

The Wirral Horn

NEWSLETTER OF THE WIRRAL TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

Editor: - Stan Wilkinson

February 1987

Bill Lowe Shield Round 3 (from results so far in)

NBCC 3 v Caldy 2
Neston 2 v WRUFC 2
Civic 3 v Eng Mart 2
Oxton v NBCC
Upton 3 v WRUFC or Marconi 2

A good win for Wirral Ladies 10 - Nil against Wigan !

R.A.F.A. CUP (SEMI-FINALS)

Pinewood 2 beat Neston 2 in one semi-final (see Report on page 8). In the other semi, Civic 3 await the winners of Caldy 3 v. N.B.C.C. 4.

LONSDALE CUP (SEMI-FINALS)

N.B.C.C. 1 v. N.B.C.C. 2
CALDY 1 v. PINEWOOD 1

BILL LOWE SHIELD Second Round winning sides please return sheets to Phil Deeks immediately as there are only TWO WEEKS in which to do the handicapping, send the sheets out, and arrange the third round matches.

COMINGS AND GOINGS AT CIVIC 3

The above title might somewhat intrigue. Going is our comfortable lead in Division 2 at the halfway stage of the season. Going are the 100% records held by players and team. As for the antonym, - well, read on and guess.

The New Year saw our team perched on cloud nine. We had a lead of 13 points over second-placed Pinewood 2, and 14 points over Neston (who have a game in hand). Our lofty position has been achieved with a squad of six, only one of whom (Captain Frank Sorrentino) is solely engaged in the Wirral. The others play also in Southport and/or Liverpool, all for different teams. Frank, with painstaking forward-planning and arm-twisting, (not to mention Mafia-like threats), has managed to fulfil his Wirral fixtures, League and Cups. His daunting task can only be compared with that of Hannibal leading his motley army across the Alps.

Our team kicked off with a win in the Bill Lowe Shield against G.R.P.C., drawing away and winning the home replay by 37 points. This was followed by an 8-2 away win over Alderley 3 in the RAFA Quarters. Civic had Val, Mabel, Joan, and Jim against Alderley's Andy McCready, Sandy, Paul Reed-Clayton, and Alan Weldon, in those orders. Alderley's wins came from Andy beating Mabel and Sandy beating Joan. As this was a case of "Dog Bites Man", (sorry dear Alderley), I shall not elaborate, except to say that the home team treated the match like a social occasion.

Our first league match in the second half of the season was at home to Neston, whom we had beaten 6-4 in the first leg, fielding the same RAFA team. In that away match, however, Neston had Keith (the H.Q. hooligan) at No. 4. This time, they brought along unbeaten Bill Crafter at No. 1, Bob Partridge, Stan Grayson, and John Dancaster, in that order. Nevertheless, the Civic team, euphoric over their successes, had no premonition of defeat. Val had beaten Bob easily in the away leg and had the measure of Bill in Liverpool 15 years ago (or is it 150?).

The match was played on what the news described as the coldest day in Britain since records were kept. We will remember this encounter as the night of two burst pipes and FIVE burst 100% records. Our team was Val, Mabel, Jim and Frank, in that order. Bill and John arrived on time, but Bob and Stan were very late. The first 100% record goes as Bill loses to Val in two sets. John then beats Frank in an exciting three-setter. Next, Bill takes Mabel's 100% record by "hard-batting" her in three. Jim plays John in a tactical

battle which goes to the Civic man in three sets.

Stan and Bob arrive, Bob apologizing profusely as he had to deal with a burst pipe at home. The third 100% record goes as Val loses to Bob two straight. Taking his defeat unemotionally, he congratulates Bob. However, (unknown to the visitors), he walks over to the Civic bench and curses Jimmy for insisting on playing with a "Chinatown" ball (Val's own words), which was heavier than the usual match ball. Mabel agrees that her loops against Bill had not the usual "kick" off the table. Frank's smashes against John had been going off at an abnormally high rate. To be fair, Val did object to using this ball even before the visitors had arrived, but he was outvoted by Jim (whose ball it was) and Frank (who took the opportunity not to supply a ball). We decide to change the ball and Frank produces a used TSP.

