

Clacton & District League Season Preview

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Condors aim for second title

The 2012/13 season of the Clacton and District Table Tennis League begins this week and, in Division One, Windsor Condors will be aiming to retain the title they won by the narrowest of margins last April.

John Patrick, Colin Stallwood and Gary Young remain the core of the side, with Jim Pallett and Gary Cattermole, formerly of the Roosters, as back-up reserves.

With Windsor Roosters now disbanded, the main title challenge will come from Brotherhood A who welcome back regular team-members Dave Binns and John Stubbings after injury.

The Brotherhood side, Champions 11 times in the past 14 years, will press the Condors all the way, but watch out for Nomads Panthers who've added ex-Roosters' player James Denyer to their squad – they could be surprise contenders.

Walton A have formed a strong-looking team in Peter Burrows, John Rice, Colin Dearman and Matthew Watson and will be hoping for a top-six finish, as will unchanged Windsor Eagles and the Walton D side of Kevin Gowlett, Kevin James, George Kalli and Paul Woolnough.

There's little to choose between Walton B, who have recruited Toby Turner as a replacement for Martin Hogg, and the unchanged Brotherhood B and Walton C teams – all three sides should find safety in their customary positions just below mid-table.

Windsor Hawks are a mix of last-year's Hawks and Falcons, with John Barton and Andy Vincent joining Felipe and Annabelle Rodriguez, whilst the new-look Windsor Kestrels' side sees Andy Holmes and Terry May joining regulars Frank Burbidge and Chris Petrou.

If the Hawks and Kestrels play to their potential, both sides will survive which means Nomads Lions' three Johns – Weller, Hatley and Fenton – and the unchanged Nomads Jaguars start as pre-season relegation favourites.

With three teams promoted and no teams relegated from Division One, there are no obvious candidates for the Division Two title.

An unchanged Brotherhood D, led this season by Russell Hillier, have four good all-round players with no noticeable weak links and they seem the likeliest team for promotion whilst the familiar Lawford trio of Richard Spence, Peter Sear and Ian Sherwood look the best of the rest.

Windsor Harriers, without Terry May this year, should be capable of a top four finish whilst Brotherhood C, who have Fred Gallone joining Kevin Pryor and Laurence Torr, won't be far behind.

However, if you're looking for an outside bet for a top three spot, look no further than promoted Nomads Cougars who boast the precocious talents of Paul and Sam Hume – they could cause more than a few shocks!

Windsor Ravens and Windsor Magpies both retain last season's line-ups and, together with Windsor Owls who this year include Sue Watson, should find safety in the middle of the table.

David North returns to local table tennis to join Barry Allen, Sandie Isaac and Mark Beckham as Brotherhood F and his points should go a long way to guide his team to survival.

The Nomads Tigers' quartet of Simon Smith-Daye, Tony Robinson, Eric Lemke and Darren Bunce looks a

competitive outfit, but the Nomads Ocelots' squad of Simon Boyton, Vic Little, Andy North, Denise Thompson and Doug Green may find the going tougher.

Brotherhood G's Dan Malinowski, Elliott Attrill and Jordan Blanche-Price have the ability to improve but will have to adjust quickly to this level whilst Brotherhood E, who include Gary Bayliss this campaign, could find themselves anchoring the division.

Division Three proved a tight division last season and it may well be the same again this year.

John Bowers joins Alan Dockerill, Lionel Goddard, Wally Ingram and John Houghton in a solid-looking Nomads Pumas' side and they should be there or thereabouts at the end of the season.

Brotherhood J will be aiming to improve on last year's fourth position but it could be that Brotherhood M, comprising three generations of the Edwards' family supported by reserve Alan Fryer, will set the pace in this Division.

Sheila Howe and Angela Barratt play alongside Malcolm Caley and Iris Howlett as Windsor Swallows and they look good enough to secure a top-six finish, as do Brotherhood I's Allen Denyer, Rowan Cottey, James Smith-Daye and a left-handed John Wrigley.

Unchanged Brotherhood H will be as competitive as they always are whilst Nomads Leopards ought to improve on last season's disappointing tenth place.

Harry Hawkes returns in a re-formed Nomads Bobcats' team with Barry Brandon, Harry Barlow, Andrew Cousins and Dave Hutchinson, a squad that should fit comfortably in mid-table.

Rob Bright, Brian Baines and two new players form Brotherhood K whilst Nomads Lynx have three new players supporting Tom Collins, Di Self and Mike Vilka, likely to be one of the division's stronger players.

Windsor Penguins are weakened without Darren Bunce but they should finish ahead of Brotherhood L and a Nomads Wildcats' team based around Harry Beezer, Paul Dale, Peter Miller and Hazel Blanche.

All of which leaves Windsor Kites facing the possibility of ending the season as bottom team for the third season running.

Tony Oswick

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