



Braintree League: Top two are up for the cup

Author: Paul Stimpson

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The top two teams in the league have also turned out to be the top two teams in the team knockout cup in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Champions Liberal A and runners-up Rayne A both came through their semi-finals unscathed. Liberal beat Netts A 5-2 while Rayne had a 5-0 win over Liberal's B team.

Brandon Crouchman and Simon Webber won two each for Liberal while James Hicks had a win over Scott Dowsett and he and Andy Holmes won their doubles.

For Rayne, the two doubles sets went to five games, but Adam Buxton, Steve Pennell and new men's singles champion Lee McHugh polished off the singles in straight games.

The restricted cup final will be an all-Black Notley affair. The club's D team put out Rayne F 6-1 with Peter Foster unbeaten, while the E team knocked out Netts F 5-0, where Alan Billing, Stewart Ireland and Takunda Nerutanga were all undisturbed.

Notley D came close to two finals but could not get past their own F team in the handicap cup semi-final.

This was a close affair in which Declan Baines won twice at 22-20 in the third game (handicap matches are played up to 21). Mel Cooch won two and Steve Baines one to take their team through 5-2.

In the other semi-final, Rayne I prevented Notley from making another clean sweep by knocking out the I team. James Long and Scott Whiteside both won two out of two in the 5-1 win.

Notley F not only made their way through to the handicap final, they also won league division three in the same evening. Their fate in the league was decided on the next door table where Notley I were playing Notley H.

The I team needed to take 17 points from their two remaining matches to deny their F team the division three title but they fell at the first hurdle, not least because Jonny Evans registered an outstanding win over new division

three singles champion Peter Pond, unbeaten in the league since November.

That restricted the I team to a 6-4 win, which left Notley H untouchable at the top.

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