

# LAWN TENNIS

BY WIMBLEDON

**T**HE final of the Men's Singles for the Auckland Association Championship was played at Mount Eden on Saturday last, when Keith met Hickson. The play was not exciting, and the match resulted in a victory for Keith by three sets to love, the scores being 6-2, 6-4, 6-1. The Men's Singles and Doubles are now decided, and I am sorry to say that in neither event was the lawn tennis of such a class as we ought to see in Auckland. Of Saturday's match there is not much to say. Hickson apparently was playing Keith at his own game, and there are few, if any, in Auckland who can do that. Hickson should have attacked more. The winner, as usual, was very accurate, and it is, of course, only fair to him to say that he played as well as was necessary. Had he been pressed, we should, no doubt, have seen a much better exhibition.

The result exactly bore out my prediction, yet in secret I half hoped to see my opinion proved wrong, for it is always pleasant to be able to chronicle the success of a young, keen player; but one cannot grudge the better man his victory, especially when he is giving away a fair handicap in years, and Keith is entitled to all credit for his accurate, intelligent game, which is in many respects such a lesson to our young players.

The result of this match will, I venture to say, give Auckland lawn tennis a better player next year. Hickson has taken quite a lot of trouble in keeping fit, and he is very interested in the game. I prophesy that next year we shall see him with a winning stroke on his backhand, and probably both his service and his smash will be much improved. Too many players forget that the smash is the child of the service, and that a bad server is rarely a good smasher. Hickson has many natural advantages. His eye is good, he lasts well, is very active, and generally speaking, his headwork is good. It only, therefore, remains for him to eliminate his faulty strokes, and I have no doubt that next year he will give a different account of himself.

The long-deferred Juvenile Championship started at ten o'clock on Saturday last on the Mount Eden lawns. Some promising young players were among the contestants. Empson and A. E. Vaile (St. John's College) beat Newell and Fretter (Grammar School), 6-3, 6-4. This was quite an interesting game, and the headwork shown by the boys was at times very creditable. Sumner and Mawbray (King's) beat their opponents very comfortably. In the Singles, Empson beat Miller, 6-0, 6-0, and A. E. Vaile beat Newell, 6-0, 6-4. Newell's brother won the event last year, and Newell was much fancied for it on this occasion. He went down badly in the first set, but led at 4-2 in the second set, and it looked as though he had colored his opponent, but the latter made a good recovery and won the next four games and the match. Empson, Baile, and Newell have good strokes, and it is only a matter of time before we shall hear of them in first-class company. Some interesting matches were played in the girls' events, but I have not received any results so far.

The meeting is being ably conducted by Mr. Raymond Biss, but there are two things that should, I think, be attended to. The sets are decided on a single game. For instance, a boy can win his set on his service after "five all" has been called. Advantage is played in the third set only. This, of course, is manifestly unfair and opposed to the spirit of the game, and should not be countenanced by the Association; indeed, it is open to question if a championship can be won on such a score. As a matter of fact, I did not see any case of this, but it is wrong, and it is just as well to do a thing properly as improperly. A 6-5 set is only a device to get players off a club lawn to make room for others. It isn't in the game.

The other point is very important. Umpires were scarce, and several ladies

kindly and ably assisted. Now, I am going to refer to now is not confined to ladies. Nearly all line umpires make the same mistake of calling "right" for a ball that is in or a service that is good. I heard this "right" repeatedly, and I saw competitors lose strokes through thinking the umpire had called "out" or "fault," for he it known the player is entitled to think something is wrong if he hears the umpire's voice during a rest. An umpire should let players know that unless he calls clearly and sharply "out," "fault," or "let," the ball is good and must be played. This, I may again say, should be laid to heart by all linesmen, for one scarcely ever sees a match where the decisions are given promptly enough. How often do we hear the striker-out call "how" and the umpire leisurely say "fault." That means one of two things. His decision is wrong, or the player was too quick for him, and in good umpiring this should not be. I have many a time thought it would be well to have a lawn tennis umpires' association. I should be careful to dodge it myself.

C. Heather and Miss Buttle beat W. A. Brown and Miss G. Gorrie in the final of the mixed doubles' handicap at Mt. Eden. Miss Buttle lobbed very well, and made some wonderful backhand returns, while Heather, as usual, was very good at the net. Either in a men's double or a mixed, Heather is hard to beat at the net. Brown volleyed well, and Miss Gorrie drove and lobbed splendidly, and, as usual, was very steady, but the handicap was a little too much for them to concede. This makes Heather's second win in the club matches, as he has already accounted for the men's handicap singles.

I understand that it is definitely decided that Brookes and Wilding will play together in the Davis Cup competition at Wimbledon. This is a combination that must make a lot of beating, either by Americans or Englishmen. We have, of course, heard that H. L. Dolerty is going to stand down this year. If the rumour should prove correct, there will not be wanting those who will say that he saw the writing on the wall—as I do.

Those who are interested in lawn tennis can scarcely have failed to notice the large amount of tennis news that has lately been in the daily papers. There have been long accounts of the Christchurch and Wellington meetings, with full scores, while I noticed an account of the Otahutu championship; also that Ellerstie and Papakura were having a desperate tussle. Elsewhere I saw that Tauranga and Pongakawa were mixed in deadly conflict. The only events of no importance are apparently the Auckland Association championships. This state of affairs partially explains the low standard of the game in Auckland. Our Association requires a little galvanism, and I propose to apply it. I don't want the shock to be too severe, so I give due notice of the fact. In reviewing the season, I shall deal with the Association and its work, and show how I think a little more life and interest can be infused into the game. Lawn tennis is taking a very high place among the nations of the world, and it behoves those who have its welfare at heart to see that it does not languish in Auckland. The Wellington and Otago Associations have nearly sixty clubs affiliated to them. How few Auckland has I scarcely like to say. It is certain that if we want the game to progress, we must do our best to see that it takes the position to which it is entitled.

