

CHAMPIONS GIVE THE JOURNAL READERS A SPORTING PAGE.

CLARENCE HOBART.

CHAMPION HOBART AND HIS CONFEDERATES.

An Interesting Chat About the Men Who Are Famous in Tennis History.

F. H. Hovey, the present tennis champion, is a born player. Watching him, one feels instinctively that his game is the result of a special talent, not of laborious practice.

colleagues champion in singles. In 1891, at Saratoga, he won the singles and (with H. G. Bixby) doubles championship of New York State. He was the runner-up at Newport and again became intercollegiate champion in singles, and with Wrenn won the intercollegiate doubles championship.

In 1893 he successfully defended his claim to the Longwood Cup, divided first honors in the West Newton Invitation event with Hobart, won with Hobart the doubles at Tuxedo and Saratoga and the national doubles championship at Chicago.

He was again runner-up in the All Corners, but lost to Wrenn. In 1894 he was winner of the West Newton and Manchester Invitation tournaments, but he fell before Goodbody, the Irish crack, in an early round of the All Corners. Last year he and Hobart defeated Pin and Mahoney in a doubles match at West Newton.

SOMETHING ABOUT WRENN. R. D. Wrenn held the championship for two years before Hovey wrested it from him. He gained his title in the second year he played at Newport, an achievement almost without parallel. While I do

BALD'S SUGGESTIONS ON CYCLING REFORMS.

The Classes and Record Distances Need an Entirely New Adjustment.

Verily these are the days of record-breaking. Also champions, world's and otherwise. There are so many new records that it requires a memory better than most people possess to keep track of them. And as for the champions, they flock in herds and droves. Every day the newspapers chronicle some new event won and herald to the public the name of some champion for a new distance. What, with standing starts and flying starts, paced and unpaced races, and vulgar fractions of a mile, till the list of records looks like a table of stock quotations, it is hard work for the plain, everyday record-holder to determine whether he is a champion or not, and leads him to place more confidence in his ability to win out when the racing season opens than in any records that he may have put to his credit during a previous season.

And when the list of record distances was established I would favor another innovation which would do with timing the races. An expert watchmaker once told me that the watch had not yet been made that would accurately split seconds into fractions smaller than fourths. This may or may not be true, but it affords the illustration of my idea. The innovation which I would make would be to use no fraction less than one-fourth in timing any race. Even if a watch could be made capable of splitting the second into hundredths, there would be the timer alert enough of eye or of hand to catch and record such a fraction?

WANDERING IN A MAZE OF RECORDS. Of course, this is the result of the ambition of the manufacturers, who maintain racing teams to put records to the credit of their wheels. For them the more records the better—it does not so much matter about the distance. But, on the whole, would it not be better to have a definite list of achievements, that could be classed as records that would be generally recognized as standing for something, and would represent the relative merits of riders and their respective mounts as the present haphazard, ill-regulated plan can never do? I believe that it would be more satisfactory for all concerned.

For a long time I have believed and argued that the Racing Board should fix a list of distances for which records should be ridden, and leave all others to the list of "remarkable performances," or whatever else the manufacturers or the riders may choose to call them. With such a definite list the relative positions of record-holders and competitors would be at once apparent, and handicapping would be exceedingly simplified.

THE MILE IS THE STANDARD. The mile is, and will probably continue to be, the standard, at least until the metric system is adopted in the English-speaking countries. The mile race is the chief event of race meets and the one in which the greatest interest is always manifested, unless some unusual circumstance,

third mile, one-half mile, two-thirds mile and three-fourths mile. No smaller divisions are, in my opinion, wise. No smaller divisions would indicate the superiority of a rider fairly.

Above the mile the list of distances at which records could be made might be fixed at two, five, ten, twenty-five, fifty and one hundred miles. These are frequent enough divisions to determine the ability of the road or long distance rider. Thus there would be twelve definite records to be striven for, and as the short distance records are capable of variation by the introduction of the flying start, and all of the dozen by the employment of pace-makers, the list should provide extensive enough to satisfy the most ambitious rider for championship honors, or the manufacturer most covetous of records to the credit of his wheel. Sufficient latitude would be allowed by the adoption of this list to suit the abilities of every rider, and every record broken would represent a definite achievement. There would be fewer record-holders, but records would count for more and be better worth striving for.

A TIMING REFORM IS NEEDED. And when the list of record distances was established I would favor another innovation which would do with timing the races. An expert watchmaker once told me that the watch had not yet been made that would accurately split seconds into fractions smaller than fourths. This may or may not be true, but it affords the illustration of my idea. The innovation which I would make would be to use no fraction less than one-fourth in timing any race. Even if a watch could be made capable of splitting the second into hundredths, there would be the timer alert enough of eye or of hand to catch and record such a fraction?

