



Clacton & Dist: Walton win by a whisker

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Posted On: December 20, 2021

Teams from the Walton Club provided the match of the week in the second series of Group matches in the Clacton & District League's Handicap Cup.

In Group F Walton A led 3-1 and 4-2 against their Walton C club-mates but it was left to the final doubles of the evening before the match was finally decided, Gary Young and Gavin Price (-8) just managing to get the better of John Marshall and Paul Newbould (+2) 3-2 (15-13, 11-8, 8-11, 3-11, 11-9).

The 'A' team got off to a flying start with Price and Paul Woolnough (-3) winning 5-11, 11-9, 11-9, 10-12, 11-7 against Newbould and John Rankin (+1) in the opening doubles, with Walton C getting only a narrow 11-2, 11-5, 6-11, 4-11, 14-12 win from Newbould (+1) over Paul Woolnough (-1) in the first four games.

And at 4-2 down it looked all over for the 'C' team but Marshall (+1) pulled out a victory in three-straight against Price (-6) and, with Rankin (+1) fighting to a 3-2 (6-11, 6-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-5) comeback victory over Woolnough (-1), the tie went into its tense final match decider.

By contrast, the second match in the group, which comprises four Division One teams, proved something of an anti-climax, with Walton D running out comfortable 5-0 winners over Brotherhood A, only one of the games extended beyond the standard three-sets.

In Group G, Nomads Panthers recorded their second win by defeating Windsor Eagles 5-2, Sam Hume unbeaten. Hume and Liam Harris (-8) shared an early doubles win, 3-2 (6-11, 11-9, 11-9, 7-11, 11-6) against Sue Welham and John Hobson (+2). The other two matches which went to five both went the way of the Eagles, Welham (+2) beating Harris (-6) 9-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-6 and Hobson and Mel Rampton (+2) just making it 10-12, 11-9, 10-12, 11-5, 11-9 against Harris and James Denyer (-5).

Isabel Barton maintained her hundred per cent record in the cup this season as Windsor Harriers also notched up a second win, beating Lawford 5-1. But it might have been different had Lawford been able to snatch the first doubles which Barton and Jenny Higgins (+1) eventually won for the Harriers, beating Charlie Denholm and Ian

Sherwood (-5) 3-2 (9-11, 7-11, 16-14, 11-5, 11-8).

Only the concession of their final match could now prevent the Panthers or Harriers from moving to the next round, leaving Lawford and the Eagles with the hope of a best third-placed position to see them through.

In Group A, the juniors of Windsor Merlins took the first doubles against Nomads Lynx, Joe Plummer and Yulian Yaremenko (-3) staging a come-back after a poor start to take it 3-2 (3-11, 7-11 11-8 11-9, 11-4) against Adrian Sexton and Norman Jacobs (+1). Dominic Joannou and Sexton then each won a singles to put the Lynx 2-1 ahead but the Merlins resumed control thereafter and ran out 5-3 winners.

The Merlins, with two wins under their belt, and Nomads Bobcats, who received a walk-over against Brotherhood F, head the group jointly on four points and look almost certain to qualify for the knockout round.

On the other hand, Group B is proving extremely competitive and, with each of the teams having one match left to play, there's no clear winner at the moment.

Windsor Kestrels are currently in pole position, heading the group with maximum points following a closely-fought 5-4 victory over fellow-Second Division side Nomads Jaguars.

The Jaguars fought back from 2-0 and 4-2 down, with Mike Vilka and Andrew Cousins each taking two singles wins. But Graham Bunce, Debra Found and Jackie Bunce of the Kestrels crucially won all three doubles, culminating in a nerve-jangling final match which saw Found and Graham Bunce (0) beat Vilka and Chris Petrou (0) 3-2 (7-11, 10-12, 11-5, 11-2, 11-5).

Despite an unbeaten performance from their number one player Andy Vincent, Windsor Hawks went down 5-3 to the Windsor Buzzards' trio of Dave Martin, Andy Crawley and Peter Bloomfield. The result leaves both sides on three points in joint-second place.

In Group C, Brotherhood B took the opening game in their all-Second Division clash with Brotherhood E but that was their sole success, the 'E' team sweeping to a 5-1 win with Kevin Pryor remaining undefeated. The closest match of the tie saw the 'E' team's Rodney Betts (+1) beat Grant Sharpe (-8) 3-2 (11-2, 11-13, 9-11, 11-3, 11-5).

Division Three Walton E made it two wins out of two in Group D when they beat Second Division Brotherhood D 5-0. But the score-line disguises a far closer match, with Walton taking the three matches which went the distance.

Clive Allenby (-1) beat Paul Metcalf (+1) 3-2 (4-11, 11-7, 10-12, 8-11, 11-9), Tony Sharman (+1) beat John Gallagher (-1) 3-2 (7-11, 11-5, 11-9, 8-11, 12-10) and, in what proved to be the final match of the evening, Allenby and Maggie Earle (0) beat Metcalf and Gallagher (0) in five (8-11, 8-11, 13-11, 11-8, 11-6).

Nomads Ocelots improved their chances of qualifying for the knockout stage with a 5-3 win over fellow-Division Three side Windsor Robins.

But once again the scor-line failed to tell the full story of a match that might easily have gone the other way, the Ocelots taking all four matches which went the distance. Arthur Wells-Garrett and Hazel Blanche (+1) defeated Neil Chegwiddden and Mick Coker (-1) 3-2 (6-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-2) in the middle doubles whilst three other matches ended 11-8 in the fifth in favour of the Ocelots, Wells-Garret (-6) defeating Oleksandra Klymenko (+1), John Magill (-8) defeating Coker (+1) and Blanche (0) defeating the unfortunate Coker (0) to secure the match win for the Ocelots in game eight.

Windsor Penguins chalked up a second win in Group E but they were made to fight all the way by another Third Division side, Windsor Magpies. The Penguins recovered from 3-1 down to lead 4-3 before clinching the match 5-4 in the final doubles where Peter Aumord and Kayley Rodriguez (0) edged past Dave Sweetland and John Plummer (0) 3-2 (11-9, 9-11, 9-11, 12-10, 11-8).

* The final group matches are scheduled to be played during week beginning 3rd January. Cup results and current tables can be found on the 'KO Cup Results and Tables' section of the Information Page on the League's website

RESULTS

HANDICAP CUP

Group A

Nomads Lynx 3 Windsor Merlins 5

Nomads Bobcats 5 Brotherhood F 0 (walk-over)

Group B

Windsor Hawks 3 Windsor Buzzards 5

Windsor Kestrels 5 Nomads Jaguars 4

Group C

Brotherhood B 1 Brotherhood E 5

Group D

Brotherhood D 0 Walton E 5

Windsor Robins 3 Nomads Ocelots 5

Group E

Windsor Penguins 5 Windsor Magpies 4

Group F

Walton D 5 Brotherhood A 0

Walton C 4 Walton C A 5

Brotherhood A 0 Walton A 5 (walk-over)

Group G

Windsor Harriers 5 Lawford 1

Nomads Panthers 5 Windsor Eagles 2

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