

CONDITION IN TENNIS.

The Part It Plays In Winning
Hard Fought Tournaments.

YOUNG LARNED IN GOOD FORM

Brother of National Champion Has
Displayed Great Skill In Recent
Games—Discussion Over Net Cord
Strokes—Proposed New Rules.

The triumph of the younger Larned, Edwin P., for the middle states' tennis title was regarded as a combination of fairly developed skill backed by the splendid condition of the player. That in the latter respect he was the master of both William J. Clothier, ex-national champion, and Raymond D. Little, the captain of the international team of 1906, was regarded as his chief asset against the two veterans. Larned had trained himself like a Spartan and had so carefully husbanded his strength that he was enabled to endure faster footwork than either of his two famous opponents. It was this attention to the necessity of keeping the physical condition at its perfection and all of the faculties so tuned up as not to jangle at high tension that had contributed to the young expert's success. In a measure it was the same painstaking care which had brought greatness upon the lawn tennis courts, and for that same reason there was the general opinion that a second member of the Larned family will be a maker of lawn tennis history.

Just how the men who are showing great promise fall of the coveted attainment was illustrated most specifically, Gustave F. Touchard, Nathaniel W. Niles and Irving C. Wright being mentioned in contrast. Touchard and Wright are regarded as the most careless of their physical need. The former does not observe the needs of a somewhat frail constitution. He frequently wears himself out by some petty diversion and then makes a dazzling, brilliant effort to win matches by sheer nerve. The younger Wright is much the same. With Niles it is somewhat different. He has experienced the pangs and twitches of rheumatism, and to those who know his adroitness as a forcing player attribute his poor showing against Edwin P. Larned in the middle states' final, a win of only six games in three sets. Actually in the pink of condition and on even terms there are many who believe that Niles would more often defeat the younger Larned than lose to him. He possesses the greatest courage, while his handling of the racket is always backed by excellent and calm judgment, as was evident in his defeat of Theodore Roosevelt Pell before he met Larned.

While it is not mollycoddling that the players should give themselves, the followers of the game believe that the rigors of lawn tennis are such that none may hope to win high honors except by a sane observance of their particular needs. Rest, especially in the way of a regular night's sleep, and the avoidance of stimulants to sustain them through their matches are in the estimation of the studious ones the absolutely necessary factors of success.

Aside from these questions, the subject of the height of the net and the attendant luck of net cord strokes has come in for some timely and profound debate. Carelessly stretched nets cause all of the top flight of the players more worry than all of the other things which they have to combat. It overthrows the best service, no matter how long and patiently the player has taken to develop it, and throughout is a source of grievance. That most groundsmen feel that their duty is done when they stretch the net taut to the limiting band in the center does not suffice. Many of the players complain that the bands loosen from the rings in the ground as the season progresses and that with a month or two of usage one or even two inches are added to the net in the center. The strange part of it is that few of them care to appear finicky by requesting the referee or umpire to decide upon the correct height.

The net cord stroke finds an ally in all loosely stretched nets, but beyond that one point the opinions are as various as the sands of the sea as to what manner should be pursued in some way limiting the stroke which in practically every instance is a bit of luck that has turned the decision to many matches. The majority of the players agree that it would be as great an injustice to forfeit the stroke entirely as to promulgate the rule that the point be replayed from the service again. There is a growing tendency to mark an additional line across the court parallel with the net at approximately the distance of a foot from it in either side. In order that a net stroke be fair as a return the ball must drop beyond that line, its failure to do so to be considered as a net for the player making the stroke. This appears to be the most popularly espoused method of overcoming the vexed question, and so general has the discussion of it been of late that something of this kind may at last find its place in the rules.

Not for many seasons on the American courts have the players endeavored to lift the game to the place that it deserves in this country. In every direction there is a manifest intention to strengthen the weak points and to overcome the deficiencies of other years.

HARD TO PICK WINNER

National League Race Now an
Interesting Affair.

PITTSBURG LOOKS STRONG.

Pirates Have Good In and Out Fielders.
With Many First Class Substitutes.
New Yorks Playing Pennant Winning Ball—Cubs' Hard Road.

The race for honors in the national league continues unabated and seems likely to last throughout the campaign. Just how the teams will stand at the finish it would be difficult to find a man with hardhead enough to predict, but the opinion is general that the fight will narrow down to a three cornered affair, with the Chicago, New York and Pittsburgh teams as the contenders. Both Cincinnati and Philadelphia still have a chance, and Boston, too, is not out of it, but there are few fans outside of the home ones who think the Reds have a chance for the pennant, many claiming that their early good showing was but a flash in the pan.

The Phillies were picked as contenders some time ago, but that was when they were battling well. Since then they have fallen off woefully in their hitting, and while they may be still considered as a two-three-four possibility, they are not likely to win the banner.

The Chicago, New York and Pittsburgh are best equipped for a grueling fight, and it seems certain that they will all figure in the going right up to the finish. Which team will win out cannot be safely predicted at this time. The Pittsburghs sometimes look like the best bet, and at other times it appears as if the Chicago would win out. Yet, again, the New Yorks look strong enough to forge to the front and claim the banner. The pennant will likely go to the aggregation which shows the best staying qualities.

