



Braintree League: Whiting key in Rayne battle

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As befits two teams likely to be in the running for promotion from division three of the Braintree Table Tennis League, Rayne's F and G teams served up a closely fought battle when they faced each other.

They went into the match level on points and the match ebbed and flowed before the F team finally pulled away to inflict the first defeat of the season on their team-mates.

But the 6-4 scoreline disguises the fact that they won four of those sets in five games. Dave Whiting held the side together, although he was stretched to 11-9 in the fifth by Peter Rickwood.

He and Ted Sims also pulled off the doubles at 13-11 in the fifth but Sims suffered his first defeats of the season when he was beaten by both Rickwood and Dave Allinson.

Neither the F or G team have yet played Black Notley G, who currently sit at the top of the table after their 8-2 win over Rayne H.

Jim Davy and Matt Brooks were undefeated but spare a thought for Scott Whiteside. Playing up from the J team, he came within a few inches of winning all three singles, but in the end lost twice at 11-9 in the fifth and once at 11-8.

Back in his normal habitat, he wasn't able to prevent Rayne J losing 6-4 to Notley I, while Rayne's I team drew with Netts E, helped by three wins from Steve Willis, who is unlikely to lose many in this division.

In division two, Liberal C suffered their first defeat of the season at the hands of Rayne E, who take over at the top as a result. Kelly Yuenyongknan and Richard Whiteside were both unbeaten in the 7-3 win.

Notley F preserved their unbeaten record and joined Liberal C in second place with an 8-2 win over Netts D. Elliot Game and Gordon Fairchild were unbeaten.

Rayne D are one point further back after a 6-4 win over Felsted. Keith Flowers was the main man here and the

only one to beat Haydn Upson, which he achieved at 11-2 in the fifth game.

Notley's C and E teams both picked up their first wins. It was no coincidence that Dan Anderson was playing in his first match of the season for the C team. His three singles helped them to a 6-4 win over Nomads.

Former boys' singles champion Zach Harrington made his first appearance for some time for Notley D against their own E team. But it was the E team who triumphed 7-3.

Six-time men's singles champion Terry Dowsett has been missing even longer but he made his second appearance of the season in Liberal A's 10-0 win against Notley B in division one. As in his first appearance, he was unbeaten.

Second-placed Rayne A included new signing Casey Cross, good enough to include Braintree men's singles champion Lee McHugh among his victims in the Chelmsford League this season – not to mention Daniel Young, Trevor Lloyd and Steve Kerns last season – but he was unable to find a way past Paul Davison in the match against Netts A.

Davison won his three sets, including a straight-games victory over Adam Buxton, his conqueror in May's men's singles semi-final, but Rayne took the match 6-4.

Netts' B team, who had won three out of three, were surprisingly held to a draw by Rayne C.

That may partly be explained by the absence of Nikki Davison, who has won nine out of nine so far, but the main obstacle was a rejuvenated Peter Hance, who won his three singles and shared in the doubles win for Rayne.

Just as Rayne C v Netts B was a draw, so too was Rayne B v Netts C. Ryan Pitt's three singles held the home team together.

Liberal B and Notley A also shared the points. After a bumpy start in his first match of the season, Steve Kerns produced his normal form to hold Notley together with three singles and the doubles with Victor Chan.

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