



Braintree League: Netts bounce back to top

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The constantly evolving picture at the top of division two of the Braintree Table Tennis League has taken another twist.

After elbowing their way back to the top last month, Liberal C were removed from their perch after a crushing defeat by Netts D, who take over at the top again.

It was Netts D's third win over their opponents this season and this time they went one better – it was 7-3 on the first two occasions, 8-2 last week.

Jan Fuller and Patrick Gilbert were undefeated while Roy Hooper lost only to Garry Fryatt. Surprisingly, Fuller and Hooper lost the doubles to Fryatt and Gareth Davies, a slip that could yet prove decisive as it turned what would have been a five-point lead at the top into a more fragile three-point one.

The previous week, Liberal had overcome the potentially difficult hurdle of Black Notley C 7-3 with the help of three wins from Jon Fieldsend, who did not play against Netts.

Netts' 10-0 win over Notley E in the same week had already begun to whittle down Liberal's lead.

With three matches to play, there remains the possibility of a final twist. Both teams have to play Felsted RBL A but Liberal's fixtures against the bottom two teams, Notley E and Felsted B, look easier than Netts' games against Rayne E and Nomads, particularly if Nomads turn out Ken Lewis.

If they do, Netts will be hoping some of Sean Clift's magic dust has rubbed off on to them. In a rearranged match, Clift became only the second person in more than three years to defeat Lewis in Notley D's 8-2 win over Nomads.

Clift has now lost only once in his last 21 sets, and that was to Lewis two weeks earlier when he won the first two games but just lost out in five. This time the two matched each other shot for shot as Clift nudged home at 13-11 in the fifth.

Two sets each from Adam Clift and Peter Foster meant an 8-2 win in the rearranged match while in the first encounter, Lewis's three wins were Nomads' only return.

Sean Clift was also unbeaten in Notley D's 6-4 win over Rayne E.

Behind the top two, Rayne D's hopes remain just alive but they also ran into Lewis in their most recent fixture. Like Notley D, they took the rest for a 7-3 win to add to their 9-1 victory the previous week against Felsted A.

They are nine points off the lead with a match in hand, but that match is against Notley C – and they also have to face Sean Clift at Notley D.

Jarek Pietraszuk, the other player to beat Lewis this season, turned out for only the second time since January for Felsted A where he won his three singles in their 8-2 win over Notley C.

At the bottom Felsted B lost 7-3 to Rayne E and 8-2 to Notley E.

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