BADMINTON-A CO-RECREATIONAL SPORT

By Carl Jackson and Lester Swan

The stroke that produces the overhead drop and high clear is essentially the same as the smash

This is the third and concluding installment of a series of three articles by Carl H. Jackson and Lester A. Swan of the Northern Evening High School (for adults) in Detroit, Mich. The authors have already covered grip and racquet position, holding the bird, the service, bird flights and the return, and the fundamental strokes. They conclude with the overhead and net strokes.

HE flights most commonly produced from the overhead stroke are the drop, the smash, and the high clear. As we indicated in the sections on bird flights, the well-placed smash is the severest weapon on offense. While we are concerned here specifically with the smash, the stroke used to produce either the overhead drop or high clear is essentially the same. The only difference in the case of the overhead drop is that the force of the stroke is checked just before the bird-racquet contact and is so gauged as to direct the bird just over and close to the net. The skillful player will usually introduce deception into the overhead drop by faking a smash. The overhead high clear differs in that the bird is hit upward.

Aside from the stroke itself, the important fundamentals to consider in the overhead stroke are the stance and the point of bird-racquet contact. A comparison of the early sequences of the forehand stroke with those of the overhead stroke indicate that the stroking stance for the overhead is the same as the on-guard stance—the left foot forward and pointing in line with the on-coming flight.

Since the smash and drop are rapidly descending flights, the bird must be hit downward. The birdracquet contact point, therefore, should not be directly overhead but a little out in front. Furthermore, this point is such that the full reach of the arm and racquet are used. The full reach is essential for the power requisite in the smash stroke. To judge the contact point properly, the player must maneuver into position and carefully time the stroke. The common faults are in not getting far enough back of the bird or in letting it fall too low (improper timing).

It will be noted that the progressive action pictures of the overhead stroke begin with the player already in stroking position. The bird at this moment is high overhead and falling a little out in front of the body-line. The player is leaning back, with most of the weight on the rear foot to rush and smash the bird that

during the backswing. This allows for additional backswing and hence power in the stroke. It may be well to point out here that the power is applied with the upward movement of the racquet and not on the downward movement, a common error with beginners. Note in No. 4 that the racquet is allowed to drop perpendicularly behind the body.

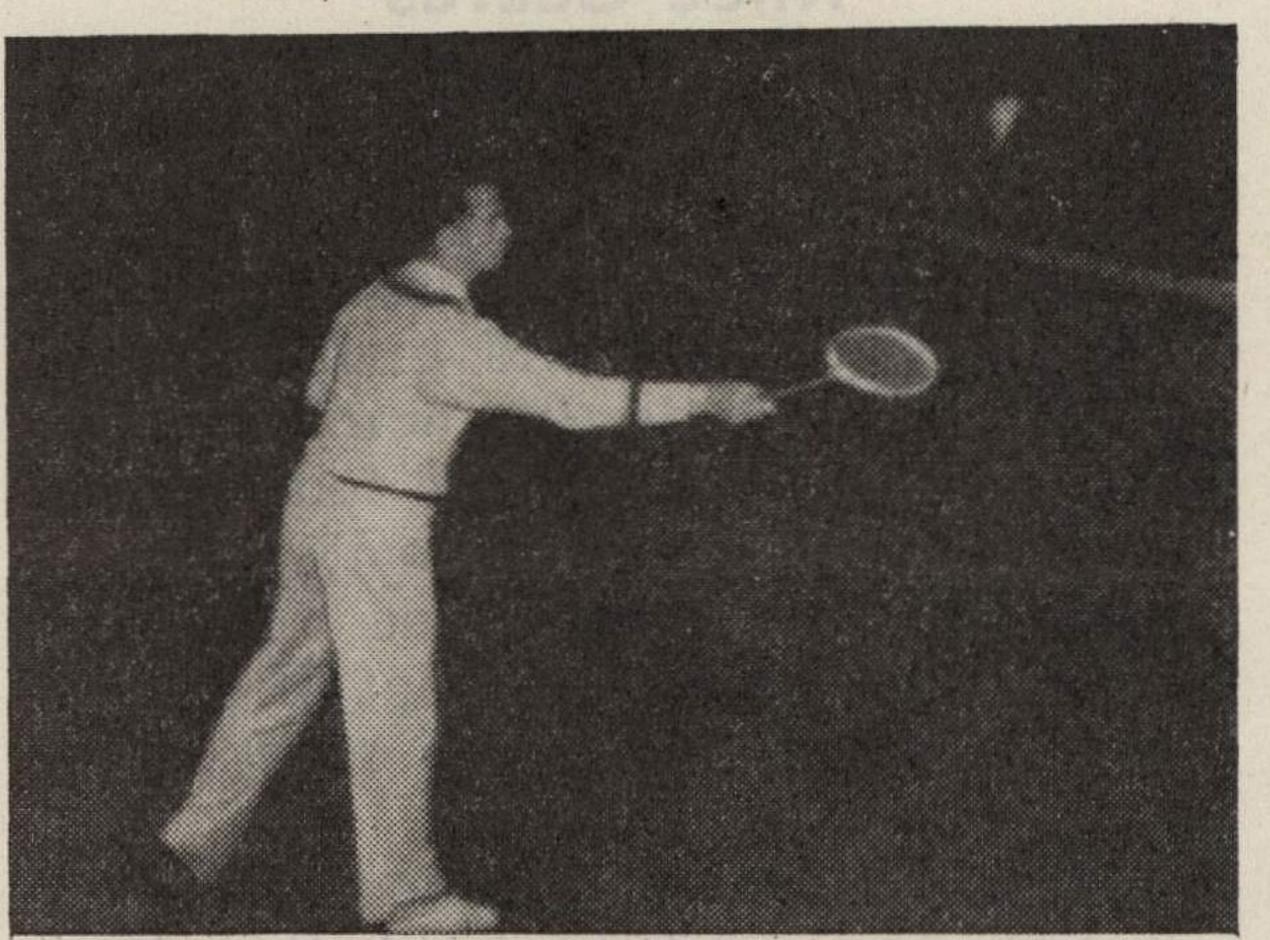
The force with which the bird is hit is indicated by the outstretched arm, by the fact that the rear foot is raised off the floor and by the lunge forward with the completion of the stroke (No. 7). But again, as in the forehand and backhand strokes, most of the power results directly from the flicking movement or wrist-snap. The wrist-lead necessary for the sudden withdrawal of the wrist is shown in Nos. 5 and 6.

