



Braintree League: Another Black day for leaders

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Braintree Table Tennis League division three leaders Rayne F suffered only their second defeat of the season – and it was at the hands of the team who beat them first time round.

In their first match against Black Notley I, Rayne F had neither of their top points scorers Dave Allinson or Ted Sims available, but both were playing in the second match, along with reserve Peter Rickwood, players with averages of 91.6, 83.3 and 68.9 respectively.

As in the first match, Jonny Evans was the main stumbling block. He won his three singles, as he had in the first match, and gained revenge over Allinson, who had beaten him in a restricted cup match the previous week.

Allinson's defeat ended a run of 12 consecutive wins. But the win of the evening came from Chris Adkins. With only three wins behind him this season, he knuckled down against Rickwood to bring off an excellent victory by 3-2 (7-11, 15-13, 4-11, 11-9, 15-13).

Rayne F's 6-4 defeat means they now share top spot with Rayne G, both with 72 points from 11 wins, a draw and two defeats.

And Rayne G's challenge is likely to get stronger now that they have welcomed back Brian How, fourth in last year's averages but absent up to now after an operation. He picked up where he left off and won his three singles in his side's 8-2 win over the club's H team.

Notley G stay in third place after an 8-2 win over Notley H. Jim Davy was unbeaten.

Liberal D's run of five successive wins came to a crunching end when they could only muster two players and were beaten 9-1 by Netts E. Jack Cains and Kierlan Richards won their two singles and the doubles.

After failing to win any of their first nine matches, Rayne J have now won two in a row after getting the better of their own I team. Dave Whiting, in their ranks for the first time, was unbeaten.

Division two leaders Rayne E were made to work hard by Notley E to retain their 100 per cent win record. Unusually it was Alan Billing rather than Takunda Nerutanga who caused them problems.

Nerutanga, who had won 27 out of 30, was restricted to one win, while Billing brought about only the fourth defeat this season for Richard Whiteside. Fortunately for Rayne E, Dave Marsh was on top form and his three singles led them to a 6-4 win.

Liberal C moved three points closer after a 9-1 win over Netts D, where Clive Forster's win over Dave Hardy was the one that prevented a full house.

Notley C's run of six consecutive wins came to a halt against Notley F, and it is no coincidence that Dan Anderson, who won his three singles and the doubles in those six, was missing this time. Peter Pond was undefeated in the F team's 7-3 win.

Karl Baldwin was also unbeaten in Nomads' draw with Rayne D.

Notley D's 8-2 win over Felsted RBL was one of those rare occasions when Adam Clift was more successful than his brother Sean. Richard Upson beat Sean but lost in four games to Adam.

In the restricted cup, there were wins for Rayne E, Notley F and Netts D, who won 9-0, 9-0 and 5-0 respectively against Rayne J, Rayne G and Notley H.

The only tight match was that between Rayne F and Notley I mentioned above. As in the league match, it was Notley who came out on top.

James Gronland, whose early appearances helped to put the I team towards the top of the division, was playing in his final match before moving to Hertfordshire.

He, Jonny Evans and the G team's Matt Brooks – cup teams do not have to correspond to their league equivalents – all won one singles and with the score at 4-4, Brooks and Evans hauled the team through to the next round by winning the final doubles.

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