

THE WIRRAL HORN

NEWSLETTER OF THE WIRRAL TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

Editor :- Stan Wilkinson.

February 1983.

Front page this month full of pleasant things :-

First to announce that the Veterans Team Competition will be called the J & F HEPPLE TROPHY. The Wirral League has provided a trophy to be played for by teams of Veterans as a mark of appreciation to Joan & Fred Hepple, for their many years of valuable service and help to the League, we wish them, and all the teams that take part in the competition many more nights of enjoyable Table Tennis.

Second :- WIRRAL BADGES have been awarded to six of our juniors for service to the League in representative matches, the standard of play in the junior ranks of the league is at a very high level at the moment and we congratulate the lads on their many successes on behalf of the league. The six are :-

Bernard Wentworth.	Roger Butler,
Ian Thomas,	Tony Bryan,
Neil Monague,	Andy Taylor,

WIRRAL CLOSED TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS As you will see by the entry forms to be found in this issue, are to be held on Sunday 6th. March at the Sports Centre, Grange Road West, Birkenhead.

Obviously to make a success of this day we would like to see most of you entering, even the lower division players entering all the events possible, can have five or six possible games in the first rounds ! It is also a meeting place for players outside the limited confines of a normal match, when if you try to make polite conversation cries of sh..... ring out. Hope to see many of you there.

Any Lady players in the league willing to make up teams to contest the McNaught bowl - please contact Joan Hepple (648 4025).

25 Years at Thorndale

I first started playing seriously when I joined the Table Tennis section of Thorndale in 1954. The club met on Monday nights and there were very few of the members whom I could beat. Margaret Cherry was the number 4 player in the 2nd. team and eventually I managed to record a few wins against her. This led to my 1st. match against Creep Inn, a team who played in a night club under New Brighton fairground. This was a traumatic experience, a dark sallow youth named Butcher appeared apparently cut of the walls to defeat me 21-4, 21-7. My other singles also brought me a single figure defeat, and even only losing my doubles with old stager Stan Caley narrowly in the third could not compensate for these reverses.

After this season my career came to a stop as a result of National Service, which I served in Singapore. My table tennis was restricted to occasional games in the Naafi. On my return in 1957 I played for our 3rd. team in Div. 5, we did quite well in a strong division, in which a strong Birkenhead Co-op team, headed by Ken Young, were invincible. At the end of the season I took over as Secretary, now that Ernie Street is no longer secretary of Lever Club, I reckon that makes me the longest running secretary in the League.

In 1958 I played for our 2nd. team, and strengthened by the acquisition of Mary Robinson from Wallasey Y.M. we managed to win the 4th. Div, for which we are still waiting to receive our medals. A division 2 win followed in the early 60's and in 1971/2 the first team consisting of Gordon Exell, Gordon Atwell, Bernie Lynch & myself were 1st. Division champions. I find this remarkable now, and am confident in asserting that the standard then was a lot weaker than today. A victory in the Lonsdale Cup has also been achieved, but the R.A.F.A. Cup has eluded us. We reached the final on 2 occasions, but went down first to Birkenhead Co-op who fielded Bruce & Barbara Cain, Charles Swindells & Peter Fallon, and on the second occasion to Pinewood, to whom we handed a 4 -) lead.

Three of our Men, John Stoddart, Eddie Clein and that incomparable stylist Gordon Exell have been Wirral Closed winners, and Mary Robinson & Barbara Cain dominated Ladies events in the late 50's & 60's. But the most remarkable triumph was the mens doubles win by Gordon Atwell & Mike Edwards over the considered invincible team of Bruce Cain & Gordon Birch.

Table Tennis has undergone a tremendous change from the time when we all played with Barma hard bats. First came the sponge bats now the variety of rubbers is quite overwhelming. Although the game is much faster, I do not think you get the varieties of play that you did with the old bats, and struggling in Division 1 this season I find that nearly all the top players have identical styles.

And a happy new year to all my readers - wherever he (or she) is. Well, the new year started in typical Neston fashion - farce. The match started slightly late due to Keith suffering from temporary amnesia (insanity?), and having to return home when well on the way to the match and Stan & Robbie having to spend ten minutes undoing the Gordian knot because some silly beggar had wound the net around (not to mention in, over, under, through and several other things), the net posts. Meanwhile, the Wallasey lads were freezing nicely.

