

Obituary

PHILIP MALT.

The name of Philip Malt was not widely known, but in the small world of Rugby Fives, it was loved and honoured. Malt meant much to everyone who played this game for he was not only the greatest player over a number of years, but one whose very modesty and friendliness was a constant joy. Malt played fives because he enjoyed playing and he was willing at any time to take part in a game with anyone who was keen enough to play. He valued, as most fives players do, the friendships the game brought him, more perhaps than the almost endless victories that he won; but he was proud of his championships, won in a game which demands great fitness as well as skill. As J. F. Burnet has told us, P. A. Malt's IV. was the inspiration of the Jesters Club in so far as it had proved how popular a roving fives team might become, and also more directly of the Alleyn Old Boys' Fives Club, for whom Malt played. Malt fell ill in the summer of 1935, but recovered sufficiently to visit the courts again during the 1936-37 season in the rôle of a spectator. He was an enthusiastic onlooker, although always talking of the day when he would once again be allowed to take part in a game. Malt came to all the championships this year, including those organised for the Public Schools, but soon afterwards he fell ill again and died in July. He was 31.

A very great player, Malt was left-handed with a right, weak comparatively in strokes but a lion in defence. Boyish in appearance, easy in style, he could play to a length in any court. He concealed the pace and direction of his shots with uncanny facility and most players found themselves sadly out of position when playing against him. Malt's best stroke was a controlled cross-shot which would bear comparison with those made with the racket by famous exponents of other court games. He was also famous for his running commentaries on his own matches. Malt won the Cyriax Cup in the days when it was still a club doubles competition for four years in succession for the Alleyn Old Boys. In 1930 he won with H. K. Prout, but from 1931 to 1933 his partner was E. Ll. Bailey. Malt did not play in the first singles championship in 1932, but for the next three years he not only played but won. Few will forget his last final when he beat J. G. W. Davies, the present champion, by two games to one, 15-13, 11-15, 16-15.

Malt served on the committee of the Alleyn Old Boys Fives Club and was an original member of the committee of the Rugby Fives Association. By profession a schoolmaster—he played much of his fives for King's College, London—he was a keen cricketer, an officer in the Territorials, and a great friend.

J.A.