

from:

SqR.F.T & R May 1935

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

By JOHN ARMITAGE.

It remains to be noted that the promoters of the tournament viewed with great regret, the growing tendency for players to throw up for themselves. The rule allowing this was made in order to safeguard an opponent against a player who really could not throw, but it is now accepted as a general practice among schools. It is to be hoped that it will not be necessary for a new rule to be made upon this matter but it is quite clear that something must be done if players throwing up for themselves continue to stand so close to the front wall. On many occasions during the tournament, the striker gained an unfair advantage by masking the ball with his body when taking service.

October 1935

Masking the Ball.

There is no doubt that the Rugby Fives Association view with considerable concern the growing tendency for players, especially school-boy players, to throw up the ball for themselves. As we wrote at the end of last season, this rule was originally made to safeguard a player against an opponent who really could not throw up a service, but the player who now habitually throws up for himself gets nearer and nearer to the front wall and so masks his return of service quite unfairly. Mr. R. L. Kay, a master at Sutton Valence School who has had great experience writes to suggest that "a white arc of a circle should be painted at the front corners, a suitable distance away, and making the server throw the ball so that it pitches full toss outside this." This may be a good idea, and we would welcome comments on the suggestion, but we hold very strongly that attempts to legislate on these matters, serve only to make the player think of the letter of the law and to forget the spirit. Laws of a game should not, in our opinion, take into consideration the fact that some players like to win regardless of their methods of doing so, for games overburdened with laws against the cheat are seldom worth playing. Mr. Kay continues by saying very truly that it is much more natural for the striker to throw up for himself, but here again we like to feel that in both games of Fives, a player can do that much for his opponent accurately and well. Nor has it been proved up to date that the player who throws up for himself has the better service; indeed, rather the contrary.

January 1936

Rugby Fives: Masking the Service.

To the Editor of Squash Rackets and Fives.

Dear Sir,

The first man who, being "down" at a game of Rugby Fives—and doubtless sorely provoked by left-handed servers who twisted and indiscriminate servers who slung—suggested that he should throw up the ball for himself in order to 'strike' his own "service," has a lot to answer for.

To-day this request, from being extraordinary, threatens to become the rule. And because along with this request goes very easily the practice of the striker "masking the ball" from the view of his opponent(s), it has attracted attention. Nobody would suggest that obstruction necessarily results, or solely results from the would-be striker throwing up his own ball. But the fact

remains that many people do associate "throwing up for oneself" with "masking the return," and for this reason it is perhaps worth while to examine why it should by some people be thought necessary for the striker to throw for himself.

Mr. Truman, it appears, does not investigate whether his opponent is capable of throwing a takeable service, but instead "prefers to ask permission at the beginning of a game" to throw for himself. Why? "Life is too short" he tells us "to keep throwing the service back," and rather than take "in desperation" an unpleasant service he avails himself habitually of a rule that was formerly no more than a safeguard against unfair serving. As I read his letter, I find myself wondering if service is after all so difficult for the man who is "up," or so vitally important for the man who is "down," as Mr. Truman would have us believe. Is it not true that the man who is probably the finest living Rugby Fives player is notably uncritical as to the service which he is given (and takes)?

I conclude that the case for the growing practice of "throwing for oneself" has yet to be proven. Except in the case of the wilful or incompetent server, it seems absurd that the striker should claim to exercise as of right the quite separate operation of serving. It would be a pity if a rule that exists to deal with a special contingency (the unfair service) should be so abused that it had to be abolished.

Yours sincerely,

J. A. C. ROBERTSON.

4, Dartmouth Park Avenue, N.W.5.

SqR.F.T & R February 1936

Rugby Fives: Masking the Service.

To the Editor of Squash Rackets and Fives.

Dear Sir,

May I be permitted to add to the growing literature on the subject of "Masking the Service" and show how, at school, we have formed a local bye-law—so far a satisfactory one—to deal with the man "who throws up for himself."

Let us take the case where A is playing B. A, we will suppose, is dissatisfied with the way B is throwing up for him and decides to throw up for himself. Under our bye-law, he must first demonstrate exactly how he intends to throw up and strike the ball; should B object to A's method of doing so, he may refuse to take such a service. Whereupon, either A must alter his methods to suit B's taste, or, if no agreement be reached, B continues to throw up for A to the best of his ability.

Of course, it can be argued against such a rule that if B is of an unpleasant, cavilling disposition he may dictate to A by refusing to fall in with the latter's demonstration-service. But it is hoped, in the Fives world at any rate, people like B are the exception rather than the rule.

Yours faithfully,

G. C. GREENFIELD.

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