Mabel levels the match 3-3 by beating Stan in three. Neston then call their unbeaten pair of Bill and John against Val and Mabel. The fourth 100% record goes as the Civic pair win two straight. Neston's Stan then beats Frank in three, and they soon go 5-4 up as Stan and Bob defeat Frank and Jim. It is vital that Jim beat Bob for a draw - the time was now past 11:00 and the usually hot Civic room was freezing (or was it our imagination?). In a long, gruelling, battle, Bob and Jim play as though their lives depended on the outcome. Jim is 14-16 down in the third when the phone in the hall rings. Frank goes to answer and comes back to call a "let" - Jimmy wanted by his wife for an "emergency". We fear the worst, but it turns out to be just another burst pipe. Play resumes and the distraught Jim loses. Neston triumph 6-4, taking the fifth 100% record - Civic's unbeaten run. John Dancaster makes the observation that so many individual 100% records had gone, each one taken by a different player.

The following week, we travel to Alderley 3, with the same team that trounced them in the RAFA. Needless to say, we had to endure some gibes from Joan for our Neston defeat. Acting Capt. Val re-arranges our order to Val, Jim, Mabel and Joan, to keep Joan away from her "bogey-man" Sandy. Alderley re-arrange theirs to Paul, Sandy, Andy and Alan. On paper, it looks better for us than in the RAFA. Val calls himself on first against Sandy. With a satanic smile, Sandy produces a ball marked "TECHNO" (never heard of this), which seemed heavier than the usual match ball. A heavy ball cannot be curved in flight by spin as much as a light ball, so that one is forced to play a more cautious game until the darned thing pops up to be killed flat with very little (or no) spin at all. Moreover, devastating "serve" do not

the same effect. Val demolishes Sandy 21/9, 21/7. Paul and Jim then delight us with a magnificent game, Jim winning 17/21, 21/17, 21/17.

Civic 2-0 and looking good. Val calls on what he thought was a "dead cert", Mabel against Alan. It turns out that the only thing dead with this "cert" is Mabel. She wins the first 21/16, and goes to sleep in the next two 12/21, 17/21, although Alan did play better than I had seen before. Andy then loops and hits Joan off 21/13, 21/18, levelling the match 2-2. Val calls himself against his former Alderley team-mate Paul. Paul played vigorously, attacking with his unique backhand which I can only describe as a "push-smash". Val wins 22/20, 19/21, 21/13, the set being marred by people walking in and out of a quiz match in the bar. This appeared to affect Paul more than Val, seemingly because of Paul's concern for his friend.

Civic lead 3-2 as Andy takes on Jim. Andy likes to attack on both wings, and it was exciting to watch him in full flight against the consistent defender Jim. When Jim attacked, Andy countered, hard. As Mabel remarked, the young lad "is not scared of the ball". Amidst thunderous applause from both sides, and vociferous grunts and groans from our Jimmy, Andy wins 21/16, 21/16, to level the match at 3-3. Joan defeats a very courteous Alan 17/21, 21/14, 21/12. Sandy then bamboozles a "sleeping" Mabel 21/8, 22/20, despite Mabel leading in the second 15-10 and 19-13. We at Civic can tell when our Mabel is dozing. Awake, she retrieves a ball on the floor some six yards away by making two enormous jumps, which we call a Mabel "double-sukuhara".

All square, with only the doubles left. Alderley, to a man, were fighting like tigers. Clearly, they were intent on doing a "Neston" on us. Civic's Jim and Joan play Paul and Sandy in yet another cliff-hanger, Alderley's pair winning 21/17 in the third. The final game, Val and Mabel against Andy and Alan, was an anticlimax, the Civic pair winning 21/11, 21/16. An honourable draw. Our thanks to Alderley for an exciting match played in a friendly spirit. Barring miracles, we reckon that the title race is between our team and Neston who are only two points behind us (if their game in hand against St. Peters is a 10-0 walkover).

