

Sq. R. F. T. & R. January 1934

## CORRESPONDENCE

### County Rugby Fives.

To the Editor of *Squash Rackets and Fives*.

Dear Sir,

I have heard with much pleasure of the Rugby Fives Association's decision to play the Inter-County Championship on a knock-out basis. May I suggest, however, that the idea of playing three games of doubles against each pair be amended? Here are my reasons for this suggestion.

Firstly, until quite recently the singles game in club Fives had been almost completely neglected. A few years ago the Jesters decided to inaugurate an Open Singles Championship, presumably with a view to encouraging singles play, for how can one enter for a serious singles championship without having had some practice? The R.F.A. has now signified its approval of this plan by taking over the management of this championship, surely then it is its immediate duty to give players every chance for singles match play! Here in the Inter-County Championship there is a golden opportunity which, in fairness to the player, must not be missed.

Secondly, by accepting the management of the Singles Championship the R.F.A. has officially recognised singles as a part of the game of Fives. Consequently if an Inter-County Rugby Fives Championship is to be run, singles must be played in it, otherwise the winning county cannot, with any justification, be called Champion County at Rugby Fives—it can only be called Champion County at Rugby Fives Doubles.

Thirdly I should like to mention that in the Inter-County Championship at Lawn Tennis singles are always played. Surely the single at Rugby Fives is no less a part of the game than the single at Lawn Tennis.

Fourthly, I consider the single at Fives to be an infinitely better game than the double. I realise that this is a question of personal opinion, but I am prepared to support my statements with the fullest reasons if anyone wishes. Here I should like to say this: in the single there is every incentive to use the angles and to play a varied and interesting all-court game in order to get your opponent out of position, for then the whole court is at your mercy. In a double if one player is put out of position by clever play, it is quite easy for his partner to occupy the whole court until the original player is back again in position. As it is almost impossible to get both players out of position at once, it follows that one has a great deal to lose and practically nothing to gain by attempting to play angle shots which, incidentally may or may not come off. The doubles game, then, tends to degenerate into an up and down game of pure hitting, with steadiness as the deciding factor. This is apt to become monotonous, to say the least of it.

I propose, therefore, that in the Inter-County Championship each string should play two games of singles against his opposite number. Then a suitable number of doubles would be played, preferably each pair playing three games against its opposite pair, and not against both pairs, as is usual.

Further, I suggest that the Association write to all club secretaries, strongly encouraging them to play at least one game of singles in club matches whenever two courts are available. This will give players the singles practice that they so badly need, and will enable them to play in their true form in the Singles Championship.

Yours faithfully,

24, Holland Park Gardens,

H. A. OUNDJIAN.

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### County Rugby Fives.

Mr. H. A. Oundjian has had his way and a singles match is to form part of the proceedings for all players taking part in the County Rugby Fives Championship. It is well that it should be so, for there has been little attention paid to Singles play in Club matches. We do not think it correct to say that the Singles game demands more skill than Doubles, although it is true that skill will frequently get a better reward in an encounter between two players rather than four. The real argument against singles in ordinary club engagements is that very often there are only two courts and it is very unpleasant to play one's single and then wait for three-quarter's-of-an-hour while other members of the team play their matches. Also a Rugby Fives match takes a very long time as it is, and at schools where two singles are played first and then doubles, it is no uncommon thing for a match to last three hours.

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## COUNTY RUGBY FIVES.

Surrey beat Middlesex in the first round of the County Championship by 168—124 points. This margin was largely due to the Singles, the Doubles play being fairly even. P. A. Malt as first string for Surrey beat H. A. Oundjian by 15—4. It is doubtful if the Singles Champion has, for some considerable time obtained such complete mastery of length and angles, and after being down by 2—4, he did much as he liked and had his young and skilful opponent continually at sea.

E. L. Bailey, as second string, lost to K. R. R. Readhead by 9—15, but it is only fair to state that he had been ill for some weeks past and could not produce his best form. Readhead, however, made very few mistakes, and kept his opponent on the run to such an extent that at one time he led to 9—1.