John Bassnett had apparently played since Christmas and on this basis, Brian called him on against Robbie. Mark you, Robbie always plays after a lay-off (how about resting until the end of April, Robbie) and took the first 21-18. He was 20-18 up in the second as well but no one assumed he was going to win. If John gets into a tight spot he fights like a cornered rat and produces scorching winners from nowhere. Your intrepid reporter remembers losing 19-21 to John from 19-11 not so long ago in just this way. So, it was no real surprise when John smashed his way back to deuce and then took the game 22-20. The third game was an enigma with Robbie leading 6-0, dropping behind 12-15, fighting back but just failing 19-21.

Keith then called on Dave Sherlock against Rich. Cross. "Action Man" Richard likes to dictate the pace of the game and, I suspect, thought he could steam-roller Dave into submission. However, Dave is rather deceptive. He looks lazy and, at times, disinterested, but, there again, so does a rattlesnake. A few quick wellies from nowhere gave Dave an early lead from which Richard never recovered. The second was a reverse of the first with Rich. winning 21-13. In the third, it was tight until 17 all but Dave then tried a little too hard and went down 19-21. So, 2-0 to them, both 19 in the third. Here we go again, we don't win many but no one beats us without a fight.

Keith then played (and beat) Neil Hyland in a match which had the trapped spectators we'd locked the door) falling off the edge of their seats - in boredom. It really was a case of the player making the most mistakes losing. To give Wallasey a chance, we then called on Essjay Grayson against Brian Maiden. Essjay looked and played like an open can of Newcastle Brown which has been sitting in the fridge for six months - dull, flat, cold & lifeless - and Brian won 17 & 14.

Brian then decided that the only way to avoid the Brass Monkey Syndrome was to stay on and play Keith. We then realised that Stan hadn't played that badly. Keith failed miserably in all departments, particularly returning Brian's serve, and lost 15 & 14. Mark you, Brian struck an early psychological blow by walking round the table and demanding to see Keith's weapon. With back firmly against the wall and after an "I'll show you mine if you'll show me yours" episode, Keith complied but was scared stiff of bending over to pick the ball during the match. Hence the half - time
cont.

<u>DIVISION ONE</u>	P	W	L	D	F	A	PTS
N.B.C.C.	12	11	1	0	94	26	22
ROSEBANK	11	11	0	0	81	29	22
ALDERLEY	9	7	2	0	62	28	14
WIRRAL GAS	11	5	3	2	64	46	14
WIRRAL GAS 2	9	5	2	2	53	37	12
CIVIC	12	5	5	2	63	57	12
NESTON	11	3	4	4	46	64	10
PINEWOOD	9	3	5	1	41	49	7
ALDERLEY 3	12	2	7	3	45	75	7
ALDERLEY 2	12	3	8	1	44	76	7
CALDY	13	1	10	2	39	91	4
N.C.L.T.C.	13	1	11	1	38	92	3

<u>DIVISION TWO</u>	P	W	L	D	F	A	PTS
ALDERLEY 4	12	9	1	2	76	44	20
NALGO	13	8	3	2	78	52	18
WIRRAL GAS 2a	12	7	2	3	76	44	17
WALL. MAN	13	7	3	3	78	52	17
W.R.U.F.C.	13	6	5	2	73	57	14
PINEWOOD 2	11	6	4	1	57	53	13
CALDY 2	13	5	6	2	62	68	12
NESTON 2	12	4	6	2	55	65	10
StPETERS	12	4	6	2	51	69	10
LEVER	13	4	9	0	53	77	8
UPTON C.C.	12	2	9	1	44	76	5
BUSWAYS	12	2	10	0	37	83	4

<u>DIVISION THREE</u>	P	W	L	D	F	A	PTS
U.V.H.	12	8	2	2	79	41	18
CIVIC 2	12	8	2	2	77	43	18
ALDERLEY 5	13	7	2	4	67	63	18
CALDY 3	13	7	3	3	75	55	17
W.R.U.F.C. 2	13	6	3	4	74	46	16
WALL MAN 2	12	5	2	5	69	51	15
ENG. MART,	11	5	3	3	62	48	13
PINEWOOD 4	12	5	5	2	68	52	12
N.C.L.T.C. 2	13	2	8	3	46	84	9
W.Y.M.C.A.	13	2	7	4	49	81	8
WIRRAL GAS 3	13	1	11	1	41	89	3
CALDY 4	13	1	11	1	39	91	3

DIVISION FOUR

	P	W	L	D	F	A	PTS
MERSEY FIRE B.	12	8	1	3	85	35	19
CALDY 5	12	8	2	2	75	45	18
W.R.U.F.C. 3	13	8	3	2	73	57	18
ENG. MART 2	13	8	4	1	80	50	17
NESTON 3	13	8	4	1	73	57	17
WALL FERR.*	13	7	4	2	71	59	16
CIVIC 3	12	6	3	3	67	53	15
POLICE	13	3	6	4	62	68	10
MARINE	12	3	6	3	54	66	9
NALGO 2	13	4	8	1	52	78	9
OXTON C.C.	13	1	11	1	34	96	3
BIRK. L.R.	13	0	12	1	30	100	1

