

Chelmsford & District League: Bocking trio clinch title in style

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Bocking B have won the Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League first division title in style and with a points total of 126 points out of 170 they are well clear of the evenly matched race for second place.

Dave Cole (29 wins out of 31 – 93 %), Rik James (38 wins out of 41 – 92 %) and Gary Cattermole (21 wins out of 32 – 65 %) have been the mainstays of this team and in what is generally acknowledged to be a very strong first division their records are quite exceptional. Cole and James have been amongst the League's best players for as long as most players can remember whilst Cattermole has proved to be an excellent No 3 and they fully deserve the accolades that accompany any side who win the title with such a small squad.

OCs A moved into second place by hammering Galleywood A 9-1. Brandon Crouchman and Michael Andrews both scored hat-tricks whilst Terry Dowsett picked up two wins. Reuben Okai was the sole winner for Galleywood with a hard-fought 3-1 (15-17, 15-13, 11-7, 11-7) win over Terry. Crouchman has fared best of the OCs players with a record of 34 wins out of 45 – 75 %.

Rawreth & Hullbridge A dropped back to fourth (although they have a match in hand) after drawing 5-5 with Bocking A. Rawreth's Gary Young scored a hat-trick of wins over Simon Webber, Alistair Hill and Kevin Gowlett.

The battle to avoid relegation from **Division Two** was desperately close (perhaps the closest on record) and three sides – Galleywood B, Elmtree Excalibur B and Hatfield Peverel A – have finished their 20 matches tied on 92 points.

However, it is Hatfield Peverel A with only four matches won who have finished second to bottom, despite beating bottom side Elmtree Excalibur C 10-0 in their last match. Gary Ward, John Gagg and John Parodi finished their season in style and they will be hoping that, with the likelihood of the League being "reconstituted" next season to add more sides to the first division, they get a reprieve. 92 points would also have seen them finish "miles ahead" of relegation in the other divisions. Certainly, Ward (with 39 wins out of 54 – 75 %) is playing as well as ever.

Chelmsford A completed their campaign by beating the champions Danbury B 6-4. Waseem Qureshi scored two fine wins over Lewis Ewers in five (11-9, 6-11, 11-8, 10-12, 11-9) and Chris Buer in four (11-7, 11-9, 6-11, 15-13). Danbury B also drew 5-5 with Liberal. Andrew Halling scored a hat-trick over Peter Hayden (hard-bat mode), Robin Armstrong and Steve Pennell.

OCs B have finished as runners-up. They completed an excellent second half to the season with a resounding 9-1 win over fourth-placed Rawreth & Hullbridge B. Steve Northcott and Robert Burton both scored hat-tricks, whilst their top player – Kevin Worthington (46 wins out of 54 – 85 %) only missed out against Simon Jacob 3-0 (9-11, 4-11, 15-17).

Division Three has been evenly matched throughout the season and this week's three scorecards all evidenced 6-4 scorelines. Maldon C, led by two wins from Brian Riedling and Dawn Baldry, just shaded it against Hatfield Peverel C whilst Danbury F (with Tony Forster, Tim Pulham and Gordon Gatherall all winning twice) emerged as the winners against Chelmsford B. Maldon C included Ciaran Whelan (from their all-conquering Division Four side) in their line-up against Danbury E and his hat-trick gave them the ascendancy. Herbie Smith won twice for Danbury E and this included a very hard-fought 3-2 (2-11, 10-12, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9) win over ace defender Brian Riedling.

In **Division Four**, EPHQ defeated Writtle 7-3, a result that means Writtle are relegated. Pip French was the EPHQ

match-winner with three wins and he received good support from Ian Hockley, who won twice. Frank Neill beat Hockley 3-2 (11-6, 11-8, 2-11, 10-12, 12-10) in the closest game of the night.

In **Division Five**, Highwood completed their campaign with an 8-2 win over Galleywood B. Martin Goddard and Kevin Barber both picked up three wins.

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