



Clacton & District: Eagles are cup killers again

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Last year, the Eagles eliminated Cup-holders Windsor Hawks in Round Two of the Clacton & District League's Handicap Knock-Out Cup – this season they've done it to reigning Division One champions and current leaders Nomads Panthers.

In a tie of high quality and energy, the Eagles trio of Gary Cattermole, Phil Smith and Fred Button triumphed 5-3, taking three of the four matches which went the distance.

Smith led the way to stay undefeated – but he did it the hard way. In the opening doubles, Smith and Fred Button (+1) shared a 3-2 (9-11, 11-7, 6-11, 11-9, 11-6) success against James Denyer and John Hatley (-3), then it was nailbiter, coming back from the brink to edge past Hatley (-1) again in five (5-11, 3-11, 11-6, 11-4, 12-10) before crowning a fine performance by overcoming Sam Hume (-3) by a see-saw 3-2 (11-1, 8-11, 11-7, 11-13, 11-0) scoreline. Denyer won both his singles for the Panthers.

It was an equally tight match between Nomads Lions and Windsor Hawks despite the 5-2 scoreline, the Lions pulling through by virtue of winning four of the five matches that went all the way. Paul Hume (-3) was involved in the two tightest matches, defeating Felipe Rodriguez (+1) 3-2 (11-8, 6-11, 8-11, 11-9, 11-9) and then (on -6) edging past John Barton (+1) 3-2 (13-11, 5-11, 11-9, 0-11, 11-8). The Lions won all five singles but lost both doubles.

In the third all-Division One encounter, Windsor Condors lost the first doubles against last season's beaten finalists Walton C but that was the only blot on their copybook, the Condors running out 5-1 winners. Elliott Attrill (-1) played well to win both his singles, defeating Mark Gale (+1) in five (6-11, 6-11, 13-11, 11-6, 14-12) in the closest encounter of the evening.

Three more Division One sides made it through at the expense of Second Division opposition.

Cup holders Brotherhood B began their defence of the trophy with a 5-1 success against Windsor Magpies. Skipper Martin Edwards (-8) stayed unbeaten although he had to battle to win both his singles in five, defeating John Plummer (+2) 9-11, 11-8, 5-11, 11-5, 11-6 and then Dave Sweetland (+2) by an intriguing 0-11, 1-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-9 scoreline.

Brotherhood C recovered from being 1-2 down to Lawford to win the next four matches and take the tie 5-2. Alan Burgess (-6) was unbeaten in his two singles and one doubles, although it was a close call against Paul Hewitt (+1) 11-7, 9-11, 11-5, 4-11, 13-11 in the only match that went to five.

It was also 5-2 for Walton B against Brotherhood F, Gavin Price undefeated. Once again, only one match was extended to a fifth set, Price and Paul Woolnough (-5) beating Barry Allen and Lee Allen (+1) 11-8, 11-9, 5-11, 6-11, 11-5 in the middle doubles.

The two teams struggling at the bottom of the First Division were both eliminated by Brotherhood sides from Division Two. In an all-Brotherhood encounter, the 'E' team beat the 'D' team 5-3 thanks to unbeaten performances from Tony Edmonds and Gary Bayliss.

But it was a simpler 5-0 for Brotherhood H against Windsor Kestrels, all the five matches settled in the fourth set. James Smith-Daye took two doubles and one singles for the winners.

Unusually, the draw had produced only one all-Second Division tie but it turned out to be an unexpected victory for relegation-threatened Nomads Jaguars over promotion-chasing Windsor Owls. Caroline North (+1) was the Jaguars' unbeaten heroine in her team's 5-2 success, wrapping up the match with a 3-2 (9-11, 11-6, 5-11, 11-2, 11-5) victory over Mark Salter (-8).

Two other sides from Division Two had more comfortable passages against Third Division opposition.

Windsor Harriers sailed through 5-0 against Windsor Kites whilst Nomads Bobcats were 5-1 victors over a Windsor Penguins' side forced to field just two registered players and who thus conceded four points before the match began.

