

## "Querying a Rugby Fives Rule"

To the Editor of "Squash Rackets and Fives."

—As I was one of the committee, under the auspices of the Rugby Fives Association, which produced the recent Rugby Fives rules I should like to reply to the query raised by Bedfordian in your issue of 22nd October.

In the first place it should be known that the draft of the rules made by the committee was submitted to every interested party so that the Association could think of. The Association carefully considered all suggestions and adopted the opinion of the majority when a point of controversy arose.

We who formulated the rules on this plan tried to approach the business with open minds putting behind us any personal prejudices if on due consideration they did not seem reasonable.

I am not sure if Bedfordian is approaching the business in the true (or is it modern?) philosophic way. Is a course of action necessarily justifiable because it is customary? Many of the cherished opinions were laughed to scorn. That the striker should be allowed to throw up the ball for himself, that a preliminary rally shall be played at the beginning of a game, that the spirit of the game is as much as the change of striker after every point lost troubles the spirit of Bedfordian.

Having explained how Bedfordian's bugbear came to pass, I do not want to uphold it. He says that the rule given in the Association's rules does not give the striker time to settle down. That is an important point then does not his rule—changing strikers after every two points lost—give the server time to settle down? To some that may be put as obnoxious. Again any unskilful players may show outside seems entirely to forget them once they are inside a court. I have found that it is hard to remember whether the striker is at his second strike or not. This has been quite beyond the capacity of any of the players and a source of endless argument for the onlookers.

And then if two strikers why not three or four or five, and so on? Finally, as used to happen at one club I know (fortunately the rule has now been changed), why should not the striker continue striking until he has struck both his opponent down, lost the game, or broken his hand?

I, too, give my good wishes to your paper.

H. D. BEEVERS.

12 November 1932

from: Club Rugby Fives

SINCE there are laws of Rugby Fives, it is well that they should be kept, if for no other reason than general convenience. Rugby Fives players do not seem to have given this point much consideration. Despite the fact that two years have gone by since the Rugby Fives Association promulgated their laws and circularized them to the best of their ability, few clubs appear to have taken the trouble to digest them. If, with Bedfordian, you find yourself at variance with one or other of these rules there is just something to be said for the two teams that by mutual arrangement agree to disregard that rule for the purpose of their match, but what can be said for the match that is in progress in two courts side by side, when there is a different set of rules governing the play in each!

The point that "Bedfordian" raised in the correspondence columns of this paper is usually to blame. Bedfordian wished the strikers to change hands at every two points lost instead of at every one; so apparently do a great many other people. In two matches that have taken place during the past two weeks in which the Old Paulines, The Jesters, Cambridge University and the Old Merchant Taylors were concerned, one half of each team were changing strikers according to the rules of the Association and the other half according to the regulation of custom. Surely it would not be a great hardship to support the decision of the Association in this matter. The ruling is quite clear: "the side that is 'down' must change strikers after every point scored by their opponents."

SqR, F, T &amp; R 22/10/32

## QUERING A RUGBY FIVES RULE

To the Editor

Sir,—I cannot help thinking that, however good the articles you have in preparation for your readers may be, and there are, I am sure, some very good ones already on your files, that nevertheless your correspondence columns should make most interesting reading.

Of late years there has been much activity among the leaders of the games, with which you are about to deal. In some cases they have reorganised their sport from top to toe, and especially have they been concerned with the revision of the rules. I hear that the Tennis rules are being, or indeed have been by now, thoroughly overhauled, and from the recent outburst of great activity among Eton Fives players, I should imagine there is some moving spirit of great energy among them. At least I know that the Rugby Fives Association has not only been concerned with regulating the size of the court, the size which in their opinion gives the best game, but has issued the first authorized edition of the rules. As I am a Rugby Fives player, it is of that game I wish to speak.

I feel that if these columns are used judiciously, they will not only serve as a medium for the ordinary player to give his opinion on the regulations which the Associations are thrusting upon him presumably for his benefit, but also for the Associations to answer any queries and justify their decisions. I, for instance, and I speak for a good many in this matter, should like to know why the Rugby Fives Association has decided that players should change strikers after every point lost, instead of after every two, as many of us have long been accustomed to playing.

This may appear a simple ruling but it is certainly an annoying one, for it does not give the striker time to settle down, while there is a marked confusion in the court which is bad for the game. I wonder how many schools and clubs still adhere to the old ruling?

I am conscious of having trespassed on too much of your valuable space already, so I will close with the usual and sincere good wishes to this paper.

BEDFORDIAN.

## 29/10/32 A Rugby Fives Rule

To the Editor of "Squash Rackets and Fives."

Sir,—In reply to "Bedfordian," the reason for the ruling that players should change strikers after every point lost, instead of after every two, was surely simplicity. After a long rally it is frequently difficult to remember who was the striker, and it would surely add to the difficulty if one were asked to remember for how many points the striker had been down, whether one or two. The system of scoring in Fives is intricate enough as it is, without adding complication.

"Bedfordians" argument that the one point does not give time to the striker to settle down is not very convincing. It is not the striker's aim to "settle down" on his side of the court! One accurate strike, if not to win, at any rate to set the rally in motion, is all he asks for. And who, except in diminutive courts such as Alleyns, has noticed confusion?

May I raise the following point? The ruling that after the preliminary rally, the winning side shall only have "one hand" seems unfair. Why have a preliminary rally, if merely to handicap the winners? That the losers should be consoled for being slow off the mark is bad. The noticeable result is a lack of enthusiasm for the preliminary rally, the losers being not at all sorry to be "down."

ALLEYN OLD BOY.

Alleyn Old Boys' Fives Club.

Probably John Armitage and  
E. L. Bailey

There are two other rules that are too little known and which may usefully be repeated here. The first concerns the "blackguard" and is number six of the rules of Rugby Fives. Blackguard. "Should the return of service hit the front wall, either first or after previously hitting the opposite side wall (such a return being known as a 'blackguard'), the server may take it as if it had been correctly returned, provided he calls out "Taken" before hitting the ball. Such decision having once been given cannot be revoked. The striker may not intentionally stop a blackguard. When the server requires one point to win the game he may not take a blackguard." That is the ruling about blackguards, which is fairly well known, but there is a corollary that is too frequently overlooked. The corollary is that if the striker returns more than two untaken blackguards he loses the point.

The other rule is that only the server may take the striker's return of service. This is frequently forgotten, as it is not often necessary to practise it, but there are times for instance, when the striker hits the service high round the court or when the striker's return comes sharply back at a narrow angle, when the server's partner and not the server will be tempted to make the return. Although this is a good and necessary rule, to guard against the strong player turning a double into a single, it is open to abuse, as the striker if he cares to hit the ball high all round the court can cause much confusion in the back of the court.

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