

## Rugby Fives Doubles Championship Cyriax Cup 1936

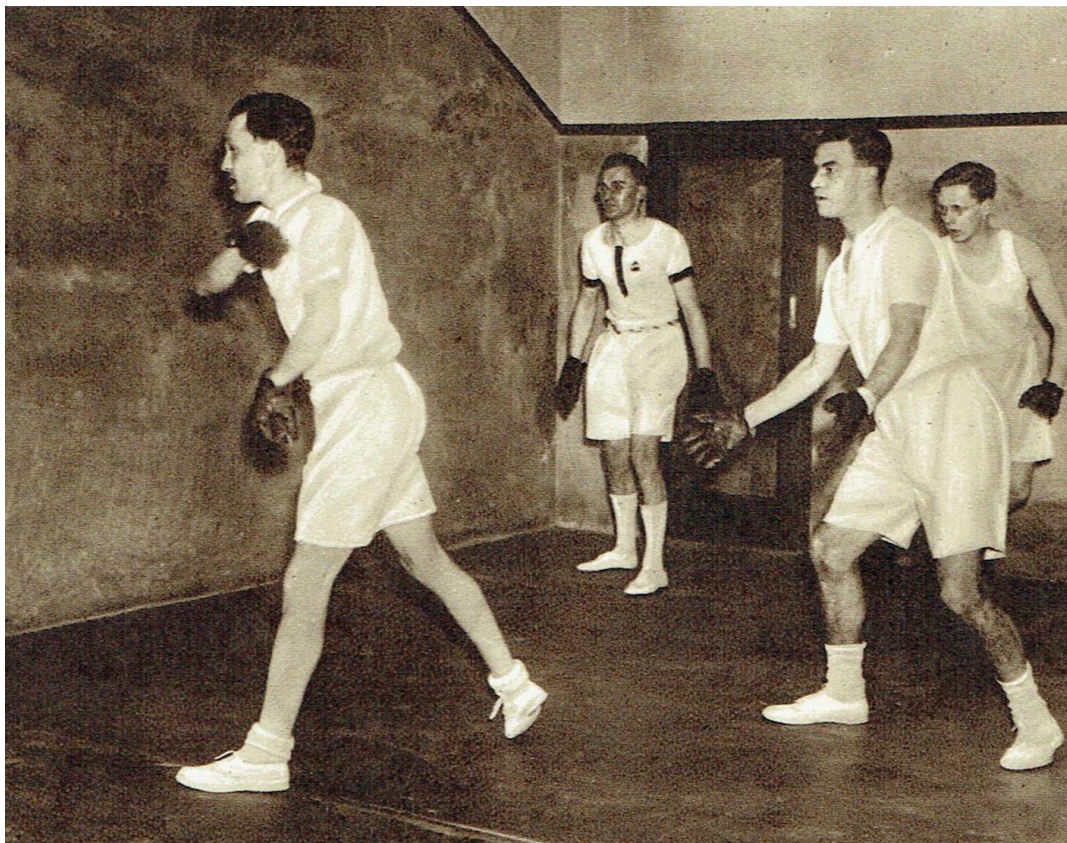
By chance, the RFA Archives has accumulated quite a lot of information about the 1936 Amateur Doubles (Cyriax Cup) that took place at the then new courts at Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club.

This was an important event being the first event held at the Hampstead Club, and the various artifacts give us a good record of the nature of the fives being organised in the 1930s. A good entry of 32 pairs took part with matches taking place over a 10-day period. The event culminated in what turned out to be an epic battle in the final where Gough and Knight contrived to miss eight match points before losing to the new champions Battersby and Truman.

The main photographic record comes from an article from the Jan 1936 edition of "Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News" and these photos are included below. The full one-page article can be found in Appendix A1.