How often, after a sharply ridden race against time or competition on the track, does one see the timers, watches in hand, exhibiting the recorded fraction of a second at which the stop was pushed defiantly to each other and then consulting and figuring out an average before announcing the result? Their watches do not split seconds alike, or, if they do, the nerves that travel between the eye and brain and between the brain and hand do not act in unison. Show me the timer who would not make the time of the same race four-fifths in one instance and five-sixths in another and I will show you a rare avia. The timer is not to blame, either. Try it yourself some time and see! When judges honestly disagree over the question of which rider crossed the tape first, a fifth is not remarkably close, is it to be expected that the timer will invariably fall to err even a hairbreadth?

WHY RACING WILL GAIN ADDED POPULARITY. Racing is the brass band of cycling and every one who rides a wheel takes a certain amount of interest in the speed merchants. What figures as the news side of the recreation and sport is invariably embodied in something that has been done or is to be done by some one who competes either for his own amusement or for money. And this is the reason that the racing feature is made so prominent. The various meets are occasions for the gathering of riders from all over the district in which the particular tourney is held, and it is at these times that one who wants to see any one of account in the wheel world puts in an appearance. Cycle racing will attain the coming season more popularity than it has ever enjoyed before, for the reason that it has been taken up by two classes which hitherto have not lent it much attention. The influence of the colleges will be made evident in a very short space of time and cycling will soon push athletics for popularity in the list of college competitions, as it has done with the

CLASS RIDERS LIKE WROTTERS. When these ideas are generally adopted, and I believe that eventually, though perhaps in a modified form, they will be, it will be possible to establish classes as in horse racing and conduct racing on principles

BACHOLDER'S BUDGET.

Wheelmen Win the First Political Fight for Right.

And so the Armstrong Bicycle Baggage bill only needs the signature of Governor Morton to make it a law. Such a fight for its passage as the wheelmen made could hardly fail to elicit admiration, even from the attorney of a railroad. The result gives evidence of the marked respect with which politicians now regard the "cyclist vote," and the few members in each house who disregarded the wishes of the wheelmen in their districts may have cause to regret their lack of perception in realizing that the bill was wanted, not by a restricted class, but by a class which comprised all classes. The wheelmen are clamorous in the extreme when their rights are in peril, and more than one candidate for public office has become aware of this fact. Nevertheless, the extent to which wheelmen dabble in politics should be limited to those occasions when it is absolutely necessary for them to show their strength, which is becoming something enormous. True it is that all wheelmen do not belong to the L. A. W., but the policy followed by the national cycling body is regarded by nine-tenths of those who are identified with wheeling. In the Armstrong bill, the wheelmen contended that they were asking for that which was just, reasonable and proper, and the victory so handsomely won reflects great credit upon those who conducted the campaign in such a capable manner. Besides Messrs. Potter, Armstrong and Bidwell, the other State Division officials lent efficient aid, and, with the bill out of the way, the work of running the membership up to the 20,000, figure will be prosecuted with renewed energy.

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F. H. Hovey.

In the air and smash the ball so viciously that it would bound far over Huntington's head, sometimes into the branches of a tree a considerable distance back.

This lavish expenditure of force proved disastrous in the end, although at one time Hovey led by two sets to one and three games to three. Here Huntington made a wonderful brace, and Hovey, tired out by his over-exertions, showed a complete reversal of form, falling in the simplest strokes. He was unable to win another game, Huntington scoring ten straight and the match.

Hovey's remarkable first year.

Later in the same season Hovey defeated Campbell, then the United States champion, in the intercollegiate tournament, thereby firmly establishing a high standing in the tennis world. That year he was ranked fifth best of all the players in America. In 1891 his official ranking was No. 4. In 1892 it was No. 5, although he deserved a much higher standing, as he won the All Corners and pressed Campbell closely for the championship. Indeed, many good judges thought he was entitled to second place. In 1893 he was third, in 1894 fourth, and last year champion and first.

For several years Hovey gave similar exhibitions of uneven play, but by degrees these grew less marked, and for the last two or three years he has been about as steady as the average expert. Last year when he at last won the championship, which had been so often almost in his grasp, he played from beginning to end of the Newport tournament a uniformly steady, careful game, devoid of most of its former sensational features, and gained wonderfully in strength thereby.

Hovey's first serve is swift and hard to handle, but the second is rather easy. His forehand drive is peculiar. He is only one player I know of who takes the ball before it has risen to the full height of the bounce. This gives him an advantage over those who wait until it is descending, in passing an opponent who runs up on the service, as he gets to the ball quicker and strikes it from a higher angle to the net.

In his match with the Western champion, Neal, at Newport last August, Hovey passed the latter, who then indicated, from a running start, which assists him in gaining a net position before the return, with consummate ease. On the other hand, Chase, who waits rather long for his stroke, succumbed to the Westerner because he could rarely return the latter's five out of his reach. With Hovey it is the whole a good, serviceable stroke, but it probably would not pay any one to whom it does not come naturally to emulate it.

