



Clacton & District: Jaguars edged out

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It was a close call but Brotherhood F ended as narrow 5-4 winners against Nomads Jaguars in their Round One clash in the Clacton & District League's Handicap Knock Out Cup.

In the all-Third Division clash, the Brotherhood trio of Harley Wood, Maci Harvey and Zak Coates made full use of their handicap advantage to edge past the runaway Divisional leaders.

The match was on a knife edge throughout, with Brotherhood leading 1-0 and 2-1, trailing 2-3, leading again at 4-3 before clinching the tie in the final doubles where Maci Harvey and Harley Wood (+1) beat Harry Hawkes and Kevin Hume (-6) 3-1 (7-11, 11-6, 11-5, 11-5).

Maci Harvey was the Brotherhood star, remaining unbeaten in her two singles and two doubles.

In the only other all-Division Three tie, Nomads Leopards raced into a 3-0 lead against Windsor Robins but the Robins fought back to take the next five matches, three of which went the distance, to win 5-3. Mick Coker was the Robins' most successful player, taking two singles and one doubles, and having the honour of closing out the match (on +1) beating Dave Wright (-5) 3-2 (8-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-13, 11-3 in game eight).

Division Three side Windsor Penguins are proving a good Cup team this season and they continued their fine form in handicap competitions with another excellent win, beating Second Division promotion contenders Lawford 5-4. Jackie Bunce won two singles and one doubles.

The match might have finished earlier had not Lawford shown typical fighting spirit, battling all the way to win all three matches which went the distance. This included two exceptionally tight games, Ian Sherwood (-6) beating Paul Dale (+1) (1-11, 11-9, 12-10, 8-11, 12-10) and John Colvin (-8) defeating Alan Charman (+1) (3-11, 5-11, 12-10, 11-6, 12-10).

Nomads Pumas were hoping to become the fourth side from Division Three into the next Round and initially it looked as though they would, setting off like an express train to take the opening three matches against Windsor Harriers. But the Windsor trio fought back to reel off five matches on the bounce, Isabel Barton (-8) beating John

Bowers (+1) 3-1 (12-10, 5-11, 12-10, 11-7) to secure the deal for the Harriers.

Two other ties saw Division Three sides eliminated at the hands of Second Division opponents, Brotherhood D beating Walton D 5-1 and Windsor Kestrels defeating Windsor Merlins 5-0 – although the Merlins came close to preventing the whitewash, Graham Bunce (-8) scraping past Sharon Gowlett (+1) 3-2 (11-13, 5-11, 11-9, 11-7, 13-11).

Just two matches saw top-flight teams in opposition.

There was little to choose between the grades of the players of Walton B and Walton E but it was the 'E' team who ultimately proved triumphant, winning 5-3. Gary Stallwood remained unbeaten in his two singles and one doubles for the victors.

Current Division One champions Nomads Panthers came a cropper against Windsor Eagles, who took the match 5-0 to give everyone an early evening. The closest of the five matches, and the only one which went the distance, was Mel Rampton's (+2) 3-2 (11-7, 13-15, 11-4, 9-11, 11-6) win over Greg Green (-1).

However, Division One title contenders, Walton A, are proving formidable opposition in all competitions and they showed little mercy on Division Two team Brotherhood E, winning 5-2. But it was a tighter match than the score-line suggests, with Walton taking two of three matches which went the distance. Gary Young stayed unbeaten on the night in his two singles and one doubles.

Nomads Lynx have a bye to Round Two and they will be joined by only one other Nomads' team to make it through – which was always guaranteed after the Lions and Bobcats were drawn to play each other. In the event, it was the Second Division side who surprised their Division One opponents, the Bobcats' trio of David North, Mike Wellum and Eric Lemke winning 5-0.

There was another victory for Division Two over Division One but this was to be expected when Walton C fielded a guest player, leaving Windsor Buzzards needing to win one legitimate match – which they did to take it 5-0.

Finally, in an all-Second Division encounter between two teams struggling at the bottom of Division Two, Mark Beckham stayed undefeated as Brotherhood G beat Windsor Magpies 5-3.

Details about Round Two, including the draw and grades, will be circulated by 24th January.

* There was just one match in the League but it was an important match in Division One in which Walton A defeated Windsor Hawks 9-1, a result which lifts the Walton side two points clear of Nomads Panthers at the top. Both the Youngs, Gary and Daniel, stayed unbeaten for the winners. The Hawks' sole point came from Felipe Rodriguez who beat Gavin Price by a narrow 3-1 (12-10, 11-9, 10-12, 12-10).

* League players have been shocked by the sudden death of Graham Parkes, the League's Vice-Chairman and Tournament Officer. Graham collapsed during his team's Cup match this week and died in hospital three days later. Our heart-felt thoughts are with Pat and her family at their sad loss. A full tribute will appear later.

RESULTS

Handicap Knock-Out Cup

Round One

Windsor Kestrels 5 Windsor Merlins 0

Nomads Bobcats 5 Nomads Lions 0

Brotherhood F 5 Nomads Jaguars 4

Windsor Magpies 3 Brotherhood G 5

Brotherhood D 5 Walton D 1

Walton A 5 Brotherhood E 2

Windsor Buzzards 5 Walton C 0

Walton E 5 Walton B 3

Windsor Penguins 5 Lawford 4

Nomads Pumas 3 Windsor Harriers 5

Nomads Panthers 0 Windsor Eagles 5

Windsor Robins 5 Nomads Leopards 3

Brotherhood C v Nomads Ocelots (match to be played 4th February)

Brotherhood A v Brotherhood B (Brotherhood A qualify)

League

Division One

Windsor Hawks 1 Walton A 9

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