



Clacton & District: Lynx rise to challenge

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Liam Harris, Dave Harris and Cameron Cini of Nomads Lynx are the winners of the first-ever **Division Three Handicap Challenge**. In the final, held last week at Windsor's St James Hall venue, they defeated Brotherhood G 5-3.

Cini (+1) was their unlikely hero in match eight when he clinched the Challenge victory by beating John Gallagher (-1) 12-10, 11-6, 6-11, 11-7, something of a surprise as Gallagher had shown fine form earlier in the final when (on +1) he'd swept past Dave Harris (-3) 11-9, 11-3, 11-3 with some impressive hitting.

That win for Gallagher in match four had given the Brotherhood side a 3-1 interval lead but the Lynx fought back to take the next four matches, with all three team members winning their second singles, Liam Harris (-1) beating a dogged Paul Metcalf (+1) in four and Dave Harris (+1) showing good form to beat Beckham (-6) in four before Cini delivered the *coup de grace*.

But it was the irrepressible Liam Harris who proved the unbeaten star of the night, his forehand attacking prominent throughout, none more so than in his encounter with Brotherhood number one, Mark Beckham, where he scarcely needed his handicap start.

Final results : (*Nomads Lynx players named first*) : D Harris/Cini (+1) lost to Metcalf/Gallagher (-3) 9-11, 7-11, 11-7, 10-12; L Harris (+1) beat Beckham (-3) 11-6, 11-0, 11-5; Cini (+1) lost to Metcalf (-8) 8-11, 9-11, 11-13; D Harris (-3) lost to Gallagher (+1) 9-11, 3-11, 3-11; L Harris/Cini (+1) beat Beckham/Gallagher (-3) 11-3, 11-8, 11-7; L Harris (-1) beat Metcalf (+1) 11-7, 10-12, 14-12, 11-7; D Harris (+1) beat Beckham (-6) 14-12, 11-13, 11-8, 11-3; Cini (+1) beat Gallagher (-3) 12-10, 11-6, 6-11, 11-7.

The result was the reverse of an early-season handicap match when the two teams – with the same players on similar grades – had met in Round Two of the Handicap Knock-Out Cup. On that occasion, Brotherhood G had been 5-3 winners.

* Despite the defeat to Lynx in the Handicap Challenge final, Brotherhood G will still celebrate their success as

Division Three champions. And the only outstanding question remaining in the League was whether the Lynx could cap their week by taking nine points from their final match on the final day of the season against Windsor Penguins to take the runners-up spot and deny the Penguins that honour.

In the event, they won the match but the score-line ended 6-4, Liam Harris winning three and Dave Harris a couple. But two wins from Paul Dale, and one each from Debra Found and Jackie Bunce, were sufficient to deny the Lynx the points they needed. So it's congratulations to the Penguins who end their excellent season in a well-merited second place, a fine all-round team performance from the Penguins.

Back in **Division One** champions Nomads Panthers ended their campaign with an 8-2 success against Walton C. James Denyer took his three to retain his unbeaten League record for the season. John Hatley and Colin Webber each took a couple but Daniel Young, playing up as a reserve for Walton, again demonstrated his potential by defeating Hatley 11-5 in the fifth and Webber 11-8 in the fifth.

The Panthers have reigned supreme this season, as they have for the last six years, but their 40-point winning margin over second-placed Walton A is the biggest for any of those six League successes.

Walton A's last match was against a Nomads Lions' side which included Paul Hume and Hume duly obliged by taking his maximum in his team's 6-4 win. But the Lions will be grateful to have won all three matches which went the distance, Hume defeating Gary Young 11-7 in the decider, Ethan Lloyd defeating Paul Woolnough 11-7 in the decider, and Roger Hance beating the same player 12-10 in the decider.

Windsor Eagles beat a two-player Brotherhood B 6-4, a result which leap-frogs the Eagles over Brotherhood B, the two teams finishing in fifth and sixth positions. Brotherhood's Gracie Edwards once again showed top-class form, her treble including an 11-7 in the fifth victory over Gary Cattermole.

Finally, in **Division Two**, Jared Chelski stayed unbeaten in Walton E's match against Brotherhood H to retain his 100 per cent record, but a couple each for Frank Burbidge, Mark Ratcliffe and Tricia Salter saw Brotherhood H home 7-3. The result means the 'H' team finish fourth, ahead of their 'F' team but three points behind their 'I' team.

* The last match of the season is the final of the **Handicap Knock-Out Cup** between Brotherhood B and Nomads Panthers on Tuesday 1st May at the Brotherhood Hall. With a number of the League's top players on show, it promises to be a competitive evening's table tennis and all spectators are welcome. Proceedings start at 7.30pm.

* On Saturday 12th May, the League is celebrating its 80th Anniversary at the Firs Caravan Park, Little Clacton. The Management Committee is hoping as many current players, as well as former member of the League, will be able to attend. Tickets at £15 can be obtained from League Chairman Peter White on 01255 425292.

* The following week, on Saturday 19th May, the Windsor Club is organising a Quiz Night at St James' Hall. Doors open at 7.30pm for an 8pm start, bring your own drink and nibbles. Tickets are £3 per person for teams of up to six. To book a table, ring Jenny Higgins on 01255 432397 or 07790 240466.

* The League's Annual General Meeting is on Tuesday 5th June at 7.45pm at the Brotherhood Hall. The presentation of League trophies for the season will take place at the end of the meeting.

RESULTS

Division 1

Walton C 2 Nomads Panthers 8

Brotherhood B 4 Windsor Eagles 6

Nomads Lions 6 Walton A 4

Division 2

Walton E 3 Brotherhood H 7

Brotherhood E 10 (w/o v Walton E)

Division 3

Nomads Lynx 6 Windsor Penguins 4

Windsor Kites 10 (w/o v Nomads Caracals)

Division 3 Handicap Challenge Final

Brotherhood G 3 Nomads Lynx 5

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