 19-21, 21-17.

G. V. Barna, undeterred by his defeat in the doubles, played magnificently in the singles and reached the semi-finals after dropping only one game to Ron Crayden, who by his well-mixed play succeeded in taking the first game from him in their second round match. I. Boros in his return to competitive tournament play surprised many by defeating G. Harrower 21-9, 21-15; all the more credit to E. Marsh, who out-hit Boros in the quarter-finals 21-6, 21-15. The other semi-finalists were J. H. Carrington, who easily beat R. S. Cooper 21-16, 21-15, and J. A. Leach, the holder and England's No. 1 player, whose quarter-final match with E. Bublely was the most exciting match of the tournament.

BUBLELY'S GREAT EFFORT

Bublely took some time to settle down and lost the first game 21-13, but then fought back and by brilliant positional backhand attack won the second 21-17. The deciding game was fairly even until the change of ends at 10-9, when Bublely with deceptive driving which out-positioned Leach went ahead to 21-16. At this point, with four points in hand, he broke down and to everyone's amazement threw away all four points, putting two into the net and two off the table. At 20 all, Leach appeared to regain his confidence and went on to win 23-21. Despite his defeat

in this match, this was a great come-back for Bublely, and it is obvious that he must once again be considered for the English team.

R. Litten (Exeter) and Miss Benstead (London), created a Mixed Doubles surprise by beating Carrington and Miss Steventon 21-19, 21-18, but were eventually defeated themselves by Leach and Miss Dace 21-11, 21-14; Miss Barnes and Miss Patterson reached the final of the ladies' doubles after disposing of Miss Franks and Miss Steventon 21-9, 21-15. In the semi-finals of the ladies' singles Miss Dace had little difficulty in beating Miss Steventon 21-9, 21-12, but Miss Blackbourn caused Miss Franks, the holder, a good deal of worry and was in fact leading most of the time before losing the third game, 21-14, 16-21, 21-18.

FINALS NIGHT

The 800 odd spectators who had to travel through a storm to reach the hall, witnessed some interesting, if not thrilling play, in the Saturday finals.

E. J. Filby and K. Merrett in the second semi-final of the men's doubles, comfortably disposed of the conquerors of Barna and Brook, Glickman and Hook 21-16, 21-16, but put up a poor show against Carrington and Leach in the final, when the latter pair, who must now be indisputably the best doubles pair in the country, won in 3 straight 21-6, 21-8, 21-16.

The closest match of the programme was the final of the men's junior singles between D. A. Miller, the holder and Junior English Open Champion, and R. E. Moore (Wembley), Moore won the first game 21-17 and only lost the second 20-22 after leading most of the time. Miller's experience enabled him to recover his composure and win the last game at 14 and so retain the title, but both boys, who are still only 17 years of age, showed remarkable promise.

Barna reigned supreme in the men's singles and after defeating Carrington in the semi-final 21-14, 21-17, gave a faultless exhibition in the final when he beat Leach 21-14, 23-21, 21-14. Barna's footwork was superb and his flick as good as ever; thus Leach, who had out-classed Marsh 21-15, 21-10 in the semi-final, met his master, in spite of some excellent retrieving.

Miss Dace avenged her recent defeat from Miss Franks by beating her clearly in the final of the ladies' singles. Miss Franks after losing the first game 21-7 and starting badly in the second, made a great recovery with angled backhand shots, only to lose at 21-19. Miss Dace in addition succeeded in taking the triple crown from Miss Franks by winning the mixed doubles with Leach when they beat Filby and Miss Blackbourn 21-11, 21-13, and the ladies' doubles with Miss Blackbourn in a match in which Miss Barnes and Miss Patterson never looked like winning, 21-15, 21-7.

This tournament was well organised and received more press reports than any other tournament since pre-war, two factors which augur well for the future popularity of post-war table tennis.

RESULTS IN BRIEF

CENTRAL LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

M.S.—G. V. Barna bt. J. Leach 21—14, 23—21, 21—14.
 W.S.—V. Dace bt. M. Franks 21—7, 21—19.
 M.D.—J. Carrington and J. Leach bt. E. J. Filby and K. Merrett 21—6, 21—8, 21—16.
 X.D.—V. Dace and J. Leach bt. E. Blackburn and E. J. Filby 21—11, 21—13.
 W.D.—E. Blackburn and V. Dace bt. P. Barnes and V. Patterson 21—15, 21—7.
 J.S.—D. A. Miller bt. R. E. Moore 17—21, 22—20, 21—14.