*2a Some Successful Pairs: A. Francis, C.E. Becker, B.C. Gough, R.J. Knight, C.L.E. Mitchell, S.E. Hall, J.W. Dowlen, N. Lloyd  
Pairs: Francis & Becker, Gough & Knight (CU), Mitchell & Dowlen, Hall & Lloyd*



*2b A Match in Progress: W.J. Rees, J. Armitage, D.G. Mackenzie, C. Smith  
Pairs: Rees & Smith, Armitage & Mackenzie*



2c Cyriax Cup Competitors: B.R. Griffiths, J. McGregor-Cheers, A.R. Hodges, V.G.W. Lewis, D.J. Mallagh  
 Pairs: Griffiths & McGregor-Cheers, Hodges & Lewis, Mallagh & J.A.Hilton (no pic)



2d A Former Champion and Others: E.J. Salter, V.E. Oundjian, J.G. Richards, E.C. Hanson, A.T. Slator  
 Pairs: Salter & H.E.Poynor (no pic), Oundjian & Richards, Hanson & J.T.Hetherington (no pic), Slator & J.T.Robinson (no pic)

*Player Notes for the above Photos: From the Article*

**2a “Some Successful Pairs”:** From left to right

A. Francis & C.E. Becker

B.C. Gough & R.J. Knight of Cambridge University

C.L.E. Mitchell, S.E. Hall, J.W. Dowlen, N. Lloyd (Mitchell plays with Dowlen, Hall with Lloyd)

**2b “A Match in Progress”:**

W.J. Rees (left) striking the ball, J. Armitage, D.G. Mackenzie, C. Smith

Playing in their 2nd round match, won by Armitage & Mackenzie (the Runners-up in 1935)

Rees is striking the service which Mackenzie has just thrown up for him.

**2c “Cyriax Cup Competitors”:** From left to right

B.R. Griffiths, match secretary of the Rugby Fives Association, J. McGregor-Cheers, A.R. Hodges, V.G.W. Lewis, D.J. Mallagh

**2d “A Former Champion and Others”:**

Last year V.E. Oundjian (2nd from left) won the Cyriax Cup with his brother H.A.

This year he was playing with J.G. Richards (centre)

The three in suits from the left are E.J. Salter, E.C. Hanson, A.T. Slator

Oundjian & Richards are Old Paulines

Note that a complete list of the players featured in the photos can be found in Appendix A2.

## Results

Full results and a report can be found in Appendices A3 and A4.

- Appendix A3: Report and Results from the Feb 1936 Squash Rackets, Fives, Tennis, and Rackets Magazine (written and compiled by John Armitage)
- Appendix A4: 1935 / 1936 Times newspaper cuttings

Some information about the final and the four finalists is provided below.

### *The Final*

The final was played on Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 1936. J Battersby and FK Truman defeated BC Gough and RJ Knight 13-15, 16-15, 15-12. So, it was a very closely fought match, with Gough and Knight failing to convert eight match points in the second game. For a full report see Appendix A3.

All four players came from Dulwich College emphasising the strength of that school in the pre-war period. Sadly, the Dulwich courts were lost through stray bombing during WWII, and were never rebuilt. The losing finalists Basil Gough and Dick Knight were both at Cambridge at the time of the 1936 championship.

Photos of the winning pair John Battersby (a left hander) and Frank Truman are shown below.



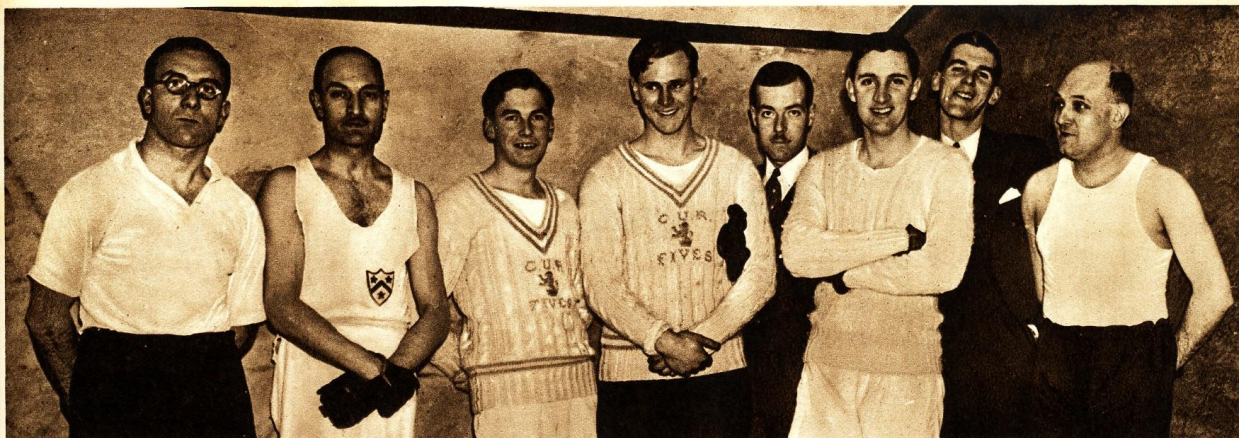
*The Winners of the 1936 Cyriax Cup John Battersby and Frank Truman*

