



Braintree League: Liberal win crucial tie

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Liberal A took a firm stride towards retaining their Braintree Table Tennis League title when they overcame their main rivals Rayne A.

Coupled with Rayne's draw against Netts A the previous week, it leaves the champions five points clear with a match in hand.

Simon Webber, out of form in their previous match against Liberal B, was the star this time. He took his three singles, while Peter Hayden took two and Scott Dowsett one in the 7-3 victory.

Rayne undoubtedly missed Adam Buxton and Alan Burgess and had just two wins from Steve Pennell and one from Lee McHugh to show for their evening's endeavours.

Against Netts A, McHugh and Pennell won twice each, but Netts' Andy Holmes was the man of the evening, taking his three singles and doubles with Robert Wood.

Holmes was to the fore in Netts' next match when they put their B team in their place by 8-2 to finally climb above them in the table. He and James Hicks were unbeaten.

At the other end of the table, Black Notley B got no change out of Liberal B but Notley's A team moved up a place after a 9-1 win over a two-person Netts C.

Alistair Hill won the one set for Netts and came desperately close to taking all three, losing 11-8 in the fifth game to Victor Chan and to Steve Kerns 3-2 (6-11, 9-11, 15-13, 13-11, 12-10).

The top two also came together in division two and it was Netts D who stole away with a 7-3 win over Liberal C to give themselves a five-point lead at the top.

Patrick Gilbert was unbeaten while Roy Hooper and Jan Fuller both lost to Gareth Davies.

After a 10-0 win in their previous match Nomads suffered by the same score against Rayne D although, in Kevin Saunders' words, neither match felt like a 10-0.

After losing three of their first four matches, Rayne D have now won eight in a row and are gradually creeping closer to the top spots.

Notley C beat Felsted RBL A 6-4 with Dan Anderson unbeaten while Notley's D team beat Rayne E by the same score.

Dave Marsh, whose defeat by Sean Clift was only his fourth of the season, was injured while playing in the doubles and had to concede that and his final singles.

The 9-1 scoreline in Felsted B's defeat by Notley E hides the fact that four of those nine defeats came in the fifth game and there was a scattering of deuces in the sets they lost in four.

There were comfortable wins for the top four teams in division three.

Netts E beat Notley H 7-3 – three wins for Clive Forster – while Notley F beat Netts F 8-2, Rayne F beat their own H team 9-1 and Notley I beat their own G team 8-2.

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