On a lighter note, we read with great amusement, the exercise in "double entendre" sent in by J.D.F. (Captain of Pinewood 2), regarding the problems (or delights) of running a squad in which two women play with four men. Our own squad have the same dilemma. Last season, Val satisfactorily played with Joan many times. This season he has played with her only twice, as Joan has opted out

out when Val was in. He thought it was because Tony (how did he get into this script?) was becoming jealous, until he learned it was because Joan's services were needed elsewhere. It's a pity, as Val regards this a more formidable pair than that mentioned by J.D.F. (and you can read into this exactly what John meant). A true comparison may yet be made if and when the two meet in the RAFA.

Val began to play with Jimmy, leaving Captain Frank with either Bill or Mabel. At first Val was disconcerted by Jimmy's grunts and groans during play, but soon realized this was Jim's way of showing he was doing his utmost. Frank, on the other hand, is perfectly happy. He just keeps on doing his normal strokes, leaving his partner to do their own thing. Frank is very versatile. Not many people know it, but Frank played with Julie whilst Rob played with Gloria (Burns) in the finale of the "mixed" at H.Q. on New Year Sunday. Scoring more points than the other partnership, Frank and Julie shared the handsome prize of £5. Later on, Julie said this was the most she has ever earned at playing.

When Frank plays with Mabel, she occasionally brings out some weird strokes, causing Frank (and the opponents) to gape in astonishment. If this happens when Mabel and Joan are playing with each other, Joan stops dead in her tracks and glares at Mabel or bursts out giggling. You should see their opponents' bewildered faces, though, when they miss the point. Bad for the heart, but good for the points.

When Bill invited Val to play with him in Liverpool, they were extremely successful as Bill feasted on Val's "boomerang" (serve, of course) to good effect. Thereafter, when a lady was not available, Val played with Bill, leaving Frank to cope with Jimmy's noises. As Val and Mabel are booked to perform in the Southport "closed", he has been allowed to practise playing with her in the Wirral first. So far, this pair is unbitten (another typing error!).

Frank has not yet played with Joan (as far as we know). Neither has Bill played with Mabel, although he may have done so in Liverpool without telling us. Against Alderley, Jim played with Joan for the first time, with disastrous results. But we think maybe this was because Tony was watching (and scoring).

We can hardly wait to pit our pairs against those of Pinewood 2. We might even end up having a friendly "swop". Ann and Debbie know that a precedence for "swopping" was set three years ago in the RAFA when Pinewood visited Alderley. The last event of the night featured Val playing with Phil (Roberts) and Ann with Debbie. As the outcome was academic, and everyone had retired to the bar, we agreed to swop partners. So Val played with Debbie and Phil with Ann. In the middle of play, the lights went out (as so often infuriatingly happens at Alderley). I seem to recall no rush to find another coin to put into the meter.

V.F.

DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	PTS
Pinewood 1	11	8	2	1	85
Civic 1	9	7	1	1	73
Caldy 1	12	6	1	5	66
N.B.C.C. 1	7	7	0	0	56
N.B.C.C. 2	8	5	0	3	43
Alderley 2	10	4	1	5	37
N.B.C.C. 3	10	3	1	6	37
Alderley 1	12	2	0	10	36
Civic 2	9	2	2	5	31
NALGO 1	10	1	0	9	26

DIVISION TWO

Civic 3	12	9	2	1	85
Pinewood 2	13	8	2	3	78
Neston 1	11	7	3	1	76
Alderley 3	12	5	4	3	66
Caldy 2	13	6	3	4	66
N.B.C.C. 4	12	6	1	5	62
W.R.U.F.C. 1	12	4	5	3	61
Thingwall 1	13	3	2	8	55
Caldy 3	13	3	5	5	54
St. Peters	12	1	2	9	42
Upton C.C. 1	13	1	1	11	35

DIVISION THREE

Marconi 1	12	7	3	2	76
B.B.B. 1	13	10	0	3	75
Caldy 4	13	6	4	3	69
NALGO 2	12	7	3	2	68
G.R.P.C. 1	12	6	1	5	67
Eng. Mart. 1	12	4	5	3	63
Wall Man.	12	5	2	5	63
W.R.U.F.C. 2	13	2	3	8	51
Oxton 1	11	5	0	6	50
Neston 2	13	2	1	10	49
N.C.L.T.C.	13	1	4	8	49