We have John Battersby's winning medal in the Archives, shown below.



*John Battersby's Cyriax Cup Winners Medal*

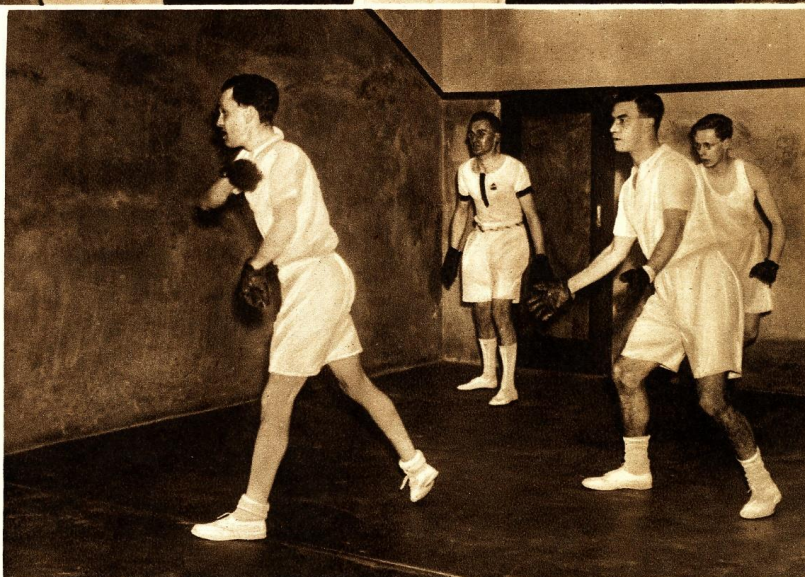
For John Battersby this proved to be his only appearance in a National final. Frank Truman reached the Doubles final again the following year, this time partnered by Dick Knight, where they lost to Bill Bailey and Cecil Mitchell. Truman was also a National Singles runner-up in 1937.



**SOME SUCCESSFUL PAIRS:** From left to right, A. Francis and C. E. Becker; B. C. Gough and R. J. Knight, of Cambridge University; C. L. E. Mitchell, S. E. Hall, J. W. Dowlan and N. Lloyd. Mitchell plays with Dowlan, and Hall with Lloyd

## RUGBY FIVES

The Doubles Championship—Some Players in the Cyriax Cup



**On right: A MATCH IN PROGRESS:** W. J. Rees (left) striking the ball, and J. Armitage, D. G. Mackenzie, and C. Smith, playing in their second round match, which was won by Armitage and Mackenzie, the runners-up in 1935. Rees is striking the service which Mackenzie has just thrown up for him



**CYRIAX CUP COMPETITORS:** The Rugby Fives Doubles Championship for the Cyriax Cup was played at the new Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club for the first time. (From left to right): B. R. Griffiths, match secretary of the Rugby Fives Association, J. McGregor-Cheers, A. R. Hodges, V. G. W. Lewis and D. J. Mallagh



**A FORMER CHAMPION AND OTHERS:** Last year V. E. Oundjian (second from left) won the Cyriax Cup with his brother H. A. This year he was playing with J. G. Richards (centre). The three in suits from left to right are E. J. Salter, E. C. Hanson and A. T. Slator. Oundjian and Richards are Old Paulines

