



Braintree League: Will Liberal be 'Rayned' in?

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Rayne A have refused to let champions Liberal A get away as they approach the final stages of their fight for the Braintree Table Tennis League championship.

In the two-week period leading up to the individual finals, Liberal won 10-0 and 6-4, while Rayne kept on their tails with an 8-2 win and a draw.

Liberal called up reserve Andrew Huckson to face Rayne B and he did not let them down as they cruised to a 10-0 win.

Life was a bit harder against Black Notley A, who only had two players but stretched the league leaders to 6-4.

Victor Chan repeated his earlier victory over Brandon Crouchman while Simon Webber, with only six defeats behind him in 19 matches, was bettered by Lucy Wang.

And it could have been worse, Chan losing out only at 11-9 in the fifth game against Webber.

Rayne A had a comfortable 8-2 win over their own C team, where Adam Buxton was the only one to beat Lee McHugh, which he managed at 11-9 in the fifth, but they were held to a draw by Netts B.

Chris Buer and Colin Bennett won twice for Netts while Hector Rogers and Steve Pennell did likewise for Rayne.

In third place, Netts A also had a 6-4 win over Notley A, although none of them could get past Wang, and they added a 10-0 win over bottom team Rayne D.

Netts B won the battle of the B teams when they beat Liberal's second string 7-3, with Gus Heath unbeaten, while Liberal B went on to beat Netts C 8-2.

Fred Evans, a member of the Colne A team that won the title five years running from 1987 to 1991 but who retired not long after, played his first division one match since around that time and was the only one of the Netts C

team to win a singles.

A two-person Netts C team had a 6-4 win over Rayne D while Rayne B beat Rayne C 8-2, Matthew Brown this time becoming the only one to beat Lee McHugh.

That Felsted RBL C would win division three has been obvious almost from the start and they sprinted over the line with three wins in impressive style.

They beat Notley G 10-0 and Notley H and Rayne I 7-3, but the three points they dropped in each of those games were walkovers as they had only two players.

Rayne H's second place was all but confirmed after their 6-4 win over their own I team, closer than expected thanks to the presence of Shirley Carroll in the I team's ranks. She won two and stretched Brian How to 11-9 in the fifth game.

Notley's E and F teams continue to battle it out for third place. The E team beat Notley G 6-4 and Rayne J 7-3 while the F team had an 8-2 win over Netts F and a 6-4 win over Notley H. Takunda Nerutanga took his three singles for Notley F in both matches.

Ian Rubens scored his first unbeaten evening of the season in Rayne J's 8-2 win over Rayne I.

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