



Braintree League: Crouchman tops averages again

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If there was any doubt why Lee McHugh's outstanding win in the men's singles surprised a few people, a brief glance at this season's final individual averages will give something of a clue.

On his performance in the league, McHugh was ranked only at No 10. His season had started well, with only two defeats in 21 sets, but then he went into something of a trough, only to discover his best form when it mattered.

The averages are topped for the third year running by Brandon Crouchman, who did not play in the individual championships – although it should be noted that Paul Davison would have topped the ratings with 20 wins out of 21, had he not fallen short of the qualification figure.

Davison's one defeat was at Crouchman's hands, but the Liberal man stuttered at the beginning of the season when he lost to Steve Pennell, Adam Buxton, Andy Holmes and James Hicks. He then moved into top gear and won his last 33 sets.

Buxton, McHugh's opponent in the men's singles final, rises to No 2, with former men's champion Steve Kerns at No 3 on his return to the league.

After topping the averages for the past three seasons, Ken Lewis has been deposed in division two.

Defeats by Sean Clift, Jarek Pietraszuk and Patrick Gilbert dropped him below Dan Anderson, in his first season in the league, who also lost three times – to Lewis twice and Dave Marsh – but played in one more match. Gilbert, the restricted singles champion, was third.

Another newcomer, Peter Pond, topped the division three list. He also lost three times, to Dave Allinson in October, Gauthier Chevallier in November and then not again until his last match of the season when he was beaten by Jonny Evans.

Two long-standing players, Peter Taylor and Declan Baines, leaped forward while Elliot Game, 14, made a strong start to his league career by capturing joint fifth place.

Individual averages (qualification one-third of team's matches):

Division 1: 1 (1) Brandon Crouchman 46 wins from 50 sets, average 92 per cent; 2 (5) Adam Buxton 44-50, 88; 3 (-) Steve Kerns 23-28, 82.1; 4 (12) Alan Burgess 27-33, 81.8; 5 (6) Scott Dowsett 48-59, 81.4; 6 (4) Simon Webber 58-73, 79.5; 7 (14) Peter Hayden 24-31, 77.4; 8= (13) Maria Boulton 33-44, (17) Andrew Huckson 51-68, 75; 10 (9) Lee McHugh 35-47, 74.5; 11= (21) Nikki Davison, (19) Adrian Pitt 40-54, 74.1; 13 (11) Andy Holmes 34-46, 73.9; 14 (9) Steve Pennell 45-62, 72.6; 15 (-) Colin Bennett 32-47, 68.1; 16 (23) Robert Wood 20-34, 58.8; 17 (24) Mike Johnston 38-65, 58.5; 18 (29) James Mullane 28-54, 51.9; 19 (-) Graham Playle 36-73, 49.3; 20 (26) Victor Chan 31-64, 48.4.

Division 2: 1 (-) Dan Anderson 53-56, 94.6; 2 (1) Ken Lewis 48-51, 94.1; 3 (-) Patrick Gilbert 45-51, 88.2; 4 (2) Glen Laing 23-27, 85.2; 5 (3) Steve Noble 22-26, 84.6; 6 (7) Dave Marsh 42-51, 82.4; 7 (4) Richard Kemp 23-29, 79.3; 8 (12) Jon Fieldsend 29-37, 78.4; 9 (23) Sean Clift 57-76, 75; 10 (-) Roy Hooper 48-66, 72.2.

Division 3: 1 (-) Peter Pond 60-63, 95.2; 2 (10) Peter Taylor 25-29, 86.2; 3 (-) Clive Forster 35-42, 83.3; 4 (6) Brian How 39-47, 82.9; 5= (11) Declan Baines, (-) Elliot Game 50-63, 79.4; 7 (-) James Gronland 38-54, 70.4; 8 (-) Tony Smith 33-47, 70.2; 9 (14) Mel Cooch 46-66, 69.7; 10 (-) Dave Allinson 38-55, 69.1.

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