Dyer: "I'm in a deuce of a fix."  
 Ryer: "What's the matter?"  
 Dyer: "Miss Dix has invited me to take Christmas dinner with them. If I buy her a present I will have to pawn my dress suit, and I can't go to the dinner without it."

## The Amateur.

### THE CHANGE IN ENGLISH PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL.

(By C. B. Fry.)

A few days ago it was reported that V. J. Woodward, the International centre-forward of Tottenham Hotspur, unfortunately disabled by a minor athletic accident, had decided to retire from football, his reason being that he was continually marked down for heavy and unfair treatment by unscrupulous opponents.

It turns out, of course, that Woodward did not authorise the statement, and had never made the complaint. I, for one, am very glad to know this, because I am confident that an amateur leaver in a professional team is of great value to the game as a sport. Men like Woodward are good for modern League football.

There are people who vigorously declare that there is no sport, nor possibility of sport, in modern professional football, and that an amateur who is also a sportsman has no proper place in it.

With this I disagree point blank. I know the faults and drawbacks of professional football rather better than most people. I played for two seasons as an amateur in a Southern League team, which won its League championship and got into the final of the Cup. Some things in modern professional football I detest, but I know there is a great deal of good in it, and of good sportsmanship, too; and I take the view that since professional football is here, and cannot be talked out of existence by words, however hard, the right thing is to make the best of it.

### DO PROFESSIONALS LIKE AMATEURS?

One of the best ways of making the best of it is for players who pride themselves on their sportsmanship to take part in it. This counts more than pointing out its faults.

It should be noticed that many of the main faults of professionalism are entirely concerned with the business and management of it, and are entirely separated from the actual game as played. But that is a long story.

The point at issue in connection with the spurious report about Woodward is the character of the play, and how it affects an amateur.

It has often been stated that an amateur is not welcome on a professional side: that the other players do not like him. This is rather a matter of each individual case. But I judge it to be, in general, quite untrue. Several amateurs have told me that the contrary is the case, and such is my own experience. T. Topham, the famous Corinthian outside right, who played for Wolverhampton Wanderers when they won the cup by that long shot of Allen's from half-back; Herbert Smith, who plays for Reading; S. S. Harris, who played for Portsmouth; E. D. G. Wright, who plays for Hull City; and others, including Woodward, would not play on a side where they were not welcome. The idea is absurd. Topham was, I know, tremendously popular with the Wolves. For myself, I found the Southampton team genial and pleasant comrades; they gave me the best of welcomes, and did everything to make me feel at home with them. Their captain, Harry Wood, won my sincerest respect.

The truth is, the professionals ask one thing, and one thing only, of the amateur. They ask "is he good enough?" If his play answers "Yes"—that is enough.

### UNSCRUPULOUS PLAY.

But the matter of the treatment the amateur receives on the field from opposing teams in first-class League and Cup football is not quite so easy to settle. For I am not going to propose that the amateur finds all his opponents sportsmanlike in their tactics.

But, on the other hand, the amount of unfair treatment which the amateur meets is exaggerated. For others I cannot speak with certainty; for myself I can.

There is some unsportsmanlike play among professionals. But to regard it as universal, or even general, is a gross error. To regard all professionals as unscrupulous players is simply ridiculous. Yet there are people who so regard them. With Southampton I played

through all the exciting rounds of the Cup-ties, with several re-played draws, into a double final; and I can remember precisely one player who deliberately and presently fouled me during a game—just one man, no sportsman, who touched me on the raw. So complete an experience of such exacting football should, I submit, count for something in the argument.

The truth is, briefly, this: The amateur does occasionally—only occasionally—meet an entirely unscrupulous opponent. This is a rare occurrence, but it makes an impression on the amateur's mind, for a very good reason. He is under a disability in combating his tormentor.

### CANNOT GIVE FOUL FOR FOUL.

A professional player, when he meets an unscrupulous opponent, can defend himself by playing diamond cut diamond. If he meets an opponent who "knees" him in the ribs or in the small of the back—the most dangerous form of foul play, and one that the referee scarcely ever detects—can give "knee" for "knee." The unscrupulous opponent knows this, and being as a rule a funk at heart, thinks twice before he begins the game. But the amateur is helpless. He has no protection except the referee, who is useless in the case of refined foul play. The amateur cannot play diamond cut diamond. Noblesse oblige. He cannot give foul for foul. This the unscrupulous opponent knows, and takes full advantage to the full.

That is the gist of the matter.

In the old days the amateur had a remedy in his own hands. When an opponent fouled him in a sneaking, unsportsmanlike way, he (the amateur) could defend himself by giving the fouler a slap-bang, heavy, hearty hundredweight or so of energetic shoulder. The old, hard, fair-shoulder charge was splendid medicine. Your "kneehammer" and "ankle-tapper" never yikes warm shoulder. He can't digest a fair example.

But by the practice of referees the fair-shoulder charge has actually, if not nominally been legislated out of the game. A pity. Rough it was in a sense, but it was sportsmanlike and laudable. Its disappearance has let in little, niggling, dirty tricks ten times as dangerous, if ten times less apparent.

But this I say, and say most emphatically. There is no sufficient reason to prevent any amateur whatever, who is good enough, from playing side by side with professionals, and against them, in League and Cup-tie football.

I affirm that the amateur does great good in professional football. He should be, and he is, man enough to look at the big best of the picture and disregard the little worst.

One rank foul—one only—in a season is a disgusting experience. But it is a blot on the page—just a blot.

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