## Appendix A2

### 22 Players are Featured in the Photo Record

Pic	Name	School	University	Record	Comments	Partner	
2b	J. Armitage	John Bedford	Cambridge	Sngls W 1938, Sngls RU 1933, Dbls RU 1935	RFA Pres 1955-60	Mackenzie	
2a	C.E. Becker		Alleyn's			Francis	
2a	J.W. Dowlen	John	Alleyn's			Mitchell	
2a	A. Francis		Alleyn's		Westminster Bank; partner was Alleyn's	Becker	
2a	B.C. Gough	Basil	Dulwich	Cambridge	Dbls RU 1936	Lost in the final	Knight
2c	B.R. Griffiths	Brian	Merchant Taylors'		Dbls RU 1948	RFA Pres 1965-70; 1936 RFA match sec	McGregor-Cheers
2a	S.E. Hall		Alleyn's			Lloyd	
2d	E.C. Hanson	Eric	Merchant Taylors'			Obit d1970; RFA VP 1960, Treas 1938-60	J.T. Hetherington - MT (no pic)
2c	A.R. Hodges		Alleyn's			Lewis	
2a	R.J. Knight	Richard	Dulwich	Cambridge	Sngls W 1947, Sngls RU 1936, Dbls RU 1936, 37	Dick; Lost in the final	Gough
2c	V.G.W. Lewis	Victor	Alleyn's		Dbls RU 1933		Hodges
2a	N. Lloyd		?			Partner was Alleyn's	Hall
2b	D.G. Mackenzie	Douglas	Weymouth College		Sngls RU 1931, Dbls RU 1935	Played at the BoE	Armitage
2c	D.J. Mallagh		Merchant Taylors'				J.A. Hilton - MT (no pic)
2c	J. McGregor-Cheers		Bedford			Killed 25/08/1941 flying Halifax bomber	Griffiths
2a	C.L.E. Mitchell	Cecil	Alleyn's		Dbls W 1937, 39, Dbls RU 1933	Partnered Bill Bailey	Dowlen
2d	V.E. Oundjian	Vahe	St Paul's		Dbls W 1935, 38; Sngls RU 1934	1935 won with his brother H.A.	Richards
2b	W.J. Rees	William	Sir Walter St John	UCL		Willie-John; University College Hospital	Smith
2d	J.G. Richards		St Paul's	Oxford			Oundjian
2d	E.J. Salter		Alleyn's				H.E. Poynor - AOB (no pic)
2d	A.T. Slator	"Tom"	Oundle	Cambridge		A Cambridge pair	J.T. Robinson - Bedford (no pic)
2b	C. Smith		?	UCL			Rees

The above table is missing schools for the following players:

- N. Lloyd, Partner was Alleyn's
- C. Smith, Partner was Sir Walter St John

## RUGBY FIVES DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

By JOHN ARMITAGE.

The Rugby Fives Doubles Championship for the Cyriax Cup was played in the courts of the Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club from Monday, January 6th, until Wednesday, January 15th. There was an extremely good entry for thirty-two pairs took part and the general standard of play was again much higher than in former years. Although there was no pair so outstanding as the brothers Oundjian in accuracy or so great as P. A. Malt and E. Ll. Bailey, the competition was the keenest that has yet been known.

### FIRST ROUND.

Most matches in this round were won very easily on points but on points only. V. G. W. Lewis and A. R. Hodges, however, had a great battle with their fellow Alleyn Old Boys, E. J. Salter and H. E. Poynor, the match being won by the former pair by the narrow margin of 16-14 in the third game. Lewis, like the great hearted player he is, played magnificently in the closing stages of this match, pulling the final game out of the fire to win a great victory, but all four players did well, Poynor's play being particularly pleasing. Many pairs showed their intention of making a strong challenge for the championship but the Cambridge pair, R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough disappointed in so far as they relied far too much on very hard hitting which had little but speed to recommend it. J. W. Dowlen and C. L. E. Mitchell were impressive; B. R. Darewski and J. R. L. Potter gave a good account of themselves; and E. W. C. Lewis and F. M. McRae battled with great vigour and

skill for a handful of points against F. K. Truman and J. Battersby. Lewis and McRae rarely made much of their opponents' service which put them on the defensive when 'up.'