DIVISION FOUR

	P	W	D	L	PTS
Pinewood 3	11	10	0	1	83
Caldy 5	13	7	2	4	76
N.B.C.C. 5	11	8	2	1	75
Neston 3	13	7	3	3	75
Thingwall 2	12	8	0	4	70
Eng. Mart. 2	13	5	3	5	68
Upton 2	13	4	4	5	63
Civic 4	12	3	2	7	49
Oxton 2	12	1	3	8	45
B. Land Reg.	13	4	0	9	43
NALGO 3	13	0	3	10	33

DIVISION FIVE

Marconi 2	13	11	2	0	94
B.B.B. 2	14	10	0	4	85
Livingstone St.	13	8	3	2	85
WALL LAB	12	8	2	2	73
Caldy 7	11	7	1	3	71
G.R.P.C. 2	13	5	3	5	70
N.B.C.C. 6	12	8	0	4	65
Eng. Mart. 3	14	4	1	9	62
NALGO 4	14	6	0	8	61
Upton 3	11	2	0	9	39
Civic 5	14	1	0	13	33
Caldy 8	13	1	0	12	32

STOP PRESS

Wirral Closed results :-

Mens Singles :- Rob Bevan
 Ladies Singles :- Joan Connor
 Junior Girls :- Sharon Norman
 Junior Boys :- Paul Birken
 Veterans :- Alan Timewell
 Mens Doubles :- Male McEvoy & R b Bevan
 Ladies Doubles :- Sharon Norman & Belinda Lau
 Division 2 - Val Franco
 " 3 - R McDonald
 " 4 - Dave Jones
 " 5 - NeilmAllen

RAFA CUP SEMI-FINAL

Pinewood 2 (8) Neston 2 (2)

Although the scoreline would suggest otherwise, this was a close encounter and Neston gave a good account of themselves against their more experienced opponents.

Pinewood raced into a 4-0 lead but then they began to stutter. John Fowler made it 5-0 after a hard tussle against Keith Naylor, and when Julie Hope lost in three sets to Tony Reuben, the Cricket Club were still in with a shout. However a classy performance by Julian Wetherall snatched victory over Steve Williams in a close encounter.

Neston gained more consolation when Williams and Naylor lowered the colours of Ann Dakin and John Fowler for the first time this season.

Pinewood look forward to the final and hopefully winners medals.

J.D.F.

B.B.B. - V - NALGO 2

The 3rd division leaders travelled to play their closest rivals at Balls Road and soon found themselves one down when Robbie beat D. Green 21-9, 16-21, 21-15. Micky Deponio then beat Peter Mitchell 17 & 20 to level the overall points score.

G. Hockaday then beat George 17 & 15 to open Nalgo account. Ian Street then beat J. Murphy sixteen twice to maintain home advantage. D. Green then surprised all the home side by beating Micky 10 & 19.

J. Murphy put the visitors level by defeating George to 13 in 3rd after two very close opening games. Robbie clinched his first singles maximum of the season when he beat G Hockaday 22-24, 21-17, 21-17. Peter Mitchell came from 19-17 down to take the first 21-19 -v- Ian Street but Super Tweet then moved into overdrive and took the next 2 very closely.

Murphy and Hockaday then beat the 2 Mac's to close the gap to one game. Pete Mitchell and Dave Green took the opening set -13 but Tweet took the next game 17 and then pulled off a really amazing recovery to take the last 21-16 after having been 16-11 down. The very close match had ended with both teams being level on points with 1 match left before the halfway stage in the season.

J.K.T.

Determined to go clear of Nalgo 2 at the top of the table the visitors were eager to avoid any slip up and nearly suffered a major jolt when Sharon Norman beat Micky 21-16 in the opening set and led 11-4 in the third before Micky took 17 of the next 19 points to put us 1 up.

Tubby (Phil Brown) then beat P. Chadwick comfortably in the first before Chadwick moved up a gear and won 7 & 13.

