



Braintree League: Hicks stars for Netts

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A storming performance from James Hicks, ably backed by Andy Holmes, has tightened up the race for the Braintree Table Tennis League title.

Hicks was at the top of his game for Netts A against champions Liberal A and took all three of his singles, including a win over 2017 men's singles champion Brandon Crouchman.

He beat Simon Webber in three straight games, Crouchman at 12-10 in the fifth and Scott Dowsett at 11-8 in the fifth.

Holmes beat Crouchman and Webber in four games and came close to making it a hat-trick when he took the first two games off Dowsett and reached deuce in the third. He could not quite hang on and Dowsett won it in five. All three Liberal players beat Robert Wood and they won the doubles to scrape a draw.

Their main rivals Rayne A moved one point further away after a 6-4 win over Netts C. Lee McHugh was unbeaten but Nikki Davison won twice for Netts, James Mullane one and they took the doubles between them.

Elsewhere there were convincing wins for Netts B, 9-1 over Black Notley A; Rayne B, by the same score over Notley B; and Liberal B, 8-2 against Rayne C, who climb off the bottom rung as a result of those two sets.

Liberal C have jumped to the top of division two after a 7-3 win over Felsted RBL A. Garry Fryatt was unbeaten.

Previous leaders Netts D were held to a draw by Rayne E. They were only able to field two players and neither Joe Meleschko nor Roy Hooper was able to find a way past Dave Marsh. It was Hooper's first defeat since the opening week of the season.

Third-placed Notley C were given a stiff examination by Notley D's Clift brothers, Sean and Adam, who won two each, but three wins by Dan Anderson gave them a 6-4 win.

Notley E followed last week's surprise win over Felsted A with another good result, 8-2 against Nomads. As last

week, Takunda Nerutanga was the man in form, including a good win over Kevin Saunders in five (9-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-2, 11-7).

Ian Whiteside made his first appearance of the season, in the unaccustomed environs of the second division, and won his three singles to help Rayne D to an 8-2 win over Felsted B – where Nick Butler can be pleased with wins over Nick Hasler and Kelly Yuenyongpknan.

There was no change in division three where the top two both won 9-1, Notley F against Notley H and Netts E against Rayne H. Rayne F slipped a bit with a 7-3 win over Netts F. Brian How won his three singles.

After four matches without a win Notley G found the magic formula again with an 8-2 win over Rayne G. Jill Canning was unbeaten.

New signing Gauthier Chevallier wasted no time in making his presence felt for Rayne I. He remained unbeaten in his team's 7-3 defeat by Notley I although he was pushed to the limit by Peter Pond, winning only at 3-2 (11-5, 6-11, 13-11, 11-13, 12-10).

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