G. Avgherinos and A. G. C. Robertson beat Dr. E. Cyriax and H. A. Cocking, 15-3, 15-10.

J. T. Robinson and A. T. Slator beat E. T. House and L. H. Barnes, 15-6, 15-5.

C. Smith and W. J. Rees beat R. L. Kay and E. A. Craven, 15-4, 15-4.

J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie beat H. D. Beevers and J. W. Glassett, 15-5, 15-8.

R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough beat L. D. Jasper and R. B. A. Smith, 15-5, 15-11.

N. Lloyd and S. E. Hall beat W. Horsfall Carter and A. F. Gillis, 15-5, 15-6.

C. E. Becker and A. Francis beat J. Allen and B. H. Jones, 15-0, 15-1.

V. E. Oundjian and J. G. Richards beat L. G. W. Puckle and L. J. Pack, 15-2, 15-11.

V. G. W. Lewis and A. R. Hodges beat E. J. Salter and H. E. Poynor, 13-15, 15-9, 16-14.

F. K. Truman and J. Battersby beat E. W. C. Lewis and F. M. McRae, 15-5, 15-4.

J. G. W. Davies and D. A. S. Day beat R. K. Colsell and G. F. Hephurn, 15-3, 15-4.

E. C. Hanson and J. T. Hetherington beat C. E. Rogers and A. Taylor, 15-7, 15-5.

J. W. Dowlen and C. L. E. Mitchell beat C. R. Black and C. S. Farnes, 15-7, 15-8.

B. R. Darewski and J. R. L. Potter beat J. Gill and L. H. Way, 15-9, 15-9.

A. E. W. Austen and J. G. L. Knowles beat J. A. Hilton and D. J. Mallagh, 8-15, 15-10, 15-13.

B. R. Griffiths and J. McGregor-Cheers beat H. J. Anderson and G. B. S. Lardner, 15-12, 15-4.

**SECOND ROUND.**

Weather conditions were against second round matches, but there were some good ones nevertheless, and the perils of photography were successfully negotiated by all but the very shy. The best victory was that of C. E. Becker and A. Francis over V. E. Oundjian and J. G. Richards. Richards served in a devastating manner in this match as did Francis at times, but he was not in form of round one and Becker and Francis pulled off the third game in spite of Oundjian's gallant work in the rallies. Truman and Battersby continued to impress the gallery, and Dowlen and Mitchell after an exciting first game against Darewski and Potter which they lost, won easily enough. The match of the hour was certainly Davies and Day v. Hanson and Hetherington. Hanson and Hetherington have many good victories to their credit this season, but it would seem that their fighting spirit is not aroused until they are some half dozen points down in the second game with defeat staring them in the face. How many match points they saved in the second game which they won by 16-14, I do not remember, but they saved eight in the third before being beaten.

J. T. Robinson and A. T. Slator beat G. Avgherinos and A. G. C. Robertson, 15-5, 15-9.

J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie beat W. J. Rees and C. Smith, 15-10, 15-8.

R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough beat N. Lloyd and S. E. Hall, 15-2, 15-11.

C. E. Becker and A. Francis beat V. E. Oundjian and J. G. Richards, 15-9, 11-15, 15-9.

F. K. Truman and J. Battersby beat V. G. W. Lewis and A. R. Hodges, 15-9, 15-8.

J. G. W. Davies and D. A. S. Day beat E. C. Hanson and J. T. Hetherington, 15-8, 14-16, 15-13.

J. W. Dowlen and C. L. E. Mitchell beat B. R. Darewski and J. R. L. Potter, 14-16, 15-6, 15-2.

A. E. W. Austen and J. G. L. Knowles beat B. R. Griffiths and J. McGregor-Cheers, 13-15, 15-7, 15-3.

**THIRD ROUND.**

J. T. Robinson and A. T. Slator, a Cambridge pair who should do better every year, were beaten by Armitage and Mackenzie after a hard first game. Robinson has many excellent shots and Slator, who has a very strong right hand makes him a first-class partner. Robinson and Slator led through the first game only to lose it by 15-13, after which they were always behind. The other Cambridge pair, R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough made very short work of Becker and Francis. All four were similar players, and Francis who enjoys a 'crack' at the ball himself with his left hand was denied this pleasure by Knight who made certain by his own hard hitting that Francis never got into position to hit the ball.