DIVISION FIVE

N.B.C.C. 2	12	12	0	0	97	23	24
W.R.U.F.C. 4	13	9	2	2	83	47	20
NESTON 4	12	9	3	0	75	45	18
PINEWOOD 5	11	6	2	3	68	42	15
WIRRAL GAS 4	12	6	4	2	62	58	14
ENG. MART 3	12	5	5	2	62	58	12
EGERTON	10	4	5	1	49	51	9
G.R.C.C.	12	4	7	1	48	72	9
WALL. MAN 3	11	3	8	0	42	68	6
BEAUFORT	9	3	6	0	31	59	6
D.K.S.	13	2	11	0	41	89	4
St MARKS	13	1	11	1	42	88	3

DIVISION SIX

PINEWOOD 6	12	11	1	0	95	25	22
WALL. MAN 4	13	11	2	0	101	29	22
CALDY 6	13	9	3	1	84	46	19
B.B.B.	13	8	4	1	77	53	17
SHAFTS	12	8	4	0	81	39	16
UPTON. C.C. 2	12	5	6	1	63	57	11
CIVIC 4	13	5	7	1	59	71	11
ENG. MART 4	12	3	6	3	52	68	9
G.R.P.C.	12	4	7	1	46	74	9
BEAUFORT 2	12	3	7	2	44	76	8
St MARKS 2	13	1	11	1	27	103	3
OXTON C.C. 2	13	0	10	3	21	109	3

score was 4 - 1 to them and another Neston defeat was on the cards. "Time for the big Neston fight back" says Keith - in hope only, no anticipation.

Well then, Robbie goes on and chops and pushes in his inimitable fashion. Richard tries to attack too much too soon and Robbie wins 15 & 17. However, "Bogey-Man" Bassnett then plays Essjay. On past results, stretching over more years than either player cares to remember, John should win. But what is this, Essjay is hitting winners. Keith is revived by artificial perspiration and Essjay wins the first game 21-17. Second game, Stan leads 5-0, John pulls back to 5-2, Stan storms ahead 15-2. John then pulls back to 16-7 and as, Stan admitted afterwards, watch the cornered rat fight. However, whether John was frozen solid or whether it was just because Stan decided the time had come to reassert his natural superiority (yer wha?), Essjay took the next five points. At three-four, the next game was vital. Could young Dave keep his bottle and pull us level or would Neil drag himself out of his despondency and put Wallasey downie two. As one might expect, it was a big-hitting match with quite a few risks being taken and some over-anxious, over-ambitious shots being missed. Neil had his chances in the first game but lost four game points. Dave took his solitary opportunity to take it 24-22. In the second, Dave played extremely well to come back from behind and won 21-18.

The first doubles was an extremely nervous affair between Keith & Essjay & Brian & Richard. Only the nerveless Essjay seemed unaffected. Richard was extremely uptight, Brian had gone into his shell and Keith was in his own little hyper-self-critical world. By dint of pushing and prodding and controlling their natural aggressive instincts (I'm joking, you fool) Keith & Stan teased mistakes from the Wallasey pair and took the first 21 - 9. However, things slipped in the second and Neil and Richard took it 21-17. In the third, Neston hoped for an early lead so that they could hold on after the change, At 6-0 things looked good. However, we frittered it away and changed round 9-10 down. The match then got more & more nervy until Keith & Stan hit a good streak to win 21-16.

The second doubles was also tense. Robbie and Dave quickly settled into a "Robbie sets them up, Dave knocks them down routine", and won the first 21-15. At 10all in the second there was a disputed service call from the unfortunate Richard which he reversed. A let should really have been played (on sportsmanship grounds) but everyone was so nervous that I am convinced no-one thought about it until afterwards. This disputed call was settled in Neston's favour and seemed to demoralize John & Neil. Nevertheless, they hung on and Robbie & Dave just sneaked home 22-20.

We had therefore turned a 4-1 deficit into a 6-4 win which can only be ascribed to one thing - grit and determination. We all won one Singles and both doubles - which can't be a bad thing TEAM performance

cont

One final thought, we've now won three league games, two of them when our new Star No.1 (Roy Williams) wasn't playing. Anyone want a part-used No.1 with new child and new job but in need of a good deal of attention before he is of any use? Alternatively, we will consider breaking him for spares.