The Chicago do not have their full strength at present, owing to numerous injuries and accidents, but that is nothing more than was to be expected, and the howls of hard luck in the Windy City recently have elicited few expressions of sympathy from outside fans. Things have been breaking mighty lucky for Chance's team for three long years, and it is nothing more than what might be expected that the tide would finally turn.

The Pittsburghs and the New Yorks have been through the mill. They know what it is to fight against odds, with their ranks shot to pieces. Therefore it is just likely that they are better prepared for the battle than the Chicago. They have both been tempered by misfortune. Take a team that has been riding on the high wave of prosperity as long as the Chicago and they are likely to lose heart when the hard times come more quickly than their rivals who have become accustomed to adversity and misfortune.

Castling all prejudices and partisan feeling aside, the Pirates seem better prepared for the battle than either the Cubs or the Giants. Neither Chicago nor New York can boast of a better array of infield and outfield talent than the Pirates. The Pittsburgh team has several combinations that it can use in the infield without weakening either the offensive or defensive power of the team, whereas the loss of one regular from either of the other teams is severely felt. The Pirates have Alan Stork and Jim Kane for first base. Then there is Starr for short or third if he is needed. Kane can play the outfield if he is called upon. Dan Moeller is also available for the outer garden, and Leach can be shifted there and Stork placed at third if necessary. Taking the pitching staffs as a whole, the Pittsburgh team need not take off its hat to the others, although it may not be able to boast of a single individual of the prowess of either Brown or Mathewson. Behind the bat Gibson has been doing just as good work as either Kling or Bresnahan, and Phelps and O'Connor look as good as Moran and Marshall or the Giants' substitutes.

Perhaps the teams are so closely matched that the result will depend upon the exhibition of spirit the team work and gameness of the various contenders. Manager Clarke of the Pittsburghs has ever sought to inculcate into his men that indomitable will power which characterizes his own work and which refuses to give up or acknowledge defeat so long as the battle is on. Clarke, Chance and McGraw are all fighters, and the race for the 1908 pennant in the fall should be a good one.

No Release For Tom Jones Now.
Manager McAleer of the St. Louis Americans was thinking very seriously of letting out First Baseman Tom Jones last spring and had even secured a substitute for the position at first, but the Pennsylvania miner regained his batting eye in a marvelous manner and has been hitting like a house afire ever since the season opened. It is estimated that his timely hitting has been a factor in giving his team victories in a number of contests. Manager McAleer says he wouldn't part with Jones now unless Elberfeld would make him an even exchange for Hal Chase.

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FLEES TO HER LOVER.

Ethel Ludwig Eludes Her Mother
And Starts For California.

CHICAGO, Aug. 14.—The Tribune today says: Miss Ethel Ludwig, who was kidnapped by her mother in an effort to keep her away from Professor Fred P. Fitzgerald, her fiancé is now on her way to Palo Alto Cal., to join him. Perhaps she eluded her mother at their home, Morris Hills. That is the belief of her father who is much in favor of the match. But at any rate, she is on her way to the West and, Professor Fitzgerald is waiting for her.

The girl's mother, Mrs. Ola Ludwig, and her aunt, Mrs. T. A. Bray of El Paso, Tex., arrived in Morris Tuesday evening with the young woman marching between them. Wednesday morning they started again for Chicago, the girl seemingly meek and subdued. Since then the Morris home has been quiet and deserted.

Professor Fitzgerald reached Palo Alto Wednesday, tired and forlorn. He had expected to take the long trip across the continent under different conditions.

A SUIT-CASE MYSTERY.

Chicago Up Against Another Case Of
Robbery And Murder.

CHICAGO, Aug. 14.—The finding of a suit case in the Chicago river near Monroe Street yesterday, convinced the police that Francisco Messina had been robbed and murdered. The Italian who has not been seen since Wednesday night, carried \$250 with him in a belt when he left his boarding house to go to a railroad station, where he expected to start on a journey to his home in Italy.

The suitcase contained a number of letters written in Italian, photographs of a woman and two children and a few articles of clothing.

A strange Italian was seen with Messina after he left the boarding house and since then all trace of the missing man has been lost. Messina has been in Chicago but a few months, coming from Pittsburgh.

NEW SHIPS APPEARING.

Japan's Policy For A Fine Navy Going Steadily Onward.

TOKIO, July 24.—During the last year the naval arsenals constructed one battleship, one armored cruiser and one second class cruiser while two dispatch boats were built at the Mitsubishi shipbuilding dockyard, Kobe. Besides these the naval arsenals were occupied in the fitting of armaments of the battleship Satsuma, and the cruiser Ikoma, both launched in 1906 as well as the repairs of the Mikasa and the warships captured in the late war. The arsenals are at present building three destroyers and three battleships each displacing 20,000 tons. The Mitsubishi yard is also constructing several ships their tonnage aggregating 80,000 tons while the Kawasaki yard has also several ships in course of construction of some 35,000 tons. In addition to these there were built altogether 100 vessels of every description and size at shipbuilding dockyards throughout the country their total tonnage aggregating 11,355 tons.

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