By far the best match of the round, and one which neither pair deserved to lose was played between F. K. Truman and J. Battersby and J. G. W. Davies and D. A. S. Day. Truman, when occasion demanded in the last game, played like ten men but before this we saw as good a display of Fives as anyone may wish to see. Fought at a tremendous pace Truman and Battersby took the first game to eight after Davies and Day had made a great recovery from 1-8 to 8-8. Then Davies, with his volleys and Day with great steadiness and brilliance came right into the picture to win the second game to seven. The last game was a long display of dogged determination on either side against great serving and adverse conditions. The result 16-15 in favour of Truman and Battersby was a fitting enough result considering that one pair had to win.

J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie beat J. T. Robinson and A. T. Slator, 15-13, 15-8.

R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough beat C. E. Becker and A. Francis, 15-4, 15-2.

F. K. Truman and J. Battersby beat J. G. W. Davies and D. A. S. Day, 15-8, 7-15, 16-15.

J. W. Dowlen and C. L. E. Mitchell beat A. E. W. Austen and J. G. L. Knowles, 15-8, 15-7.

**SEMI-FINAL ROUND.**

Both semi-finals were worthy of the occasion. In the first G. C. Gough and R. J. Knight won a great victory over J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie after losing the first game to 5 and being led 13-10 in the second. Armitage and Mackenzie did all they could to keep the ball away from Knight's right hand, and lobbed and played the ball to a length in an attempt to play the match at their own pace. Possibly they hoped that Gough would succumb to so concentrated an attack but although he made mistakes, he played better than anyone in the third game and came out of the match with an enhanced reputation. Knight was as mighty as ever hitting the ball with such power that Armitage and Mackenzie were very frequently in the wrong position to play a shot. I cannot agree that this is Fives at its best, but it is very effective and gives to the gallery a much fiercer enjoyment than is usually the case. Knight does not like his right hand to be denounced as devastating but I can think of no better title unless it be annihilating, which means, I think, the destruction of the soul as well as body. The match was won and lost when Armitage and Mackenzie, unwisely for such old campaigners, took part in a sudden and impetuous rally against Knight. Knight won and soon after the match was squared and a little later crowned with victory.

C. L. E. Mitchell went off at a great pace against F. K. Truman and J. Battersby, and being well supported by J. W. Dowlen, he served and swung his left arm in magnificent fashion. A lead of 14-2 seemed good enough but Truman and Battersby fought back and almost saved that first game. They did not save it but they were now in commanding mood and playing well together took the second game to 8. Battersby was then a little tired and even Truman made mistakes, so Mitchell and Dowlen again gave themselves a princely lead. This time they were checked at 9 and unable to sustain their attack were passed and beaten 15-10.

R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough beat J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie, 5-15, 16-14, 15-11.

F. K. Truman and J. Battersby beat C. L. E. Mitchell and J. W. Dowlen, 13-15, 15-8, 15-10.

**FINAL ROUND.**

F. K. Truman and J. Battersby beat R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough by 13-15, 16-15, 15-12, to the admiration of an enthusiastic gallery and the discomfiture of Freddie Vogler's forecast. But as Freddie said, how can one avoid mistakes when the favoured pair lose eight match points! The final began poorly. Gough was very nervous at the start, although before the end he played better than his over-anxious partner, and points were won, mainly by Truman and Battersby after some very unexciting rallies. But Knight suddenly came into his own so that in two hands the score had changed from 1-7, to 9-7, and that game was virtually won. By the middle of the second game 7-3, or 10-6, in favour of Knight and Gough the match seemed over. For six hands the same pair had a match point at 14-11, and then came a rally of sixty shots which Battersby ended with a lovely drop to the right corner. It was the turning point in the match, but Knight and Gough had another chance at 1-0 in the set, but again two match points were saved. After this Knight and Gough were always struggling. They were led 7-0, pulled up to 9-10, but never got their nose in front and Truman and Battersby won the game and match at 15-12—a wonderful achievement.