I am thinking of taking a correspondence course in the art of precis,
ED.

J & F HEPPLER TROPHY 2nd. Round, to be played before W/Ending March 13th.

St Peters or U.V.H.	v	W.R.U.F.C.'A'
Eng. Mart 'A'	v	Nalgo.
Caldy or W.R.U.F.C	v	Wirral Gas.
Pinewood	v	Wall. Man or Civic.

DIVISION FIVE

Wall. Manor v St Marks.

Scoreline Wallasey 4 St Marks 6, What's this, Can't possibly be right, YES IT IS ! A win after 12 attempts.

Couldn't write this last night, brought home in state of shock. Seriously folks, this has been on the cards for a few weeks now, last 4 games ending in our opponents favour 3 - 7, 4 - 6, 4 - 6, & 4 - 6.

St Marks called first doubles, on came Don (Pancho) South, Martin (Hair Bear) Smith to win a tight set in the third. Second doubles and (hot) & Dave (Dangermouse) Mitchell to win against Father & Son, John & Stephen Lewis 2 - 0 (just),

Pancho returns and beats Dave Thomas in two, We stand back in amazement 3 games what a luxury!

Two veterans next locked in battle, John v 'Hot' A real hunder, John wins 3 - 1 Whew ! Next comes 'Hair Bear', playing out of his skin to beat Steve in two straight, score now 4 - 1.

'Hot' back on wins in two against Dave Hanlon, 5 - 1. All St Marks team & supporters, Taxi - driver Hugh 'Pugwash' James now leaping up and down at first point. Pancho enters scene and promptly demolishes John (sorry John). Yes, we had finally won (6 - 1 up). Wallasey fight back to 6 - 4.

Thanks to our hosts, a most sporting night, we hope you forgive us our night of triumph.

'HOT'

Averages 6 matches to qualify

Div. 1	E HARDMAN	Ald	100	Div. 4	M KING	Pol	96
	D ROBERTS	W Gas	100		G ABBOTT	Fire	91
	T TURNER	Rose	93		M MUSKETT	"	83
	S GREEN	Rose	90		A HAYES	Civ	82
	L MOLYNEUX	Nbcc	86		B DOBSON	Em 2	80
	R SMITH	Civ	85		R SPENCE	Nes 2	77
	M McEVOY	Nbcc	85		M CLEWETT	Wru3	77
	T BARRACLOUGH	"	79		W GIBBINS	E.M 2	76
	P LUXON	"	75		R DAVIES	Ferr	73
	M KONG	Rose	75		E HARRIS	Civ 3	73
	N ROBERTS	Ald 3	75		I FREE	Cal 5	73
Div. 2	R TIERNEY	Lev	86	Div. 5	J STEVENSON	Egert	100
	I OWEN	Nalgo	85		J CONWAY	Nbcc*2	95
	B MAIDEN	Wrufc	82		J HOROBIN	"	92
	P STEWART	Ald 4	79		B MURPHY	"	88
	C PAGE	"	78		d Coulson	Pin 5	86
	N MONTAGUE	W Gas 2a	78		W STANLEY	Wru 4	79
	R BARKER	W. MAN	73		D BENYON	Nes 4	75
	J BASNETT	Wrufc	73		J WETHERALL	"	73
	E BOGER	Caldy 2	71		C STEWART	Wru 4	73
Div. 3	G KIRSOPP	W Man	91		S CORCORAN	DKS	71
	N MASON	UVH	89	DIV. 6	I STREET	BEB	100
	F HEPPLER	Pine	83		D RENNISON	UCC	95
	R BENNION	Civ 2	81		N KIRSOPP	W.Man 4	88
	R STEVENSON	Ald 5	76		L DONNISAN	Pin 6	88
	D STEWART	Cald 3	73		P BIRKEN	W.Man 4	81
	M CAMPBELL	Cald 4	73		K WILLIAMS	Cal 6	80
	A BRYAN	Pin 4	72		M BRYAN	pin 6	80
	M TRAVIS	UVH	71		J BLACKWELL	"	79
	J HEARLE	Civ 2	70		P ROTHWELL	Shaft	78
					D McKEOWN	W.Man 4	77

We have at the moment vacancies on the League Committee, anybody who would volunteer their services would be welcomed, we have our meetings, usually on the first Monday in the month in Birkenhead..

Reminding all juniors, dont forget to enter the CHESHIRE JUNIOR Tournament to be held at Neston in March, entry forms available from Chris Wentworth or Myself, we must have a strong local entry to make this Wirral run Tournament a success.