MERSEYSIDE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

M.S.—G. V. Barna bt. J. Leach 18—21, 19—21, 21—15, 21—18, 21—16.
 W.S.—B. Blackburn bt. H. Elliot 21—9, 21—18.
 X.D.—E. Blackburn and J. Leach bt. B. Steventon and J. H. Carrington 21, 21.
 M.D.—G. V. Barna and A. A. Haydon bt. J. Carrington and J. Leach 21—13, 21—12.
 W.D.—H. Elliot and L. R. Barnes bt. B. Blackburn and Mrs. N. Roy Evans 21—17, 15—21, 21—17.
 J.S.—D. A. Miller bt. Allcock 21—17, 21—14.

NORTH MIDLANDS OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

at Mansfield, 7th December, 1946
CRAYDEN'S TRIPLE SUCCESS
 MEN'S SINGLES.
 R. J. Crayden bt. J. Carrington 21—14, 13—21, 23—21.

LADIES' SINGLES.

Miss M. Senior bt. Mrs. P. Wildes 21—18, 21—8.
 MEN'S DOUBLES.
 Carrington and Crayden bt. W. Bedford and A. Keyworth 21—12, 21—13.
 LADIES' DOUBLES.
 Miss M. Senior and Mrs. D. Atherton bt. Miss D. Hardy and Miss D. Williams 21—14, 21—16.
 MIXED DOUBLES.
 Crayden and Mrs. D. Atherton bt. C. Ferry and Miss Withers 21—15, 21—18.

HULL OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 16th November, 1946

MEN'S SINGLES.
 R. Sharman bt. W. Bedford 21—17, 21—15, 21—16.
 LADIES' SINGLES.
 Miss Barnes bt. Miss McBryde 21—18, 21—14.
 YOUTHS' SINGLES.
 F. J. Walton bt. D. J. L. Wilkes 19—21, 21—18, 21—17.
 MEN'S DOUBLES.
 Mitton and Whiteley bt. Reay and Jeat 21—18, 21—17.
 LADIES' DOUBLES.
 Miss Lightfoot and Miss Quesby bt. Miss Purves and Miss Robson 14—21, 21—13, 22—20.
 MIXED DOUBLES.
 Sharman and Miss McBryde bt. Thompson and Barnes 21—18, 21—16.

Our WEMBLEY WEEK-END Competition

Most readers know the rules of this competition now. All you have to do is to answer one question in each of our issues for November, December, January and February.

Do not cut the coupons out until the last question appears in February.

The winner will qualify for travel to London, a ringside seat at Wembley, and hotel accommodation in London for one day, all at the expense of TABLE TENNIS (the Official mag.).

Any reader resident in the British Isles is eligible for the prize.

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION (No. 2).

As a slight advance on the spelling mistake, this time we have an anagram to solve.

Here is the key sentence of 26 letters:—

FOOT AND EYE STEPDANCE WELL, SON

Sounds like advice to a young player, and so it is. All you have to do is to re-arrange those 26 letters into another phrase making better sense.

Clues.—Clues to the correct phrase:—

1. It contains 5 words (26 letters).
2. It makes good sense.
3. It could be a piece of advice to a young player.

4. It actually appears in the pages of this magazine—this month, *in italics*.

Once again we fear we have made it too easy, but please don't be impatient. Next month's Question may narrow down the field.

THE GREAT OCCASION.

Just to remind you, "Wembley Night" is Saturday, March 15th, 1947, when the finals of the English Open Championships will be staged at the Empire Pool, Wembley.

LAST MONTH'S QUESTION.

To settle a query; the deliberate spelling mistake was in an ordinary word—NOT in a NAME. A word that every table tennis player should know.

WEMBLEY WEEK-END COUPON No. 2

My solution of the anagram :
 FOOT AND EYE STEPDANCE
 WELL, SON

is

(five words, total 26 letters)