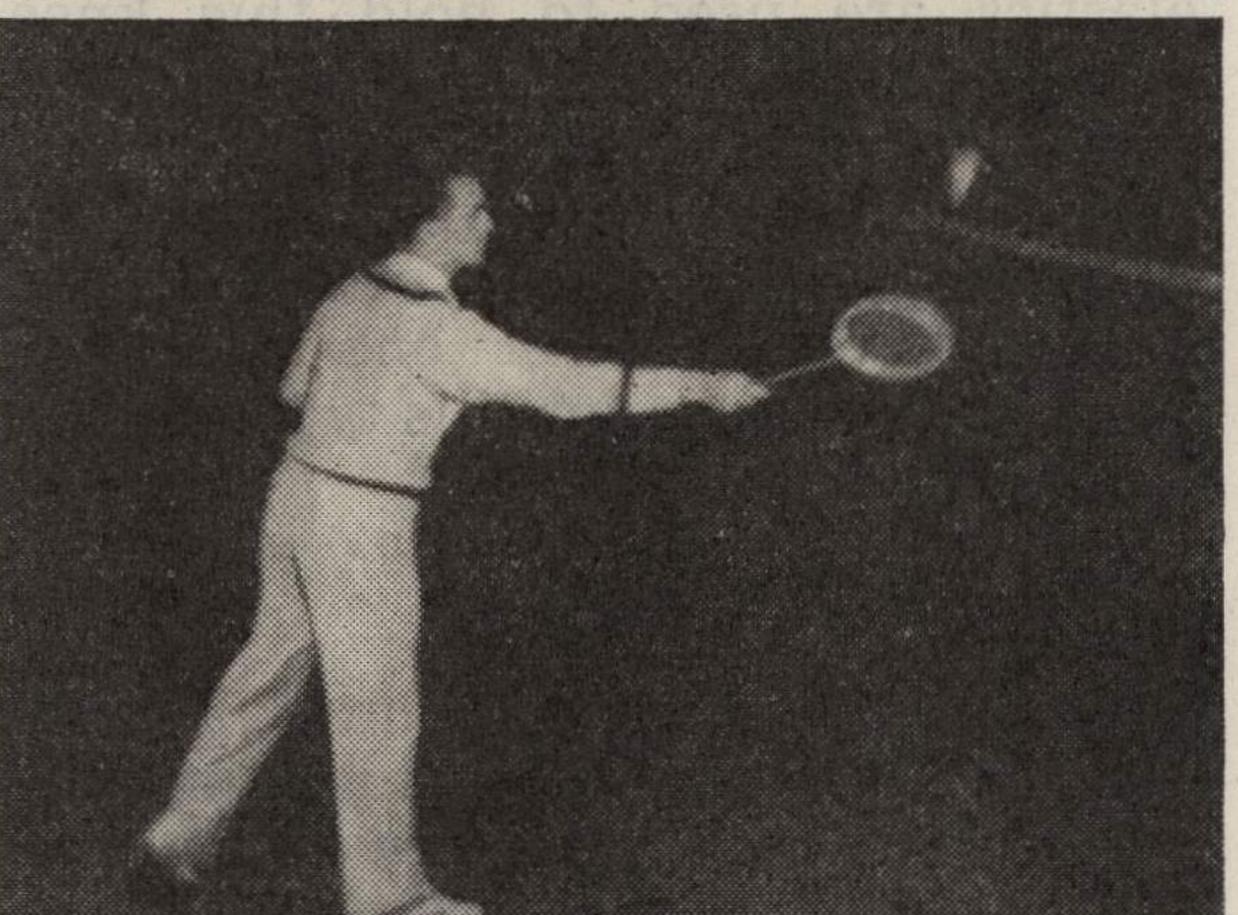
The net strokes

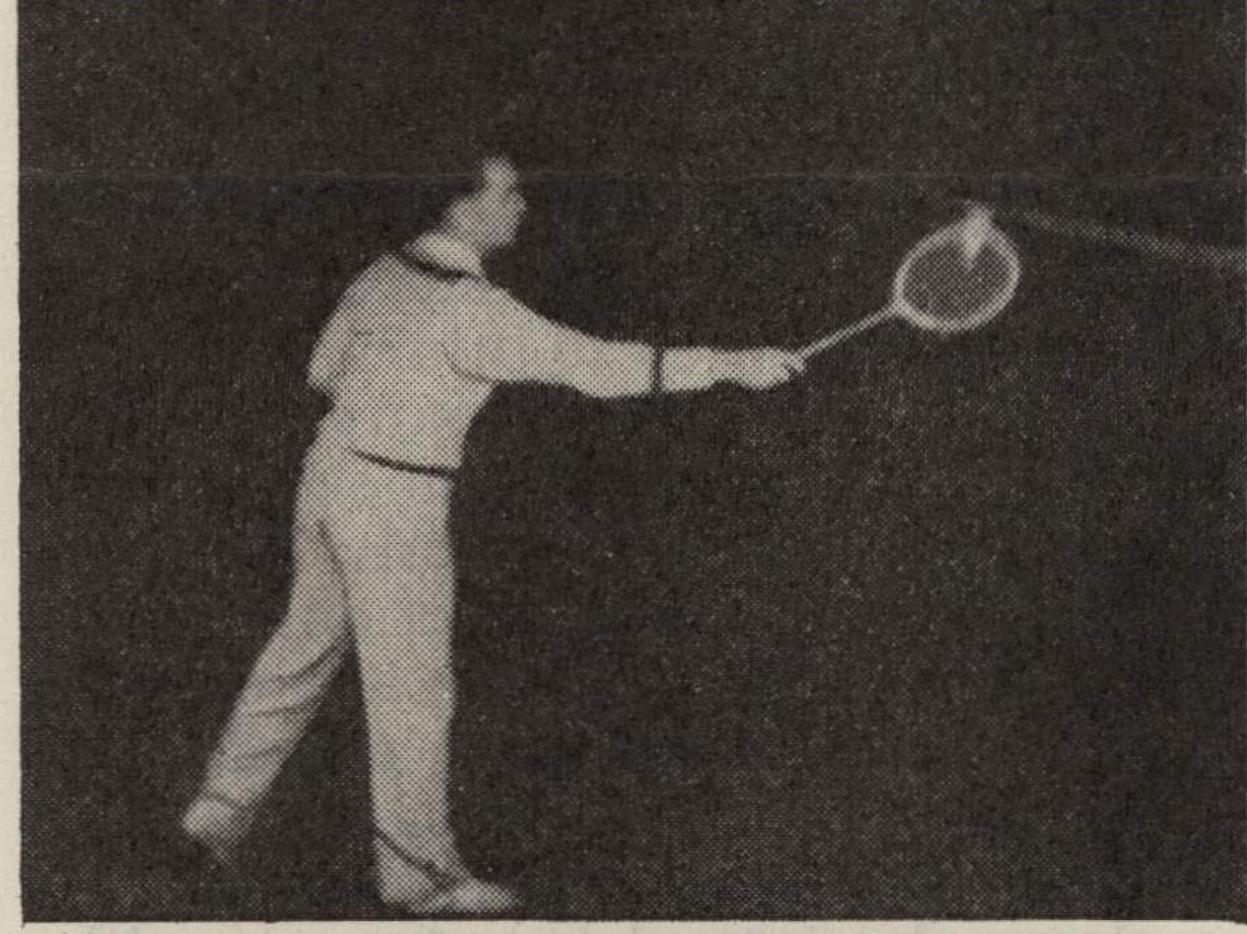
Net play is a relatively easy department of badminton and yet it provides much of the fun and thrills of the game. Two types of net strokes are illustrated in progressive action pictures—the lift stroke, where the bird is stroked down low; and a carefully gauged, high forehand (or backhand) stroke, where the bird is stroked near and directed along the net-tape (cross-net) toward the side alley.

