



## Chelmsford & District: Top division beefed up

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Eagle eyed observers will already have noted that the 2018/19 Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League includes a significantly revamped first division.

After a lot of thought by the League Committee and with Fixtures Secretary Gordon Gatheral calling the shots, the first division has been increased from eight to 12 teams. The five established first division sides – Maldon A, Chelmsford A, Danbury A, Liberal and Rawreth will be joined by seven other teams.

It is acknowledged that there is a marked difference in class between the top five sides and the other seven teams and for that reason the League will be split into two divisions at Christmas with the top six teams playing each other twice in the second half and the second six sides playing each other two times as well. Points earned in the first half will be carried forward.

Favourites and winners for the last two seasons – Maldon A – remain the team to beat. Their squad of Trevor Lloyd, Alex Abbott, Colin Stallwood and John Poysden has the strength in depth to make it three wins on the trot.

With a marked “upwards rotation” of teams at the top end other sides will have seen themselves promoted throughout the League and my guess is that quite a few teams will find themselves competing in a different division to which they had anticipated.

Rayne consolidated third place in the top division of the Central Essex Summer Table Tennis League. They beat Liberal 3-2 with Steve Pennell scoring two wins. However, Hector Rogers showed up well for the losers. He beat Adam Buxton 3-2 (5-11, 11-9, 7-11, 11-7, 11-8).

Liberal also lost 3-2 to Danbury A. Steve Buer excelled on this occasion. He beat both Mike Johnston and Hector Rogers 3-2 – the latter 11-8, 11-6, 11-13, 7-11, 12-10 and the former 7-11, 16-14, 8-11, 11-9, 16-14.

Ramsden B impressed in division two and they did well to beat Writtle B 4-1. Trevor Collin had a night to remember, beating both Rod MacLennan and Phil Smith. The win over Smith could have gone either way before Collin triumphed 3-2 (8-11, 11-9, 10-12, 11-8, 11-9).

Ramsden B also lost 3-2 to OCs B. Richard Baxter won twice for the Old Chelmsfordians side and he had to call on all his experience to beat Collin 3-2 (11-6, 11-8, 8-11, 7-11, 11-9) and Neil Freeman also in five (9-11, 11-6, 11-5, 8-11, 11-9).

Danbury B are the 2018 division three champions. They produced two ruthless displays to capture the title by a massive nine-point margin from OCs D. Dave Goody and Tim Pulham ran out 5-0 winners against Writtle C and with Ken Sheard replacing Goody they also beat Danbury C 5-0. Even Dave Marsh was found wanting. He lost 3-1 (6-11, 7-11, 11-6, 9-11) to Sheard and 3-1 (6-11, 7-11, 15-13, 9-11) to Pulham.

Ramsden D were 3-2 winners in division four. Paul Mulley and Colin Barham both won once but they both missed out against Gordon Gatheral. The in-form Gatheral beat Colin Barham 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 13-11) and Paul Mulley 3-1 (11-6, 10-12, 11-7, 11-5). Ramsden nevertheless topped the division by two points from Danbury D.

Chelmsford Leopards are the CLICK / Division six winners although they did lose 3-2 to Chelmsford Jaguars in their last match. Nyree Marsh scored two fine wins for the Leopards, beating Cleon Fernandez 3-1 (7-11, 11-7, 11-4, 11-4) and Sudheep Kamma 3-2 (11-13, 7-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-8).

Chelmsford Rhinos did well to beat Chelmsford Wildcats 4-1. Harry Chivers was undefeated for the Rhinos, beating Annabel Sweeney 3-2 (11-9, 11-4, 9-11, 7-11, 11-7) and Melinda Abraham Victor 3-1 (11-4, 4-11, 11-4, 11-7).

Ewan Hynd was another player to bag two wins. He was undefeated for Danbury F although they lost 2-3 to Chelmsford Jaguars. Hynd beat Nyree March 11-6, 11-4, 11-4 and Annabel Sweeney 13-11, 11-6, 11-6. Hynd repeated the feat as Danbury F beat OCs Lions 4-1. Tom Bird showed up well for the OCs side here. He beat William Ratcliffe 3-2 (8-11, 5-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-9) in the pick of the night's action.

OCs Lions fared better against Chelmsford Wildcats. Josh Peasgood and Cameron North ran out 5-0 winners. Chelmsford Rhinos completed their fixtures with a 3-2 win over Chelmsford Wildcats. Cameron Waite was undefeated.

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