



Braintree League: Top two ready for another classic

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Brandon Crouchman and Paul Davison, who had a memorable battle in last season's semi-final, are scheduled to provide the climax to this year's individual championships in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

The two, whose match finished at 14-12 in the fifth game in Crouchman's favour last year, are the top two seeds in this year's event, which begins this weekend.

The in-form Simon Webber and Adam Buxton are seeded to provide the opposition in the semi-finals but Andy Holmes, finalist last year, is running into form at the right time and could make his mark again.

Crouchman also won the men's doubles last season but in the absence of his partner Scott Dowsett, he teams up this year with Webber in an attempt to keep the trophy on Liberal's shelf. Buxton and Lee McHugh are seeded to meet them in the final.

Davison is the favourite to retain the veterans' singles title that he won at the first time of asking last year, with Buxton the No 2 seed. Holmes, Steve Pennell and the new anti-loop version of Peter Hayden could make it tough for either of them.

For the first time for seven years, there will be a ladies' singles final. Hannah Pitt was denied by injury in her attempt to win the trophy two years ago, but lines up this time against Rayne's new signing Kelly Yuenyongpknan.

The junior events will be played to a finish at the weekend but after several years, the league returns to a separate finals night for the main events which will be held the following Friday, April 20.

And there is a new venue this year, the Earls Colne Recreation Centre, home of the Netts club.

In the league, Holmes' three singles helped Netts A to a draw with Rayne B while Adrian Pitt's similarly untroubled

evening helped Liberal B to a 6-4 win over Rayne C.

Netts B's 7-3 win over their own C team was one of those matches that defy logic in which all three C team players won one singles, but each of them beat a different member of the opposition. Maria Boulton, Colin Bennett and Gus Heath won two each for the B team.

In division three, leaders Felsted RBL C turned out a team of Butlers for two successive matches. Ian and sons Ashley and Nick duly took home 20 points.

Black Notley E ensured that Rayne H still have some work to do to clinch second place after two thumping wins. They beat Netts F 10-0 and Notley H 9-1 while Rayne H took all ten points from Rayne J but dropped three points in beating Notley G.

Three wins from Tim Townsend helped Rayne I to a 7-3 win over Notley H and only Alan Billing got the better of him in the draw with Notley G.

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