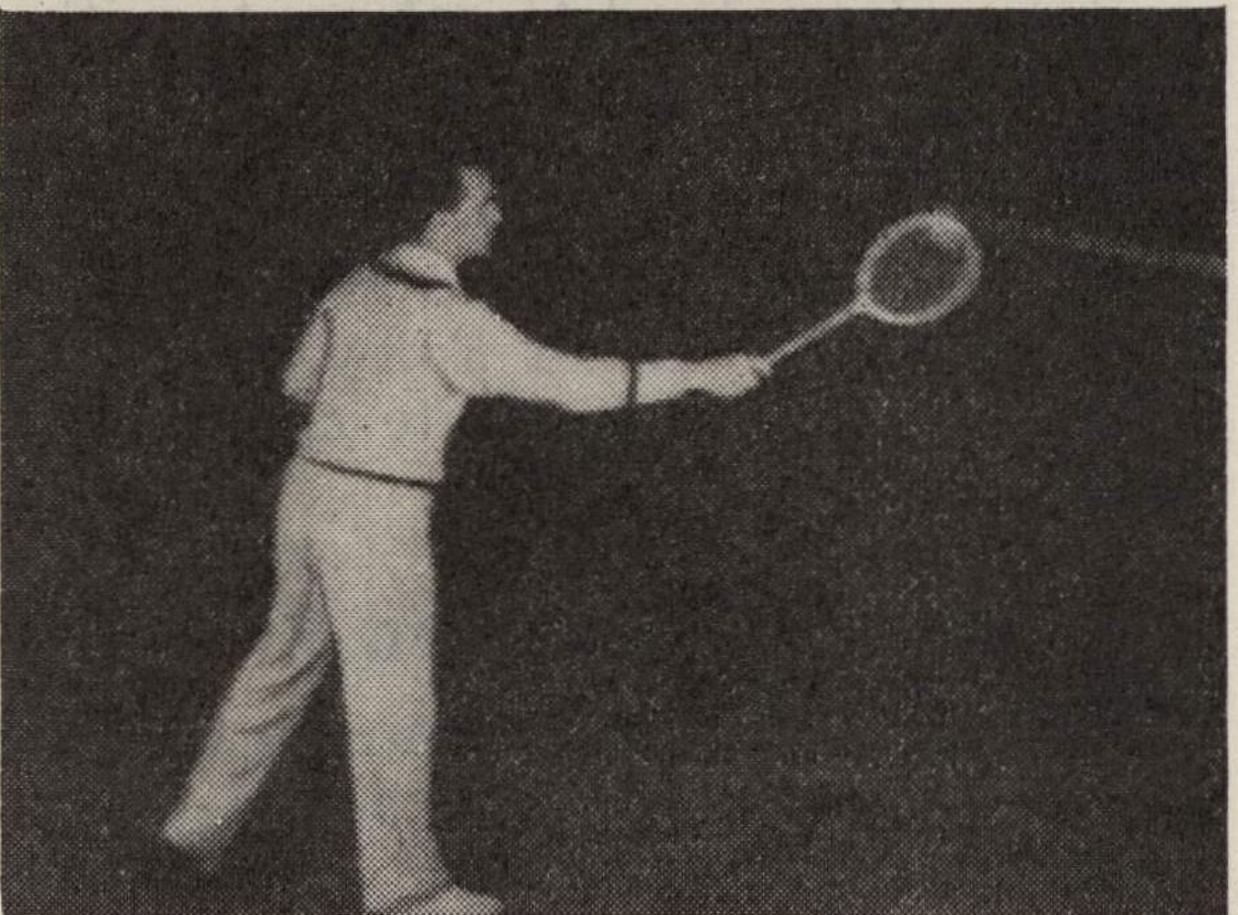
Of course the cross-net as well as the short hairpin type of flight may be produced with the lift stroke, but where the player wishes to make a quick cross-net placement and the time element does not force him to stroke low, he should strive to meet the bird as close to the net tape as possible. A short flight, directly over the net, may of course be produced from near the net tape also. Variations between the short and crossnet flights for either of these strokes provide interesting opportunities for deceptive tactics, as for example, faking a cross-net flight from near the net tape and "dropping" the bird directly over the net. This and other obvious variations of deceptive play are relatively easy in net play.

