



Braintree League: Rayne aiming to bounce back

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Last season produced an exciting battle for promotion from division two of the Braintree Table Tennis League and there looks to be no reason why that should not be repeated this year.

Relegated Rayne D, sadly without the late Steve Siggs, lead the contenders. Keith Flowers joins regulars Dave Punt, Dave Miller and Paul Wellington, who have been sharpened by two years in division one.

Rayne E were second last season (as Rayne D) and have Richard Whiteside and Nick Hasler in their ranks again. Kelly Yuenyongknan is not expected to play as much but they have very solid support from Dave Marsh, a regular in the division's top ten averages, and the stylish Gauthier Chevallier, a reserve last year but likely to turn out more regularly this season.

Liberal C, who were third, will again be relying on Garry Fryatt, Gareth Davies, Jon Fieldsend and Dave Hardy, while fourth-placed Black Notley C again have Tim Huxtable, Dan Anderson and Glen Laing but Leon Hewitt, who has work commitments, has been replaced by Declan Baines, promoted from division three.

Notley D, Nomads and Notley E are little changed while Felsted RBL have amalgamated their A and B teams.

Promoted Notley F have sprayed their players far and wide. Only Mel Cooch remains from last season, with Declan Baines in the C team, Steve Baines in the G team in division three and James Gronland, who anticipates leaving the area shortly, a reserve in division three.

The new F team is led by Gordon Fairchild, dropping down from division one, plus two from the I team, Peter Pond, who won nearly everything in division three last season, and 15-year-old Elliot Game, who has made enormous strides over the past year.

Netts D, last year's E team, take the place of Felsted B after finishing third in division three. They will be relying on Clive Forster, Tony Smith and Peter Lewis, third, eighth and 14th in last season's averages, but they will not find life easy in the higher sphere.

The field in division three is wide open. After the withdrawal of Felsted B, there is no relegated team who would normally be expected to challenge, champions Notley F and third-placed Netts E (now D) have been promoted while second-placed Notley I have lost their two best players to the F team.

The most likely candidates are the new Rayne F team, who have Alastair Brown and Ted Sims, stepping down from division two, and Dave Allinson, tenth in last season's averages.

Rayne G, last year's F team, were fourth last year and will be up at the top end again, but with Brian How out for some months after an operation, are likely to fall short.

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