



Braintree League: Liberal bag a rare whitewash

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Posted On: November 04, 2019

Liberal D, new to the Braintree Table Tennis League this year, have had an up-and-down ride so far.

After a 6-4 defeat and 7-3 win in their first two matches, they went into a run of three successive 9-1 defeats.

But in their latest match, they became the first team in division three to win a match 10-0, indeed only the second team to do so throughout the league in the seven weeks so far.

The team is a mix of youth and experience. Yasunori Aoyagi is returning to the game after a lengthy absence, Paul Martin after a much shorter absence, while Lewis Armstrong-Kirton is in his first season.

All three had their shooting boots on against Rayne I, who had started the match seven points above them. Ian Rubens took all three sets to five games, but neither he nor his team-mates could keep their opponents out.

Elsewhere in division three, Rayne G took over at the top from their own F team after an 8-2 win over their own J team.

Dave Allinson and Peter Rickwood remained unbeaten for the G team while Alex Morgan scored the J team's only singles win against Charles Wilkinson.

The F team meanwhile were held to a draw by Black Notley G. Allinson and Rickwood were both playing up for Rayne F but Steve Baines, despite a paucity of action this season, was too much for both of them.

Rayne's H team also shared the points, in their case with Notley H. Tim Townsend was unbeaten.

Netts E and Notley I each had only two players when they faced each other. All four players won one singles but a win for Jonny Evans and James Gronland in the doubles gave Notley a 5-4 victory.

In division two, Liberal C slipped further behind at the top after hitting a brick wall in the shape of Sean Clift.

Clift took his three singles and the doubles with his brother Adam to help Notley D to a 6-4 win, which left Rayne

E, 9-1 winners over Netts D, six points clear.

The surprise result in the division, though, was relegated Rayne D's 9-1 hammering at the hands of Notley E. Takunda Nerutanga, now with 16 wins out of 18, has taken his game up another notch this season, and he was joined in the unbeaten fold by Zach Harrington, in only his second match back after a couple of seasons on the sidelines.

Karl Baldwin won his three singles for Nomads but it was not enough to prevent Notley F taking the match 6-4 while Notley C scored their third win in a row, 8-2 over Felsted RBL, after starting the season with three defeats in a row.

In division one, Rayne A are now two points behind Liberal A at the top despite inflicting the first defeat of the season on Netts B. Jon Hill won twice against his former club-mates, but Adam Buxton's three singles saw his side to a 7-3 win.

Colin Bennett took his three singles in Netts A's 7-3 win over Notley A while Ian Whiteside was unbeaten as Rayne B shared the points with Liberal B.

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