Puckle did well to score 9 points against D. E. Smith, who completely outclassed him as a stroke player. W. J. Rees owing to his extreme fitness and stamina always had a yard to spare on C. S. Farnes who was still feeling the effects of a damaged ankle, and won comfortably to 15—4.

The doubles play, as mentioned was very even, and in two hard-fought games Malt and Bailey beat Oundjian and Readhead to 15—13, 15—13. Readhead did not show the form he was subsequently to bring out in the Doubles Championship, but Oundjian was near in his execution and rallied well against the cunning of Malt. Farnes and Puckle gave the Surrey first pair little trouble, who won to 7 and 12. Smith and Rees took the first game off a somewhat casual Oundjian and Readhead, after having beaten Farnes and Puckle quite comfortably, but in the second game saw the new champions at their very best and lost to 9. The match provided some extremely high-class Fives, although the hard "Gallopers" balls were not all that hands accustomed to "Perfecta" could desire.

Surrey beat Middlesex by 168 points to 124, at Roehampton.

P. A. Malt beat H. A. Oundjian, 15—4.

E. L. Bailey lost to K. R. R. Readhead, 9—15.

D. E. Smith beat L. G. W. Puckle, 15—9.

W. J. Rees beat C. S. Farnes, 15—4.

Malt and Bailey beat Oundjian and Readhead, 15—13, 15—13  
beat Farnes and Puckle, 15—7, 15—12.

Smith and Rees beat Farnes and Puckle, 15—8, 15—12; lost to  
Oundjian and Readhead, 15—12, 9—15.

K.W.M.

# RUGBY FIVES.

## County Final.

Although marred by one or two unfortunate scratchings, the County Championship provided us with some excellent Fives. Surrey, who were beaten by Kent in the final were generally considered favourites for the Competition, as they had two pairs of outstanding ability as doubles players—and it was unfortunate to see D. E. Smith so much off form in the final. Full tribute, must, however, be paid to D. G. Mackenzie and C. R. Black, who as Kent's first pair beat F. K. Truman and Smith to 15—6, 15—6. This set was surprisingly short, and Mackenzie, having brilliant spasms when nothing could go wrong, found the corners and used the length-kill to great effect, and Black, although less brilliant, would miss nothing, and it was no surprise to the spectators that the Alleynians were massacred. Against P. A. Malt and E. L. Bailey, in the first set, they took a long time to settle down, and with the Champion finding his best form they lost to 4—15, and after striking good combination could do no better than amass 12 points in the second game. Malt has been playing almost better than ever this season, and after his brilliant association with Bailey it is most unfortunate that the latter has suffered an illness this season which may well finish his great, if short career. During and since his Cambridge days Bailey has been a most fearsome opponent, especially on his own small courts at Alleyns, and has beaten Malt on several occasions. Now he seems to tire quickly, but whilst fresh is still a devastating player,—thus it was that this pair beat Mackenzie and Black so easily in the first game: and also beat H. A. Oundjian and K. R. R. Readhead to 15—5 in their first game in the Amateur Doubles Championship.

The winning point in the match came when J. W. Dowlen produced such improved form when playing with C. H. Knott as second pair. In their set, against Truman and Smith, he was superb, and apart from consistently brilliant shots he was always where the ball was, and saved what was otherwise a bad combination. Knott, mainly through fine length play from the half-volley was effective, but was frequently out of position, and Dowlen's job was thus doubly arduous. He rose to the occasion splendidly, and abandoning his usual lethargic style was mainly instrumental in the Alleynian pair's defeat by 15—11, 15—11. Against Malt and Bailey he was naturally a little ill at ease, and owing to the Surrey pair's excellent combination he and Knott lost to 8—15. The final game found Bailey very tired, and with Dowlen and Knott playing very well, Kent just managed to win the game at 15—14.

**Kent v. Surrey.** Kent beat Surrey by 99 points to 93.

D. G. Mackenzie and C. R. Black (Kent) lost to P. A. Malt and E. L. Bailey, 4—15, 12—15; beat D. E. Smith and F. K. Truman, 15—6, 15—6.

J. W. Dowlen and C. H. Knott (Kent) beat D. E. Smith and F. K. Truman, 15—11, 15—11; lost to Malt and Bailey, 8—15, 15—14.

K. W. MILLAGE.