



Braintree League: Tight at the top

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The fight for promotion from division two of the Braintree Table Tennis League was a closely contested race last season and is shaping up to follow suit this year.

After three weeks, only one team have won all their matches and only six points separate the top six teams.

Rayne E, narrowly second last year (as Rayne D) made it three wins out of three with a 6-4 win over Black Notley C but as each of their wins has been close – they won the first two 7-3 – they sit only in second place.

Liberal C are currently top but their record is skewed by a walkover in their first match against Notley C.

They had a good battle with Notley F which ended in a draw. Peter Pond, who carried almost all before him in division three last season, is carrying on in a similar vein this time. He won his three singles, including victories over Garry Fryatt and Gareth Davies, which never come easy.

Rayne E also had some close encounters in their win over Notley C. They won twice at 12-10 in the fifth game, twice at 11-8 in the fifth and once at 11-7 in the fifth.

The one hurdle they could not overcome was Steve Noble, who won his three singles for Notley.

Relegated Rayne D had a similar experience. They won everything against Notley D apart from their sets against Sean Clift.

The sextet at the top are completed by Nomads and Felsted RBL, who had wins of 6-4 and 8-2 over Notley E and Netts D respectively.

Felsted's win over Netts was notable for two excellent wins by third division players playing up for Netts. Peter Hardy beat Haydn Upson, who had won his three singles the previous week, while Michael Goodchild overcame Barry Evans.

The scorelines in division one were more convincing, two 9-1s and an 8-2 plus a 6-4.

Liberal A's 9-1 win over their own B team saw only the doubles slip away while Steve Noble's win over Paul Lombardi was the only blemish in Rayne A's win over Notley B.

Nikki Davison continued her strong run of form, winning her three singles for the third consecutive match in Netts B's 8-2 win over Netts C.

Steve Pennell was undefeated in Rayne B's 6-4 win over Notley A.

Notley G are the only team to have won all three matches in division three. Their latest success was a 9-1 win over Rayne I with Matt Brooks and Jim Davy unbeaten.

Rayne's F and G teams share second place although they had contrasting fortunes. The F team had a 9-1 win over Liberal D but the G team were held to a draw by Notley I. Dave Allinson played for both the F and G teams and won six out of six.

Rayne H had an 8-2 win over a two-man Rayne J while Mike Smith, Paul Downes and Peter Game all won twice in Notley H's 6-4 win over Netts E.

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