



## Braintree League: Leaders shocked by bottom team

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There is no doubt what was the match of the week, indeed of the season, in the Braintree Table Tennis League. Netts A, top of division one, played bottom team Black Notley B – and lost.

Netts went into the match with nine wins out of nine, Notley with nine defeats. There were mitigating circumstances in that Netts rested most of their big guns but Paul Davison was there and that guaranteed three wins.

Notley were strengthened by the inclusion of Dan Anderson, a Chelmsford League first division player, who won his other two singles.

But that still meant Patrice Élonge, with a 25 per cent win average, and Dave Parker, one win out of 27, had to overcome Fred Evans, with a 66.7 per cent average, and Joe Meleschko, on 50 per cent.

Élonge found top form and beat them both while Parker avenged his earlier defeat by Meleschko to give Notley a stunning 5-4 victory.

Notley's A team also had a good win, 5-4 over champions Liberal A, but this was much more of a match that went by the form book.

Liberal could only field two players and although Terry Dowsett won his three singles comfortably, Zach Harrington's win over Guy McKenzie was their only other success.

Notley A have been strengthened by the return of Takunda Nerutanga, back in this country after completing the early part of his PhD research in Zimbabwe.

After an 87 per cent record in division two in the last full season, he has been promoted to the A team and began life there with a 3-2 (11-8, 10-12, 15-13, 3-11, 11-9) victory over Harrington. Steve Kerns also beat Harrington to wrap

up the points.

Adam Cuthbert's three singles led Liberal B to a 6-3 win over Rayne B but the hard-luck story here belonged to Robin Armstrong, who was twice pipped at the post, 11-9 in the fifth game by Dave Marsh, playing up from the C team, and 12-10 in the fifth by Ryan Pitt.

The Braintree League has announced that matches may be postponed by captains if they are unable to raise a team because of a Covid-19 infection, or if any of their players are reluctant to turn out because of the risk of infection.

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