



Clacton & Dist: Hawks win crucial cup clash

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It was the final series of Group matches in the Clacton & District League's **Handicap Cup** and, of all of them, Group B proved the closest and hardest-fought, with none of the four teams staying unbeaten but each one picking up at least one win.

The all-Windsor clash between the Hawks of Division One and the Kestrels of Division Two was crucial for the Hawks who knew they had to win to qualify. And win they did, taking the tie 5-3 – but it was by no means an easy evening for the Hawks, who took all four matches which went the distance, three of them going down to the wire.

John Barton and Ian Fielder (-6) defeated Debra Found and Jackie Bunce (+1) 11-9, 11-7, 2-11, 2-11, 11-2, Barton (-8) narrowly beat Bunce (+1) 11-6, 11-6, 6-11, 11-13, 11-9, Felipe Rodriguez (-10) edged it by a closer 0-11, 13-11, 6-11, 11-8, 12-10 against Found (+2) whilst Fielder (-8) scraped past the unlucky Bunce (+1) 12-10, 11-9, 6-11, 13-11, 14-12 in the tightest match of them all.

In the second match in the group, Nomads Jaguars notched up their first win in the competition with an important 5-1 success against Windsor Buzzards.

Once again, it was a highly competitive affair, with the Jaguars' trio of Daryl Lott, Mike Vilka and Andrew Cousins winning three of the four matches which went to five – although the closest match of the contest was the sole Buzzards' victory, Pete Bloomfield (-3) just making it 3-2 (3-11, 11-9, 11-13, 11-9, 13-11) against Vilka (+1).

These results means the Hawks and the Kestrels, who had won their previous two group matches, qualify for the next stage automatically, whilst the Jaguars, who finish third, qualify as one of the two best third-placed teams.

In **Group A** Windsor Merlins and Nomads Bobcats had already qualified so their meeting was merely to determine who'd finish first and second. And despite the Bobcats striking first in the opening doubles, with Allen Denyer and Dave Harris (-3) defeating Joe Plummer and Yulian Yaramenko (+1), the Merlins ran out 5-1 winners.

The Merlins won two tight matches, Yaramenko (+1) beating Denyer (-6) 13-11 in the decider and, in the middle

doubles, Yaramenko and Sam Plummer (+1) beating Harris and Andy Teemal (-5) 11-9 in the decider. Sam Plummer remained unbeaten on the night.

Brotherhood F and Nomads Lynx were left fighting only for honour and pride in the group's second match and, although Brotherhood triumphed 5-0, it was a closer encounter than the scoreline suggests.

Brotherhood won the three matches which went the distance, Ben Bryden (-3) defeating Dominic Joannou (+1) 1-11, 8-11, 11-5, 11-8, 11-6, Alex Marsh (-6) defeating Adrian Sexton (+1) 8-11, 1-11, 11-5, 11-4, 11-8, and, in the doubles match which sealed the victory, Bryden and Marsh (-6) defeating Joannou and Norman Jacobs (+1) 11-8, 11-6, 3-11, 4-11, 12-10.

In **Group C**, Walton B had a walk-over against Brotherhood E to leave them undefeated and in top spot, although their two previous wins had already guaranteed them a place in the next round.

Nomads Lions, 5-0 winners against Brotherhood B, finished as Group runners-up. The 11-8 in the fifth victory of Adam Cuthbert (-5) over John Owen (+2) was the only match which went the distance.

In **Group D** Walton E defeated Nomads Ocelots 5-2, despite the Ocelots taking the opening two matches, Hazel Blanche and Christophe Wilmotte (+1) beating Maggie Earle and Toni Hayhow-Khan (-6) in five, and John Magill (0) beating Tony Sharman (0) 3-2 (7-11, 12-10, 11-7, 6-11, 11-7). Walton top the group, having won all their three matches.

Both Brotherhood D and Windsor Robins played with just two players but the Brotherhood pair of Paul Metcalf and John Gallagher won all four playable matches and, with each team gaining a concession, the final score was 5-1, sufficient for the Brotherhood side to progress to the next round as runners-up.

In **Group E**, Windsor Penguins made it through to the knockout stage with a perfect record but they were forced to pull out all the stops against Brotherhood C, winning by the closest of 5-4 scorelines. The tie see-sawed throughout, Brotherhood leading 2-1, the Penguins taking the next three to lead 4-2, Brotherhood levelling at 4-4, before the Penguins snatched the victory in match nine.

Crucially, the Penguins won all three doubles, including Peter Aumord and Janet Cowie (+1) defeating Mark Salter and Tricia Salter (-8) 3-2 (7-11, 11-7, 7-11, 12-10, 11-6), and Aumord and Kayley Rodriguez (+1) beating Mark Salter and Barry Allen (-5) 3-2 (11-1, 11-5, 10-12, 10-12, 11-5) in that final match.

