



Braintree League: Close tie features a host of surprises

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A 5-4 win for Liberal A over Netts B in the Braintree Table Tennis League is not a result to cause many raised eyebrows – but the score hides a number of intriguing individual scorelines.

For a start, Brandon Crouchman, 2017 men's singles champion, lost twice. A defeat at 11-5 in the fifth game against Maria Boulton was not a major surprise as Boulton had only been beaten three times out of 24 this season.

But an 11-2, 11-5, 12-10 loss to Nikki Kennard would not have registered highly on the expectation curve.

Kennard also confounded expectations by coupling a convincing win over Crouchman with a defeat to Zach Harrington, who she had beaten in their last two meetings.

Given her win against Crouchman, Boulton's straight-games defeat by Adam Cuthbert was a little bit out of left field.

Cuthbert took all three for Liberal, his closest set coming against Kennard, who succumbed only at 14-12 in the fifth game.

Also in division one, Rayne B registered a 7-2 win over Black Notley B. Notley's two came from Patrice Élonge, but he could not get past Ryan Pitt. He won the first game 11-1 but Pitt took the next three.

It was a similar story at the top of division two where Karl Baldwin won two in Sudbury Nomads' 7-2 defeat by Notley C but found Dan Anderson impenetrable.

Notley C moved a point clearer of Liberal C after Notley's F team took three points off them. Or more precisely Adam Clift did – Garry Fryatt, David Razzell and Dave Hardy making up an impressive trio of wins.

Steve Buer was another lone shining beacon. He won his three singles in Rayne D's 6-3 defeat to Notley E.

Paul Wellington, in sparkling form, took his three singles for the first time this season in Rayne C's 8-1 win over Notley D.

The Netts C juggernaut rolls on in division three but their 9-0 win over Notley I was matched by second-placed Rayne E's win by the same score against Rayne G.

Third-placed Notley G were made to work hard for their 5-4 win over their own H team in the face of the expected three sets from Graham Chinnery. Two wins each from Jill Canning and Matt Brooks helped them over the line.

Netts D were only one behind their C team, defeating Rayne F 8-1. But like the Liberal A win that scoreline does not tell the whole story. Rayne F took six sets to five games but were beaten in five of them.

Chris High lost twice at 11-8 in the fifth while Chris Krelle beat Alastair Brown 11-9 and Charles Wilkinson 12-10 at the same stage.

Wilkinson was the only one to get it the right way round, 11-7 in the fifth over Davina Brazier.

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