Appendix A4: Times Newspaper cuttings Dec 1935 - Jan 1936

Dec 30th 1935

RUGBY FIVES

The Jesters (K. R. R. Readhead, B. R. Griffiths, R. J. Knight, J. Gill) beat Alleyn Old Boys (V. G. W. Lewis, C. L. E. Mitchell, J. W. Dowlen, A. R. Hodges) at Rugby fives at Dulwich on Saturday by 95 points to 94.

Jan 10th 1936

RUGBY FIVES

The results in the second round of the Rugby Fives Doubles Championship, which is being played at the Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club, were:—

J. T. Robinson and A. T. Slater beat G. Avgherinos and A. G. C. Robertson (15—5, 15—9); J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie beat W. J. Rees and C. Smith (15—10, 15—8); R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough beat N. Lloyd and S. E. Hall (15—2, 15—11); C. E. Becker and A. Francis beat V. E. Oundjian and J. G. Richards (15—9, 11—15, 15—9); F. K. Truman and J. Battersby beat V. G. W. Lewis and A. R. Hodges (15—9, 15—8); J. G. W. Davies and D. A. S. Day beat E. C. Hanson and J. T. Hetherington (15—8, 14—16, 15—13); J. W. Dowlen and C. L. E. Mitchell beat B. R. Darewski and J. R. L. Potter (14—16, 15—6, 15—2); A. E. W. Austen and J. G. L. Knowles beat B. R. Griffiths and J. McGregor-Cheers (13—15, 15—7, 15—3).

Jan 13th 1936

RUGBY FIVES

The Rugby Fives Doubles Championship for the Cyriax Cup was resumed at the Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club last night, when J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie, R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough, F. K. Truman and J. Battersby, and J. W. Dowlen and C. L. E. Mitchell reached the semi-final round.

The results were:—

THIRD ROUND.—J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie beat J. T. Robinson and A. T. Slater (15—13, 15—8); R. J. Knight and B. C. Gough beat C. E. Becker and A. Francis (15—4, 15—2); F. K. Truman and J. Battersby beat J. G. W. Davies and D. A. S. Day (15—8, 7—15, 16—15); J. W. Dowlen and C. L. E. Mitchell beat A. E. W. Austen and J. G. L. Knowles (15—7, 15—6).

Jan 15th 1936

RUGBY FIVES

B. C. Gough and R. J. Knight beat J. Armitage and D. G. Mackenzie by 5—15, 16—14, 15—11, and J. Battersby and F. K. Truman defeated J. W. Dowden and C. L. E. Mitchell by 13—15, 15—8, 15—10 in the Rugby Fives Doubles Championship semi-finals at the Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club, London, last night. The final will be played at 6.45 to-morrow evening.

## Appendix A5: Ebay - Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News Photo Article L328

Ebay Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 2021: Purchased on behalf of the RFA "Buy it now" £15.00 (+£4.85 postage)

### *Seller*

"antiquechapters" Paul

Antique Chapters, The Grange, Claywood, Menithwood, Worcestershire, WR6 6UB

Phone: 1584-881144; email: zeddyzed@aol.com

### *Description*

**Rugby Fives Magazine Photo Article** - One single sheet / one page only (not the complete magazine) - Unrelated text to the reverse - Complete text / article as published - This item will be despatched in a postal tube for added protection - **Please note:- Antique Chapters digital watermark is not visible on actual print**

**Original** - Not Reprint Or Reproduction

**Source** - The Illustrated Sporting And Dramatic News (Weekly Publication / Magazine)

**Date** - January 1936

**Measurements** - c. 310mm x 230mm / 12.25in x 9in

**Condition** - Lightly tanned - Some edges may have been trimmed - Some edges may have slight imperfections - Corners lightly bumped - Couple of small marks and light soiling - Otherwise good condition

***An image of the article and copies of photos from this article are included above.***

## Appendix A6: Summary of Sources

This document includes information from:

- An article from the Jan 1936 Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News
- Report and Results from the Feb 1936 Squash Rackets, Fives, Tennis, and Rackets Magazine
- 1935 / 1936 Times newspaper cuttings
- Various photos held in the Archives: players and trophies