Name

Address

TOURNAMENT DIARY

- Jan. 1st/4th.—Metropolitan Open. E.T.T.A., 69, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.
- Jan. 11th.—Yorkshire Open. L. E. Forrest, 23, Wharncliffe Road, Frizinghall, Bradford.
- Jan. 19th.—Southampton Open. Miss L. Ferguson, 20, Atherley Road, Southampton.
- Jan. 25th.—North of England. W. Berry, 416, Moorside Road, Flixton, Manchester.
- Jan. 26th.—Kent Open. F. G. Mannochm, 161, Borden Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent.
- Feb. 1st.—Hampshire Open. F. S. Brown, 124, Bournemouth Road, Parkstone, Bournemouth.
- Feb. 8th.—Midland Open. M. Goldstein, 415, Mosely Road, Birmingham.
- Feb. 15th.—Surrey and South of England Opens.
- Feb. 22nd.—Bristol Open.
- Feb. 27th/Mar. 5th.—World Championships.
- Mar. 5th/10th.—English Open.
- Mar. 22nd.—London Open.
- Mar. 29th.—Grimsby Open.
- Apl. 5th.—N.E. Yorkshire Open.
- Apl. 19th.—Cheshire Open.
- May 3rd.—Bucks Open.
- May 9th.—Wembley Open.

INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

- Jan. 18th.—England v. Ireland at Liverpool Stadium. Tickets from W. Stamp, 3, Farmdale Close, Liverpool, 18.
- Jan. 25th.—England v. Wales at Cardiff.

THE WOMEN'S MATCH FOR WOOLWICH & DISTRICT LEAGUE

England v. Belgium (Women) will be played at Plumstead Baths, London, S.E., on 19th December, 1946. Tickets and full details from Mr. F. H. Derbyshire, 55, Rennets Wood Road, London, S.E.9. Telephone, only after 6 p.m., please, Eltham 6919.

The England team will be: Misses Dace, Blackburn and Franks. Reserve: Belgian team: Mms. M. Detournay, Mles. M. Leurquin, J. Wouters and J. Kindt.

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GAMES.

Beckenham v. Leatherhead.
Luton v. London University Club.
St. Albans v. South London Lge.
Sittingbourne Lge. v. London Lge.
Toronto Club v. Willesden Lge.
Romford Lge. v. Woolwich Lge.
Croydon Lge. v. Barnet Lge.
Wembley & Harrow Lge. v. Sutton Valence Club.
Huddersfield v. Blackpool Lge.
Crewe Lge. v. Southport Club.
Radcliffe Lge. v. Bolton S.S. Lge.
Southport Lge. v. Macclesfield Lge.
Rainshall M.I. v. Chester Lge.
Liverpool Lge. v. Bispham Club.
Bedford Lge. v. Cambridge Lge.
Exeter Lge. v. Forest of Dean Lge.
Portsmouth Lge. v. Southampton Lge.
Salisbury Lge. v. Reading Lge.
Mansfield Lge. v. Grimsby Lge.
Sheffield Lge. v. Lincoln Lge.
West Bromwich Lge. v. Birmingham Lge.
West Cumberland Lge. v. Northumberland Lge.
Whitehaven Y.M.C.A. v. Carlisle Lge.

BYES.

Central Lge., Aldershot Lge., Chelmsford Lge., North Middlesex Lge., Thames Valley Lge., Dartford and North Kent Lge., Ilford Lge., London Business Houses Lge., West Craven Lge., Keighley Lge., Norwich Lge., Torbay Lge., Bristol Lge., Gloucester Lge., Bournemouth, Park Club, Chesterfield Lge., Peterborough Lge., Evesham Lge., Ashbourne Club, Worcester Lge., Gateshead Club, Sunderland Lge.

ROSE BOWL DRAW Inter-League Womens' Teams Competition

GAMES.

Leatherhead Lge. v. Croydon Lge.
Sittingbourne Lge. v. Nth. Middlesex Lge.
London Business Houses Lge. v. St. Albans Lge.
Central Lge. v. Thames Valley Lge.
Sunderland Lge. v. Northumberland Lge.
Liverpool Lge. v. Crewe League.
Blackpool Lge. v. Macclesfield Lge.
Southport Lge. v. Bispham Club.
Portsmouth Lge. v. Salisbury Lge.
Southampton Lge. v. Aldershot Lge.
Exeter Lge. v. Bristol Lge.
West Bromwich Lge. v. Evesham Lge.
Sheffield Lge. v. Huddersfield Lge.

BYES.

Ilford Lge., South London Lge., Barnet Lge., Toronto Club, Willesden Lge., Beckenham Lge., Bedford Lge., London Lge., Wembley Lge., Woolwich Lge., London University Club, Romford Lge., Southport Club, Bournemouth Lge., Reading Lge., Torbay Lge., Birmingham Lge., Gloucester Lge., Walsail Lge., Lincoln Lge., Scunthorpe Lge., Grimsby Lge.

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