

SqR, F, T & R 3/12/32

The Jesters Singles Championship

To the Editor of "Squash Rackets and Fives."

Sir,—May I congratulate the Jesters' Club on having successfully arranged to play the Rugby Fives Open Singles Championship in the evenings—thus ensuring a representative entry. I am, however, very astonished to read that matches are to be decided on the best of three games—on games, not points. This is even more surprising to me as the St. Paul's School courts are notoriously tiring for Singles—a fact which many of your readers will be able to confirm from experience. Even when in perfect training, as one usually is at school, two games of Singles have always been more than enough. I presume that the arrangement to play games in the evening was primarily to permit those who work during the day-time to enter for this competition; and now it is proposed to ask these players, who ordinarily would only play either four or six games of doubles on Saturday afternoons, to play three games of Singles after a full day's work, with the possibility of another three games the next evening, and so on.

I also see no reason why the result should not be decided on points. I have never yet heard of a Rugby Fives match, the result of which has been decided on games. The Cyriax Cup, all matches between clubs and schools and even the Public Schools Singles Championship, which is organised by the Jesters Club, are all decided on points and I fail to see why a change has been thought necessary.

I am sure there are many other Rugby Fives players besides myself who are interested in this matter and who would much appreciate an explanation.—Yours sincerely,

V. E. OUNDJIAN,

Old Paulines' Fives Club.

24, Holland Park Gardens, W.14.

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Rugby Fives Championships

To the Editor of "Squash Rackets and Fives."

Sir,—I should like to express my very hearty agreement with the views stated by Mr. Oundjian in a letter on the subject of the proposed regulations for the Open Rugby Fives Championship published last week. The proposal that the matches should be decided on games is, as is universally known, against all precedent: this, quite correctly, should carry little weight unsupported, if the precedent is bad, but I question very strongly whether it is bad. The most obvious—in fact, the only defence of this proposal is that those who lose in the first round will get two complete games instead of a few points more than fifteen for their five shillings: that is to say, if one is beaten game 4, instead of one's opponent getting five points he has to get a complete game, a proceeding which is likely to be as boring for him as it is both boring and embarrassing for the loser.

The only competition within my experience which was decided on the best of three games was the Public Schools Doubles Championship and those of us who took part in that have no wish to see the experiment repeated.

I would like to add in conclusion that the matter has been discussed from all angles by numerous club Fives players recently and I have seldom known such a unanimity of antagonistic opinion on what appears to be not even a controversial point in the eyes of the promoters.—Yours faithfully,

K. R. R. READHEAD,

Old Pauline Fives Club.

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RUGBY FIVES

THE OPEN SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP

"The competition will be played under the Rules of Rugby Fives, which have been laid down by the Rugby Fives Association, and will be decided on the best of three games—on games not points."

Quoted above is the ruling of The Jesters Club for their second Open Singles Championship, and they are the words to which many players of Rugby Fives (all in Mr. Readhead's opinion) have taken exception. Accordingly it is my task to put before the intending competitors the case of The Jesters and to try and explain why the best of three games was chosen as against two games on points. I have also to answer both Mr. Oundjian's and Mr. Readhead's arguments, and probably by to-morrow morning many others.

A lady was once heard to ask a distinguished poet, whether or not he was fettered by rhyme; Mr. Oundjian and Mr. Readhead wish us to be fettered by convention. It is necessary to remember that the competition is but two year old. Last year it was run on customary lines, each match being decided on points. The result was entirely unsatisfactory. Matches were over before they had begun, or so it seemed, and even if this was pleasurable from a player's point of view, it was bad from a view point of the spectators or the promoters of the Championship. We are not attempting to revolutionize the scoring in Rugby Fives matches. In our opinion, points for the ordinary match which consists of Singles and Doubles is ideal for it not only makes a certain amount of exercise guaranteed, but enforces the players not to give up for a single moment. That is in the ordinary course of events, but a Championship is different.

Are we to understand that a Rugby Fives player is incapable of playing for as long as a Squash Rackets player? Are we to imagine that a Rugby Fives player only enters for a championship for a pleasant evening's exercise for which he is unwilling to train? No, certainly not, a Championship is a serious business, and the winner must be required to carry more guns than mere stroke play. He is required to be physically fit and on the top of his form. Nor do we see that the result of deciding matches on games and not points will necessarily mean more strenuous games, but it will be essential for the player to consider his tactics before entering the court and while playing his match. With this we are strongly in favour, for we think that it is a just criticism that a Rugby Fives player is a too blind exponent of his game that he does to a great extent just play and not trouble to think. In any case it is an experiment, which we feel justified in making.

It is an old old story about the Rugby Fives player and his hard day's work. It is true that he does work but so in these days do most other people, while to Mr. Readhead we humbly submit that there are really some Rugby Fives players who would welcome the change.

JOHN ARMITAGE,

Hon. Sec., Jesters' Rugby Fives.