However, two teams from the Second Division were eliminated by sides from Division Three. John Bowers remained undefeated as the Third Division leaders Nomads Pumas beat Brotherhood I 5-1 with greater ease than they might have expected. The match included the most bizarre scoreline of the Round, Bowers and Andrew Cousins (+1) taking the opening doubles 3-1 (12-14, 11-0, 11-0, 11-0) against Mark Beckham and Jonathan Found (-3).

However, Nomads Ocelots' victory over Windsor Buzzards was a much closer affair, their 5-4 success proving the closest tie of Round Two, despite only one of the matches going to five. Mike Wellum was the difference between the two teams, making full use of his handicap advantage to stay unbeaten in both doubles and singles. But, in retrospect, the crucial match was the opening doubles which was the only one that went the distance, Tom Collins and Scott Campbell (+1) beating Pete Bloomfield and Dan Malinowski (-6) 6-11, 11-8, 11-8, 9-11, 11-3.

The two all-Third Division ties both ended in 5-3 scorelines. Jason Lloyd was undefeated as Nomads Leopards beat Windsor Swallows whilst it was Rivhu Khan who was Walton D's main man in his team's victory over Nomads Wildcats – although it was a tight 3-2 (1-11, 12-10, 11-9, 5-11, 11-9) for Khan (-3) against Andrew Cawley (+1).

* Of the 16 teams left in the Handicap Knock-Out Cup, six are from Division One whilst there are five each from Divisions Two and Three. The Nomads Club has six sides left in the competition with Windsor and Brotherhood providing four each and the Walton Club two. Round Three will be played during week beginning February 1. Team Secretaries will be notified of the draw by January 16.

* The only League match played was in Division One but it turned out to be a cracker, with leaders Nomads Panthers extending their lead at the top of the table with a 7-3 success against club-mates Nomads Lions. But Paul Hume of the Lions was the star of the show, taking three top-class victories, defeating James Denyer 3-1 (11-3, 8-11, 11-3, 11-6) with surprising ease, Gill Locke in a closer five-game match (11-3, 12-10, 7-11, 9-11, 11-5) and then, in the final match of the contest, younger brother Sam in an even closer 3-2 (8-11, 11-8, 11-8, 5-11, 11-9). The tightest finish of the evening saw Denyer beat Adam Cuthbert 12-10 in the fifth.

* The Handicapped Singles Tournament takes place on Saturday February 6 at the Windsor Club's St James Hall venue. As play will only be on four tables, it may be necessary to restrict the number of competitors and so players are advised to make their entries as early as possible. They can be sent by e-mail (to Peter White) or post (to Tony Oswick). The entry fee is £3 and the closing date is Sunday January 31. Full details have been sent to all registered players and are also on the League's website.

* Older members of the League will be saddened to learn of the death of Peter Keffler, aged 92 years. Peter was a stalwart player with the League for many years and he continued to play social table tennis well into his eighties. We send our sincere condolences to his family.

RESULTS

Handicap Knock-Out Cup: Round 2

Nomads Jaguars 5 Windsor Owls 2
Walton B 5 Brotherhood F 2
Windsor Buzzards 4 Nomads Ocelots 5
Windsor Kestrels 0 Brotherhood H 5
Windsor Harriers 5 Windsor Kites 0
Brotherhood C 5 Lawford 2
Windsor Magpies 1 Brotherhood B 5
Nomads Wildcats 3 Walton D 5
Windsor Condors 5 Walton C 1
Nomads Lions 5 Windsor Hawks 2
Nomads Leopards 5 Windsor Swallows 3
Brotherhood I 1 Nomads Pumas 5
Windsor Eagles 5 Nomads Panthers 3
Brotherhood D 3 Brotherhood E 5
Nomads Bobcats 5 Windsor Penguins 1
Windsor Ospreys w/o v Nomads Tigers

League

Division 1

Nomads Panthers 7 Nomads Lions 3

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