



Braintree League: Clift steps up to plate

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A number of individual performances stood out in the latest set of Braintree Table Tennis League fixtures, one in division one, one in division two and two in division three.

In division one, it was Sean Clift who made his mark. A long-serving second division player, Clift had played only one match in division one, against Liberal A three years ago when he lost all three singles, as do most people.

This time he stepped up for Black Notley's B team against Rayne C and won two singles, putting the team's two regular members in the shade. He also joined Neil Freeman, who won one singles, to win the doubles.

Rayne took a leaf out of the Butlers' book at Felsted and turned out a father-and-two-sons combination, Adi, Sudheep and Vineeth Kamma all winning twice in the 6-4 victory.

It took to 14 the number of players used by Rayne C this season, equalling the record set by Colne A back in the 70s.

Also in division one, leaders Liberal A dropped just one set – a surprise win for Dean Andrews over Simon Webber – in beating Rayne B, while second-placed Rayne A had an 8-2 win over Liberal B.

Netts A, in third place, had a 7-3 win over their own B team, with three wins for Maria Boulton, while Netts' C team, featuring an unbeaten James Hicks, had a win by the same score over Notley A.

The standout performance in division two came from Peter Pond. Playing up from Notley F to the E team, Pond remained unbeaten against division leaders Rayne E.

He was taken to four games by Dave Marsh but polished off Richard Whiteside and Dave Moles in three straight. Rayne E won the match 6-4.

Back with his normal team-mates two days later Pond was not the first person to find both Dan Anderson and Glen Laing too much of a handful.

Gordon Fairchild managed to get the better of Laing, at 12-10 in the fifth game, but Notley C took the match 6-4.

In Notley D's 6-4 win over Felsted RBL, it was Sean Clift's turn to be put in the shade. He was unable to keep Richard Baxter at bay, whereas his brother Adam beat him in three straight games to give him three wins in the match.

Dave Miller was Rayne D's man in form in their draw against Nomads. He beat Kevin Saunders and stretched Karl Baldwin, last beaten on October 29, to five games.

In division three, leaders Rayne F turned to two G team players for their match against Notley I but they all came the same to 16-year-old Jonny Evans. His three wins included an excellent victory over the experienced Brian How, beaten only once before this season, but Rayne F took the match 6-4.

Paul Martin was in a similar position for Liberal D. He won all three singles against a strong Netts E side, including only a second defeat for Kierlan Richards.

He, like Evans, contributed to a doubles win but likewise could not avoid a 6-4 defeat.

How and Tim Gowers were back in the Rayne G team for their match against Rayne H and helped their team to an 8-2 win.

Rayne J continue to show up their clubmates higher up the alphabet, their latest an 8-2 win over their I team. Alex Morgan and Scott Whiteside were unbeaten.

No such problems for Notley G, who put the H team in their place to the tune of 9-1.

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