

Sq. R. F. T. & R. October 1933

Public Rugby Fives Courts.

To the Editor of "Squash Rackets and Fives."

Dear Sir,

Now that another season is approaching, I am writing to enquire whether you could put me in touch with a Club, which would consider hiring out its courts for one or two nights per week.

Although the "Westminster Bank Rugby Fives Club" has had several fairly successful seasons as regards matches, there has never been the opportunity of forming a proper club and playing ordinary games, owing to the fact that the Bank does not possess courts.

At present our active membership is only twelve, but a very large number indeed have decided to join, should courts be available.

In view of the ever increasing popularity of the game, and the number of new clubs appearing, it seems amazing that no public courts have been built in London up to the present. I am sure that any enterprising building firm would profit by taking the matter in hand. Our Club is by no means the only one without courts, and which is forced to play all its matches away.

I think I am correct in stating that Clubs such as the "Old Blues," "U.C.S. Old Boys" (Evenings), "King's College," and now "Old Merchant Taylors," are all in the same predicament.

Apart from these, the "Rugby Fives Association," I am sure, would be only too pleased to have home courts. Also, such important events as County Matches, the Varsity Match, the finals of the Rugby Fives Open Singles Championship, and the Cyriax Cup, etc., could all be played on Public Courts, if same were to be erected in or near London.

Public Squash Courts are now available for hire in Ealing, and others I am told are in the course of construction. Surely the same could be done for Rugby Fives?

A short time ago I wrote to "Barts" Hospital enquiring into the possibility of hiring the courts which they have taken over from Merchant Taylors School, and their Hon. Sec., Mr. W. A. Oliver, has now replied with the cheering news that there is every likelihood that we shall be able to use same.

However, I would be very grateful if you would let me know if anything is under consideration re the building of courts or hiring out of same, in case "Barts" should not be able to help us.

Yours faithfully,

F. A. VOGLER,

Hon. Sec. Westminster Bank Rugby Fives Club.

Sq. R. F. T. & R. November 1933

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Public Rugby Fives Courts.

To the Editor of Squash Rackets and Fives.

Dear Sir,

I have read with great interest the letter from Mr. Vogler on the above subject in your issue of October and heartily endorse what he says about the need for public Rugby Fives Courts.

One often hears the remark that no such courts are needed because hardly anyone wants to play Fives after leaving school. This is entirely erroneous. The truth is that a great many men do want to play Fives after leaving school but the vast majority cannot do so for the simple reason that there are no Courts for them on which to play. At the present moment, the only chance of getting a game in London is if one has been to a school in this city that accords permission to its old boys to use its Fives Courts and even this is generally restricted to Saturday afternoons. The number of schools in London possessing such courts is not large.

What happens to the large number of Rugby Fives players amongst the old boys of schools situated in the provinces? A few, it is true, have been able to arrange an odd match here and there with Clubs that possess Courts, but the remainder have no chance at all of getting a game. And their number is continually growing as our various public schools in the provinces keep on sending out into the world quite a number of good players and many of these migrate to employment in London.

At the present moment, the open singles and the open doubles championships and the schoolboys competitions have no permanent courts of their own on which to play. They are entirely dependent on the courtesy of about three Clubs in London who have been good enough to lend their courts. If, however, such permission to use them were withdrawn, all the above competitions might have to be abandoned unless some other kind school (at present unknown) could be found to lend their courts.

During the last fourteen years I have tried systematically to persuade the various public parks, recreation grounds, sports grounds and assorted tennis clubs and cricket fields in London to build Rugby Fives Courts in some corner which was standing idle: in many cases I have offered to guarantee fifty pounds per annum for a period of two years for hire of the said courts. But so far nothing has resulted. Nevertheless, I am convinced that there are hundreds and hundreds of men in London who would be only too pleased to see public Rugby Fives Courts erected in some easily accessible part of London. These, if constructed according to the standard specification of the Rugby Fives Association would serve as courts on which the various open and school championships could be played, would serve as practice courts for the competitors in the same and would afford a large number of persons an opportunity of continuing to play that game that they so thoroughly enjoyed during their schooldays. And, incidentally, I hold positively the opinion that the building of such courts would be a very paying proposition.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

EDGAR CYRIAX.

Chairman of the Rugby Fives Association.

41, Welbeck Street,
W.1.

Sq R. F. T & R November 1933

Rugby Fives Courts at Oxford.

To the Editor of Squash Rackets and Fives.

Dear Sir,

I was very glad to see in your last number Mr. Vogler's letter about the need for more public Fives courts. The position in Oxford at the moment is quite absurd. Each year there come to Oxford nearly a thousand Freshmen from schools, a large proportion of which play Fives regularly, and they find—one private court belonging to Keble College, and one public court which leaks!

The attitude of the authorities who wield the College purses is, "Until there is more general enthusiasm we will not build courts." The answer is "Until there are courts, how can we show our enthusiasm?" But even if we must admit the truth of the statement—"The don is a child in matters of business," can it be that his folly has so pervaded the atmosphere of Oxford that no clear-headed investor can penetrate it?

Mr. Vogler says that a profit could be made on courts in London, where most of the users can only be free from 6-10 p.m., and I am sure he is right. How much better, then, in Oxford, where the users' play is as important as their work and where they can play all day!

Apart from the numbers of players who give the game up from lack of opportunity, we at Oxford share with the clubs Mr. Vogler mentioned the great embarrassment of never being able to return the hospitality of our opponents; not to mention the immense disadvantage to any club of never playing on the "home ground."

If Cambridge, with many courts, can keep those courts full of enthusiastic players, so could Oxford, and the fact that the money which flows like water for the building of Squash Courts is withheld from Fives, is an opportunity that some building firm should not fail to seize.

Yours faithfully,

A. SHAWYER,

Oxford University Rugby Fives Club.