



Braintree League: Surprise loss for Notley

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Rayne F are slowly and almost inexorably moving away from the chasing pack in division three of the Braintree Table Tennis League as their rivals stutter.

After Rayne G's defeat at the hands of Black Notley G the previous week, it was the turn of Notley G themselves to trip up, surprisingly, against Rayne J.

Rayne F rose above it all with a 9-1 win over Notley H. Dave Allinson and Peter Rickwood were unbeaten in Rayne F's win, where Mike Smith's defeat of Alastair Brown was the away side's only consolation.

For Notley G, defeat to the inexperienced Rayne J team – in only their second season of league table tennis – came as a disappointment after rising to second place in the division the previous week.

The match was a personal triumph for 20-year-old Scott Whiteside, who won his three singles, including a straight-games win over Matt Brooks, fourth in the individual averages at the turn of the year.

Alex Morgan added two singles and James Long one, which together with a Whiteside/Morgan win in the doubles made it 7-3.

Rayne G jumped back above Notley G with a 7-3 win of their own. They beat Netts E with three wins from Rickwood, back in his natural habitat, and Brian How.

Paul Martin's three singles led Liberal D to a 7-3 win over Netts E while Chris Adkins scored the first hat-trick of his career in Notley I's 10-0 win over Rayne I.

In division two there was a good win for second-from-bottom Felsted RBL, 6-4 over fifth-placed Notley F. Haydn Upson went home undefeated, but he had to work hard for the privilege. He beat Elliot Game 12-10 in the fifth game and Gordon Fairchild 18-16 in the fifth.

It was Declan Baines who made his mark in the draw between Notley's C and E teams. With a limited number of

wins behind him in his first season in division two, he notched up two victories and then took a 2-1 lead in games against Takunda Nerutanga before succumbing at 11-8 in the fifth.

Adi Kamma made his debut for leaders Rayne E and duly took his three singles against Notley D in an 8-2 win.

In division one another defeat for Rayne A has left Liberal A looking even more impregnable at the top.

Liberal had a 10-0 win over Netts B while Rayne included two reserves in their visit to Notley A, a dangerous proposition when Steve Kerns is among the opposition.

The highlight of the evening was always likely to be the clash between Kerns and Adam Buxton, and so it proved, Kerns sneaking home at 12-10 in the fifth.

Also notable was Guy McKenzie's win over Steve Buer despite losing the fourth game 11-0. It gave his side a 6-4 victory.

Maria Boulton was unbeaten in Netts A's draw with Rayne B while James Hicks took his three singles and a share in the doubles in Netts C's 6-4 defeat by Rayne C.

Neil Freeman scored a good win over Andrew Huckson in Notley B's otherwise unfruitful visit to Liberal B.

In the Chelmsford individual championships, there was a first title for Steve Kerns in the over 50s singles. He had to come back from 7-3 down in the fifth game to beat Babel McLeod in the final.

Notley's Victor Chan had a notable straight-games win over Kerns in the group stage and then knocked out the No.1 seed Trevor Lloyd before losing to McLeod.

Netts' Paul Davison was on the winning side in the veterans' doubles, where he was partnered by Gary Young.

They beat Neil Freeman and Liberal's Mike Johnston on the way to the final, which they won in three straight games against Lloyd and John Poysden.

Takunda Nerutanga reached the final of both the division four and division five singles.

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