



Clacton & District: Walton save top-flight honour

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Just two teams from Division One have made it through to the quarter-finals of the Clacton & District League's Handicap Knock-Out Cup – and both are from the Walton Club.

Title-challengers Walton A were 5-0 winners against Second Division Brotherhood C but the match was far tighter than the score-line suggests with the final three matches all going close in five. Gavin Price (-10) beat Tricia Salter (+3) 11-8 in the fifth, Kevin James (-5) defeated Mark Salter (+1) 11-9 in the fifth and James and Gary Young (-8) secured the match victory with an 11-7 in the decider win over Russell Hillier and Tricia Salter (+2).

Walton E, who are struggling at the other end of the table, guaranteed their place in the quarter-finals with a 5-2 win over Division Three's Windsor Robins. Mark Gale was their best player, staying unbeaten. But the Robins put up brave resistance and it might have been so different had the first match of the evening gone the other way, Gale and Paul Woolnough (-15) beating Oleksandra Klymenko and Mick Coker (+2) 1-11, 4-11, 11-9, 12-10, 11-5.

An unprecedented five teams from the Second Division have made it through to the last eight, with pride of place going to Windsor Kestrels and Brotherhood D who both eliminated Division One opponents.

In an all-Windsor tie, the Kestrels' trio of Bob Sawyer, Graham Bunce and Debra Found defeated the Eagles 5-0 but, once again, it was anything but an easy ride, with three of the matches going all the way and the other two settled in four. The closest match was the opening doubles, Bunce and Found (+1) beating Phil Smith and John Hobson (-5) 11-4, 11-1, 8-11, 10-12, 11-7.

It was a similar story in Brotherhood D's 5-0 success against Windsor Hawks. Four of the individual matches went the distance with Brotherhood's Grant Sharpe, Lee Allen and Barry Allen winning three of them. The closest was the final match of the evening when Sharpe and Barry Allen (+1) defeated Felipe Rodriguez and John Barton (-5) by an unusual looking 11-0, 9-11, 7-11, 11-0, 11-9.

Ferdy Rodriguez, Isabel Barton and Jenny Higgins of Windsor Harriers rode their luck to beat Division Three side Windsor Penguins 5-1. Barton, the only unbeaten player on the night, was involved in two of the tightest matches of the quarter-finals, (on -6) edging it 12-10, 1-11, 4-11, 11-4, 13-11 against Jackie Bunce (+1), and (on -5) scraping home 8-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 13-11 against Alan Charman (+1).

Nomads Bobcats are the fifth Second Division side through, having received a walk-over against Brotherhood A whilst the Third Division was guaranteed a representative when Brotherhood F and Nomads Lynx were drawn together, Brotherhood going through 5-0 with ease when the Lynx could only field two players.

* The week also saw the quarter-finals of the Handicap Doubles Challenge and, despite Division Three providing half of the sides, only one survived. So congratulations go to Nomads Pumas whose trio of Alan Dockerill, Lionel Goddard and John Bowers put paid to the hopes of top-flight Walton C, winning 5-2.

In the semi-finals, they'll be joined by one team from Division One, Walton E, and two from Division Two, Brotherhood D and Windsor Kestrels. And, with these three teams also having enjoyed success in the Handicap Cup, all three are still in with a chance of doing the double and winning both Handicap Knock-Out competitions.

By a quirk of fate, Walton E and Windsor Robins were paired together for this competition as well as the Knock-Out Cup. The two ties were played on consecutive nights but, alas for the Robins, the result turned out the same, 5-2 to Walton E, the teams sharing four matches which went the distance. Mark Ratcliffe, Jason Gale and Paul Woolnough were the winning team, Gale and Woolnough (-11) taking the final match by beating Bob Bales and Mick Coker (+2) 11-8, 1-11, 11-9, 0-11, 11-8.

Brotherhood D are also in with a shout of the double and they were winners in another Division Two v Division Three clash, defeating Walton D 5-0. Despite it being a hard-fought encounter, only one match went to five, Grant Sharpe and Barry Allen (-8) beating Lynette Sparks and Maggie Earle (1) 9-11, 11-9, 11-5, 9-11, 12-10 in what turned out to be the concluding match.

Second Division Windsor Kestrels are the fourth team through, having had a walk-over against Brotherhood F.

For the record, none of the four semi-finalists qualified for the Knock-Out stage of the competition by finishing top of their Groups, all four qualifying as runners-up.

* The next Rounds of both competitions will be played during week beginning 9th March. The draw for the Knock-Out Cup has seen both the remaining Division One teams from Walton drawn against each other. The full draws are:

Knock-Out Cup (Round Three): Nomads Bobcats v Windsor Harriers; Brotherhood D v Brotherhood F; Windsor Kestrels v Brotherhood G; Walton A v Walton E.

Handicap Doubles Challenge (semi-finals): Nomads Pumas v Windsor Kestrels; Walton E v Brotherhood D.

RESULTS

HANDICAP KNOCK-OUT CUP

Round 2

Nomads Bobcats w/o v Brotherhood A

Walton A 5 Brotherhood C 0

Windsor Harriers 5 Windsor Penguins 1

Brotherhood F 5 Nomads Lynx 0

Brotherhood D 5 Windsor Hawks 0

Windsor Robins 2 Walton E 5

Windsor Buzzards 2 Brotherhood G 5

Windsor Eagles 0 Windsor Kestrels 5

HANDICAP DOUBLES CHALLENGE

Knock-Out stage, Round 2

Walton E 5 Windsor Robins 2

Windsor Kestrels w/o v Brotherhood F
Nomads Pumas 5 Walton C 2
Walton D 0 Brotherhood D 5

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