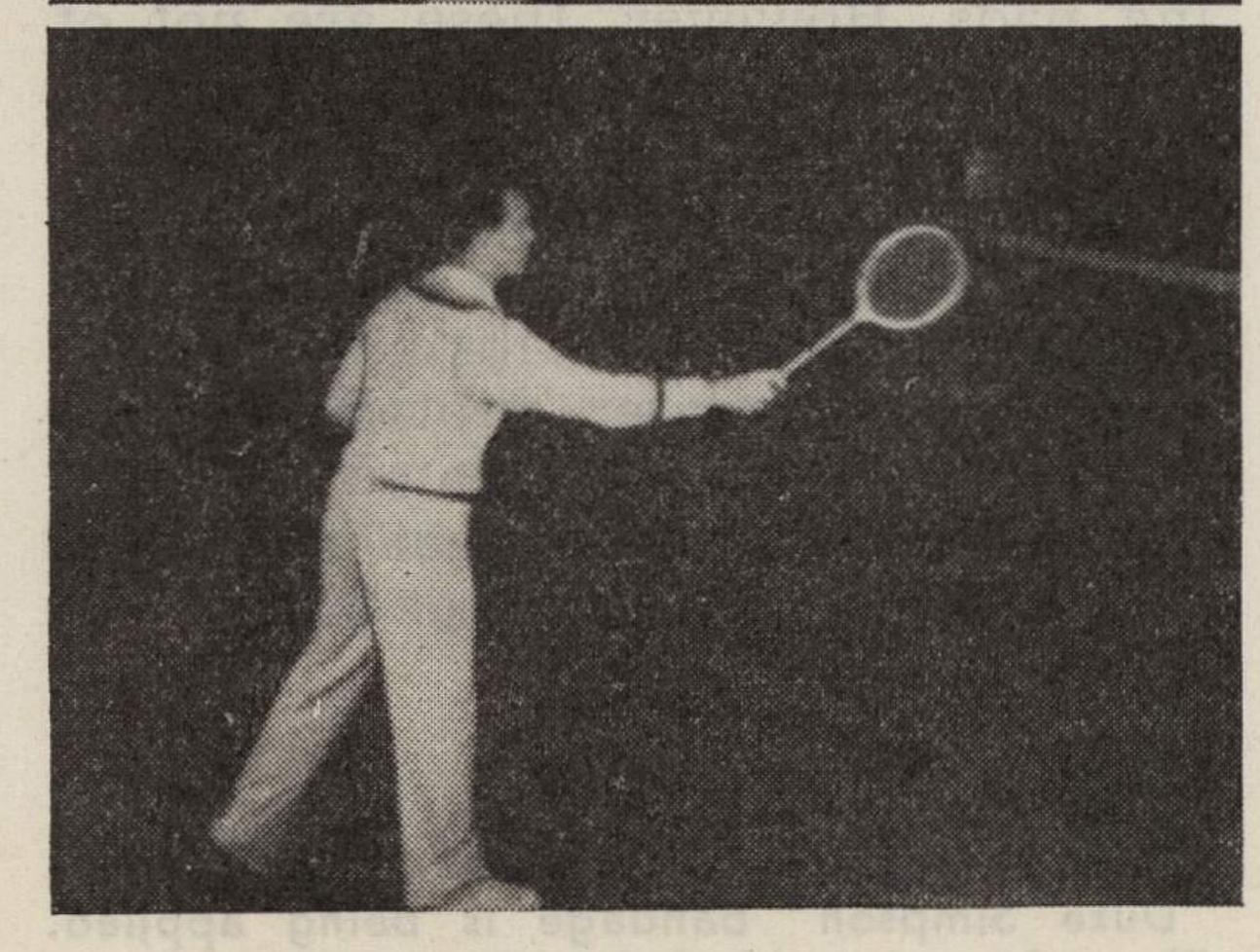
It has been assumed thus far that the nearness of the on-coming bird to the net-tape, or the receiver's position, rule out the possibility of a rush to the net followed by a quick smash. However, the alert player will be watchful for an opportunity











Above: The Cross-Net