The major surprise came next when the opening doubles was called and Messrs. Deponio and Street beat Norman Berry and Sharon with relative ease. The home side drew level by taking the next doubles 22-20 (after being 18-14 down) and 21-18 when Keith Marget and Chadwick took the last 6 points on the trot. Micky then gave Norman his second league defeat of the season.

George McGettrick opened his account by beating Keith 15 & 16. Tweet then beat P. Chadwick to make it 5-2. Sharon promptly demolished George. Tubby then dropped the first to Keith but levelled it off at 1 each before taking the third in a close battle. Tweet then played Norman who had previously never beaten but opened that account by clinching 7-3 win for the visitors by winning 14 & 17.

J.K.T.

SECRETARIES PLEASE NOTE. J.S. BANKS 1st ROUND DRAW.

(3 a side Under 21)

Wallasey Manor	v.	N.B.C.C.	Civic 1	v.	Wallasey Manor
English Martyrs	v.	B.B.B. 2	Civic 2	v.	Civic 3
B.B.B. 1	v.	N.B.C.C. 1	G.R.P.C. 2	v.	Caldy 1
Wingwall	v.	Oxton Nomads	Caldy 2	v.	G.R.P.C. 1

Home Team to notify Away Team of Match Night. (To be played by closing date Feb. 15th, or as soon as possible). Winners to notify PETER WALSH 051-652-8544.

URGENT/HELP: If anybody has old bats, blades, bat rubbers, or any equipment they no longer use, please ring Peter Walsh on 652-8544, or leave them behind the bar at the CIVIC CLUB (7 pm - 10:30 pm). Better still, why not drop in at Arrowe Park H.Q. (Sat. 2-5 pm). There are raw beginners, who would love to have a bat of their own but cannot afford the cost!

NIOR KNOCK OUT LEAGUE (UNDER 21)

rowe Park T.T. H.Q. SATURDAYS 2pm - 5pm

ADMISSION. IMMEDIATE START IN LEAGUE TABLE! TROPHIES FOR BEST!
CERTIFICATES FOR ALL!

sitions as at 24 January 1987

	Points		pts
1. Neil Allen	41	19. Steven Dowler	19
2. Keith Gillison	32	19. Darren Armitage	
3. Mark Newnes	30	19. Mike Reilly	
4. Paul Mutch	25	19. George Jones	
5. Jonathan Coburn	23	19. David Adams	
5. Peter Walsh	23	19. Leanne Walsh	
7. Danny McKeown	21	25. Michelle Taylor	
8. Rob Davidson	20	25. Carl Oakley	
9. Gary Allen	17	25. Rod Williams	
10. John Trenbirth	16	28. Michael Coburn	
11. Mark Carey	14	28. Peter Lampkin	
12. Chris Melling	11	28. David Lampkin	
13. Richie King	9	28. David James	
14. Susie Sorrentino	7	28. Clare Newnes	
15. Alex Lawson	6	33. Steven Down	
16. Steven Barker	6	33. Tucker Jones	
17. Michael Barker	5	33. Craig Richmond	
17. Don Farr	5		

ORT

Neil Allen lengthens his lead at the top. But who knows what can happen. Steven Dowler came right in at No. 19 on his 1st visit because he got through to 4th Round/Semi Finals gaining 4 points, (1 point awarded for each round you get through).

Example play, the winner gets 6 pts; runner-up 5 pts; semi-finalists 4 pts; etc. down to one point for those unlucky enough, to get knocked out in the 1st round.

There is still time to make an impact in the knock-out league yourself! So make the effort Saturday next! We want to see you!

PETER WALSH

Wirral Youth Rep 1986/87

COACHES/HELPERS WELCOME! COME ON DOWN!

THE CHRISTMAS HANDICAP TOURNAMENT

There were four preliminary sessions, two on Sunday, and one each on Monday and Tuesday. Each session (about three hours) consisted of four groups of 4 players, each group playing on their own table. The winners and runners-up in each group then played one knock-out round, producing four session-winners to go through to the final session on Friday. The final 16 players were then drawn into groups of four and the same procedure adopted to produce the eight who went on to the quarter-finals on. The draw (done randomly) was designed so that no two players met twice, unless they both reached the final.