This result meant the last tie in the group between Brotherhood C and Windsor Magpies became a straight knockout – whichever team won would finish second and automatically proceed to the next round.

It turned out to be an entertaining cracker, with the lead constantly changing, Brotherhood having to take the last two matches of the evening to notch up the 5-4 win. Once again, the doubles proved crucial, with Brotherhood winning all three, including two which went the distance. Brotherhood's Barry Allen remained undefeated in both singles and doubles.

But, in spite of the defeat, the Magpies have the satisfaction of knowing their third place was one of the two best third-placed positions and so they will take their place in the knockout round alongside the Penguins and Brotherhood C.

In **Group F**, Walton A's Gary Young, Daniel Young and Gavin Price recorded their third win, a 5-1 success over Walton D, to stay in top spot.

Daniel Young was their only unbeaten player but it was a close-run thing, with both his singles ending in the same 12-10 in the fifth score-line, (on -8) beating Mark Gale (+2) 3-2 (11-7, 13-11, 7-11, 1-11, 12-10) and (on -6) edging it 3-2 (8-11, 4-11, 11-7, 11-8, 12-10) against Mark Ratcliffe (+2).

Brotherhood A conceded their match with Walton C and this was sufficient to see the 'C' team take second position in the group and an automatic place in the next Round.

In **Group G**, Windsor Harriers and Nomads Panthers were guaranteed a place in the knockout round before their tie so their meeting was somewhat academic. For the record, the Harriers defeated a two-player Panthers 5-2 to

take top spot.

In the other group match, Windsor Eagles were gifted a win when Lawford conceded, a result which left the Eagles, despite not having won a match *on* the table, in with a shout of being one of the best-placed third teams.

In all, there were five third-placed teams who accumulated four points – Nomads Jaguars (Group B), Nomads Ocelots (Group D), Windsor Magpies (Group E), Walton D (Group F) and Windsor Eagles (Group G). But, by virtue of the ratio of sets won to sets lost, Nomads Jaguars and Windsor Magpies qualify for the knockout stage as the two best third-placed teams.

So the 16 teams through to the first round of the knockout stage of the competition are: Windsor Hawks, Walton B, Nomads Lions, Walton A, Walton C, Nomads Panthers, Nomads Bobcats, Windsor Kestrels, Nomads Jaguars, Brotherhood D, Brotherhood C, Windsor Harriers, Windsor Merlins, Walton E, Windsor Penguins and Windsor Magpies.

They comprise six teams each from Divisions One and Two, and four from Division Three. And club-wise, it's six teams from Windsor, four each from Nomads and Walton, and two from Brotherhood.

Teams will be notified of the draw for Round One by 18th January. Round One matches are to be played during week commencing 31st January.

Details of all the Cup results, and the final group tables, can be found on the 'KO Cup Results and Tables' section of the Information Page on the League's website.

* There was just one result from the League where, in **Division One**, Nomads Panthers caught up with their first-half season fixture against Brotherhood A. And they used it to good effect, winning 7-3 to extend their lead at the top of the table to a sizeable seventeen points.

Liam Harris took three, Greg Green two and Gill Locke one. Harris maintained his unbeaten record but it was a near-run thing against Gracie Edwards, Harris taking their match 12-10 in the decider. For Brotherhood, Gowlett won a couple, including a 13-11 in the fifth win over Green.

* The first of this season's tournaments is the Handicapped Singles which takes place on Sunday 13th February at the Coastal Academy Sports Hall, with play starting at 10am. The closing date for entry is Sunday 6th February. Full entry details are on the League's website.

RESULTS

HANDICAP CUP

Group A

Brotherhood F 5 Nomads Lynx 0

Windsor Merlins 5 Nomads Bobcats 1

Group B

Windsor Buzzards 1 Nomads Jaguars 5

Windsor Hawks 5 Windsor Kestrels 3

Group C

Brotherhood B 0 Nomads Lions 5

Brotherhood E 0 Walton B 5 (walk-over)

Group D

Nomads Ocelots 2 Walton E 5

Brotherhood D 5 Windsor Robins 1

Group E

Brotherhood C 4 Windsor Penguins 5

Windsor Magpies 4 Brotherhood C 5

Group F

Walton C 5 Brotherhood A 0 (walk-over)

Walton A 5 Walton D 1

Group G

Windsor Harriers 5 Nomads Panthers 2

Lawford 0 Windsor Eagles 5 (walk-over)

LEAGUE**Division One**

Nomads Panthers 7 Brotherhood A 3

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