



Braintree League: Rayne fall in first match

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Rayne A's quest to wrest the Braintree Table Tennis League title from Liberal A got off to a less than encouraging start when they were beaten in their first match.

Their opponents, somewhat ironically, were Liberal's B team, who finished sixth in the division last season. But they proved too much to handle on this occasion.

Rayne A had to call in a reserve but Paul Lombardi did not let the side down and won as many singles as his team-mates. He, Steve Pennell and Alan Burgess won one each.

Andrew Huckson was their main stumbling block. He won all three singles for while Mike Johnston won two and Adrian Pitt one in the 7-3 victory. Huckson was stretched to four games by Pennell but won his other two singles in three straight games.

Liberal A's result meanwhile was much more predictable, a 10-0 win over Rayne C. Scott Dowsett, back in action earlier than he had anticipated, Peter Hayden and Simon Webber were rarely troubled.

They are joined at the top of the one-match-old table by Rayne B, for whom Keith Martin, Ryan Pitt and Hector Rogers took all ten against Black Notley A.

Andy Holmes and James Hicks were unbeaten as Netts A beat Notley B 8-2 while Maria Boulton took her three singles in Netts B's 7-3 win over their own C team.

Liberal C did nothing to dispel the notion that they could lead the way in division two by winning their first match 10-0 against Nomads. Kevin Saunders came closest to disturbing their equilibrium, taking two sets to two points in the fifth game, but Gareth Davies, Garry Fryatt and Jon Fieldsend stood firm.

Felsted RBL A matched them with a 10-0 win over their own B team, who had only two players.

Notley C's new signing Dan Anderson illustrated what an important acquisition he could be by taking his three

singles against Rayne D, expected to be among Liberal C's main challengers this year. Glen Laing matched him as Notley won 7-3.

Jan Fuller had an equally impressive Braintree League debut, winning her three singles for Netts D against Notley D, but she was unable to prevent a 7-3 defeat.

Keith Flowers and Dave Marsh were unbeaten as Rayne E beat Notley E 7-3.

Division three title favourites Rayne F were another team with an unblemished start, in their case against their own I team.

Notley G are a point further behind after a 9-1 win over Netts F with Rayne H following on one point further back after an 8-2 win over Notley H.

All three of the defeated teams were one player short.

Clive Forster made a successful return to the Braintree League after some years away. He won his three singles as Netts E drew with Notley F.

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