SOME OF Hovey's STROKES. Hovey's backhand (that is, his backhand ground stroke), is not very good, and I think he tries to put a little too much force into it. He hits rarely, but with good judgment, so that he occasionally catches his opponent unawares. He never uses the lob to profit by the other's mistakes, but always in an attempt to score by it.

His volleying is almost unexcelled. On overhead balls he seldom smashes now, but contents himself with less severity and more placing. He is able to volley almost equally well in any position, which few players can do, and his phenomenal quickness makes him a very hard man to pass. I regard him as the superior of all the present generation of tennis players, with the possible exception of Larned.

Previous to his triumph of last August, Hovey's successes have been numerous. In 1890, as before stated, he won the inter-

not consider his best game to be quite as strong as Hovey's best, his form is superior. No one who has a better or more graceful style, and to my mind none of the English and Irish experts who have visited this country can compare with him or with Larned in this respect. Between these two I should find it hard to make a choice. Larned's style is brilliant and forceful, Wrenn's is more rounded and finished.

Wrenn is a left-handed player, which gives him a slight advantage, as his opponents have of course fewer opportunities to practice against players of his peculiarity than he has against those of the usual right-handed habit. He is one of the best generals in the game, changing his methods as he finds strong or weak points in his opponent. Outside of Hovey, he is, I think, as quick with his racquet as any American player, and although he cannot run very fast he starts quickly and covers a good deal of ground.

He played in a few tournaments during the season of 1891, but was not particularly successful. His name began to be widely known. He upset the calculations of the tennis prophets and caused a widespread sensation by his defeat of H. H. at Bar Harbor, just after the latter had gone gallantly through the Nahant invitation tournament. He has since then been a household name. He upset the calculations of the year to win, not excepting the All Corners, and Hovey's friends were confident that he would follow up his success by a greater one at Newport.

HALL'S GOOD CHANCE.

Their hopes received a severe check when their favorite succumbed to Wrenn at Bar Harbor, who played the game of his life up to that time. But for this setback I think that Hall would have come very near to winning the All Corners that year, judging by the grand form he displayed at Nahant. This disappointment, however, seemed to unsettle him, and his game at Newport was weak by comparison.

Wrenn continued his good work at Newport by defeating the veteran Knapp, after the latter had won from Chase, then known as "the Boy Wonder." This match was one of the longest on record, and gave Wrenn an enduring reputation for lasting. The five sets, the score of one of which reached 14-12 and another 10-8, consumed five hours of the hottest part of a sultry August day. At the end Wrenn was far fresher than his opponent, who, however, was somewhat predisposed to fatigue from his previous battle with Chase.

Wrenn reached the semi-final round, and was then laid low by Hovey, but not before he had given indications of being very nearly in his conqueror's class. The following year he won the All Corners, and became champion of the continent. There is no gainsaying the fact that Wrenn was wonderfully favored by fortune. He was the only player of the very first class to be defeated in his own country, and so reached the final round without having to meet a foe man worthy of his metal. In the final he was laid low by Hovey on an off day and succeeded in defeating him, but I do not think he was the latter's equal at that time.

WRENN'S BRILLIANT SEASON. 1894 was Wrenn's year. Not only was he victor in the Newwood Park Invitation tournament with Goodbody, Stevens, Chase and Larned opposed to him, but he defended his championship against the Irish invader in the most impressive style imaginable. I have no hesitation in stating that this was the best game Wrenn ever played, and one of the most superb and well-rounded exhibitions of tennis playing ever seen in this country. If he had not been champion I believe the chances are good that he would have won the All Corners again, and that if he had met Hovey he would have won the match on its merits.

Naturally it will be necessary to establish certain fractional distances, but I believe there should be no more than five of these, as follows: One-fourth mile, one-



Champion Bald at His Editorial Desk.

such as a match race between one or two well-known riders who have demonstrated a marked strength at other distances, is made a feature. It is the mile race that the people wait for, and it is the mile race that they stand up in their seats to applaud. Why? Because the mile has been their unit of measurement. The mile is the basis on which trotting and running records are marked, and by which the ability of horses and locomotives has always been reckoned, to say nothing of bicycle riders before the present unseemly craze for crazy-quick records came in vogue. So, first of all the Racing Board should, I believe, place the mile record on their accepted list.

Naturally it will be necessary to establish certain fractional distances, but I believe there should be no more than five of these, as follows: One-fourth mile, one-

that will be more satisfactory to the public and quite as advantageous to the rider. With regard to pace-making I have already expressed myself in the columns of the Journal, but allow me to repeat—because this subject naturally arises in connection with the other—that the reforms now being agitated with reference to pace-making are sure to have a beneficial result. The single pace-maker, or the race with riders put in for the special purpose of setting the pace, is much more fair to all the competitors than the introduction of any pace-making machine, big or little, that carries more than a single rider. Of course, the single pace-maker, or the race with riders put in for the special purpose of setting the pace, is much more fair to all the competitors than the introduction of any pace-making machine, big or little, that carries more than a single rider. 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