



Braintree League: Liberal swing back to top

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The game of see-saw at the top of division two of the Braintree Table Tennis League continues.

Liberal C were knocked off the top spot after a defeat in their first encounter with Netts D, regained it, lost it, shared it, regained it again, then lost it two weeks ago after a second defeat to Netts D.

Last week their 7-3 win over Felsted RBL B took them back to the top, ahead of Netts D, who lost 6-4 at Nomads.

Netts came up against Ken Lewis, who took everything as he usually does – only Jarek Pietraszuk has beaten him this season – although Roy Hooper took him to the wire, 12-10 in the fifth game.

They also encountered a top-form Richard Kemp, who won twice and shared the doubles with Lewis.

While Netts will be unhappy at their defeat, Liberal C will also be disappointed at not getting a better result out of Felsted B, who are well adrift at the bottom of the table.

Instead Ashley Butler and Nick Butler scored good wins over Jon Fieldsend and Dave Hardy respectively and took the doubles between them.

The two teams are now tied on points but Liberal take over the lead by virtue of winning more matches.

Rayne D and Black Notley C are seven and nine points behind them with a match in hand.

It would be neat to say that 7-3 and 9-1 wins in their outstanding matches would have all four teams level at the top, but that won't happen: their outstanding match is against each other.

Nonetheless the top two will continue to look over their shoulder, particularly if Notley C can run up any more 9-1 wins like last week's against Rayne E.

Rayne D meanwhile hit the buffer that is Sean Clift, who beat all of them in their 7-3 win over Notley D.

In the other match in the division, Richard Baxter was unbeaten as Felsted A beat Notley E 6-4.

In division one, Liberal A have tightened their grip on the leadership after a surprise slip-up by Rayne A at Notley A.

Rayne had the double disadvantage of having only two players and finding Steve Kerns in the opposition line-up. Lee McHugh and Steve Pennell won twice each but had to give second best to Kerns, and also to Kerns and Chris Parr in the doubles.

Liberal A had a comfortable win over Rayne B, where only one set was stretched beyond three games. That was the doubles which Scott Dowsett and Brandon Crouchman won 3-1 (11-8, 10-12, 11-8, 11-6).

Rayne C have climbed off the bottom and if they can keep calling on Ian Whiteside, who made his debut for them in their match against Netts A, they are likely to stay there.

Whiteside won his three singles in the 7-3 defeat while Notley B, who were level with Rayne C at the start of the week, tumbled 10-0 to Netts B.

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