



Braintree League: Willis run comes to end

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A number of unbeaten records went tumbling within days of each other in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

The most notable was that of Steve Willis, who had won all 11 sets he had played before he came up against Matt Brooks in Rayne F's division three match against Black Notley G.

An upset looked far away when Willis won the first game 11-3 and even though Brooks stretched the second one to 15-13, Willis's record appeared safe.

But Brooks dug in, took the next game 11-5, survived a cliffhanger to win the fourth at 12-10 and then triumphed 11-8 in the fifth.

Life was not all rosy in the Brooks household though as Matt's son Jamie chose that evening to have a dip in form.

Now at university, he is not playing regularly but he had won all six sets he had played. That record disappeared at Rayne, however, where he lost in straight games to Dave Allinson but then came heartbreakingly close against both Willis, where he lost 3-2 (9-11, 5-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9), and Alastair Brown, who beat him 3-2 (9-11, 11-5, 13-11, 13-15, 13-11).

In a match where six of the sets went to five games, Allinson remained unbeaten – only just; he beat Matt Brooks 11-9 in the fifth – as Rayne F won the match 6-4.

Another record to go was that of Rayne G's Brian How. Fourth in last season's individual averages, How has only just started playing again after an operation, but had won five out of five when he faced Rayne J.

And it was there that Alex Morgan got the better of him, a second feather in his cap after the previous week's win over Allinson. Like Matt Brooks, he had to come from two games down and won at 14-12 in the fifth. Rayne G won the match 7-3.

The most notable feature of Rayne H's match against Notley H was that the league computer's player of the match award went to Brian Dixon, a player normally in the shadow of his team-mate Tim Townsend.

Dixon won two to Townsend's one while Paul Downes, Peter Game and Mike Smith all won twice to give Notley H a 6-4 victory.

Notley I beat Netts E 7-3 while Liberal D took all ten sets against Rayne I. It was only the third 10-0 result in the division and curiously Liberal D also featured in the other two – at both ends of the scoreline.

In division two, Rayne E stretched their lead at the top with a 10-0 win over Netts D while Liberal C beat Notley D 7-3.

Liberal's new signing, the former Notley player David Razzell, was to the fore here, winning his three singles.

Four matches ago, Nomads were third from bottom. Now, after four wins in a row, they are third from the top. The latest was an 8-2 win over Notley F, where Karl Baldwin was unbeaten.

Notley E had a surprisingly healthy 8-2 win over Rayne D while Notley C's two-man team of Dan Anderson and Zach Harrington won all seven against Felsted RBL.

In division one, leaders Liberal A won 10-0 against Netts C while Rayne C had an 8-2 win over Notley B.

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