It was fascinating to listen to various predictions as to who would emerge the winner. Amongst the "ringers" bandied about were Richie King (+23), Glynn Tierney (+17), Alan Biggs (+3), Mal Travis (+20), and Don South (+22). Of these, only Glynn, having played in a previous handicap competition, had a computer rating. Those competing for the first time (21 in the field) were given ratings based on information supplied by others who knew them. These ratings will be revised, if necessary, when the results of this tournament are analyzed.

All sixteen preliminary groups were keenly contested, two of the groups requiring a count of sets between three players. There were a number of "hard luck" stories of failing to qualify because of losing a close third set. One such, which drew a crowd, was Rob Bevan giving Richie King 35 start up to 46. Rob loses the first 16/46, takes the second 46/39, and "deuces" the third at 45 all, with his serve to come. He serves a "googly" into the net and loses the next point on an "edge".

Bill Baldwin (from Caldy) expressed surprise and delight at the closeness of the handicapping, although failing to go through. Bill lost to Roy Williams 22/20, 19/21, 20/22, to Chris Ford 42/44, 40/42, and to Andy Page 23/26, 26/24, 23/26. Mal Travis (also from Caldy), won all his three group games. Mal received 9 start to 21 from Julie Hope and won 21/16, 21/17, despite Julie tying the second set at 14-14. He then received 24 start to 36 from Andy Wright, and won 34/36, 36/30, 36/11, although Andy, having won the first, had pulled back the second to 28/32. Mal remarked afterwards that the secret of winning was "psychology" - the superior player relaxes and loses concentration after catching up. All you "superior" players, take note!

When the smoke of battle clears, there remained the following eight players to contest the Quarter-finals: -

John Fowler gives Don South 13 start up to 26 and wins 15/26, 26/21, 26/21. Barbara Smallwood gives Glynn Tierney 5 start up to 21 and wins 21/16, 21/17. John Powell gets 7 start up to 21 from Alan Langfeld and wins 21/18, 19/21, 21/14. Alan found himself quickly 10 down in the third after three "flukes" by John. Tony Connor gives Mike Cooper 10 start up to 21 and wins 21/18, 24/22.

Nobody would have predicted any of the four players left to contest the semi-finals. Moreover, all four were only runners-up in their groups, John requiring a set-count against Peter Langfeld, who actually beat John (giving John 22 start up to 36) 37/35, 34/36, 36/32.

In the first semi, John Powell gets 10 start up to 21 from Barbara Smallwood and wins 21/17, 25/23. Barbara (a young bundle of dynamite) looped and hit on both wings against John's defensive play, and the match seemed to be a battle by "Babs" to control her nerves. In both sets, she had pulled back the handicap, and actually held advantage point in the second.

In the second semi, Tony Connor gets 9 start up to 21 from John Fowler and wins 21/15, 22/20. John said he had his chances as he had pulled back the handicap in the second set.

And so, the GRAND FINAL is on. A crowd of about twenty gather on both sides of Table No. 2. Our own Ed (Stan) pulls up a grandstand chair for himself and calls out to John that he would never get another chance to play in front of such a large crowd. In the umpire's chair we have Alan (who else?), announcing that the final is between John (the "ringer") Powell and Tony (the "bandit") Connor. It does not help the protagonists' nerves as Alan adds that the battle is for £15.00 or £7.50.

All five previous finals had gone to three. How would this one fare? John receives 4 start up to 21. The contest is a contrast in styles - Tony's "penhold" attack against John's defence. In the first set, rallies are prolonged as both players make few unforced errors. Tony scrapes through 22/20. In the second, it looks all over as Tony goes 19-16 up. However, it is John's serve. He serves fast to Tony's backhand and chps Tony's top-spin return back to the same region. Tony nets two points and drives off the end as he adjusts to avoid a third net. Tony actually leads 20-19, but John sneaks the set 22/20. In the third set, Tony continues to lose points on John's serve, and John starts to win points by hitting loose balls with his own forehand. John finally triumphs 21/15 in the third.

V.F.