



Clacton & District: Walton clinch title in last-day drama

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They may have left it late – but Walton D are the new champions of **Division Three** of the Clacton & District League.

In their final match of the season, they cruised to a 10-0 victory over a Mike Hillier-less Nomads Cougars to secure the eight points they needed to take the title from long-time leaders Nomads Pumas.

It was a something of a smash and grab raid by the Walton side who have tracked the Pumas, leaders of the Division for the past six months, all season – but take the top spot for the very first time on the very last day of the season!

It is a well-merited success for the Walton squad – Rivhu Khan, unbeaten in the league, super-veteran John Long who's enjoyed a new lease of life, together with the two much-improved founder members, Lynette Sparks and Toni Hayhow-Khan.

And although Nomads Pumas will have to settle for second place, they can take satisfaction on their best-ever season.

The Cougars, with Mike Hillier included, had been involved in another match earlier in the week, chalking up a 7-3 success over Windsor Kites. Hillier won his three while Zoe Strange took two. In the tightest match of the evening, Sue Lee defeated Diane Self 3-2 (3-11, 11-3, 11-8, 12-14, 11-8). Sue Chillingworth won two for the Swallows and Kayleigh Stratford one.

There was another 7-3 scoreline as Windsor Ospreys beat Nomads Lynx, Woody Fitzpatrick taking three, Millie Easton two and Maci Harvey one. The closest match was Fitzpatrick's 11-4 in the fifth win over Paul Dale. Dale won two for the Lynx and Liam Harris one.

There was yet another 7-3 result – and another 7-3 defeat – for the Lynx, this time losing to Brotherhood G.

Graham Healey stayed unbeaten for the winners, with David Hunt taking two and Jo Millar one. Dale again got a couple for the Lynx with Cameron Cini winning their third point.

All the matches between Nomads Leopards and Windsor Kites were settled in three-straight, the fixture ending 9-1 in favour of the Leopards. Jason Lloyd and Ethan Lloyd stayed unbeaten with Norman Jacobs winning two but losing out to Chris Simson. The Leopards thus finish in a creditable fourth place, one point behind Nomads Wildcats.

In **Division One** champions Nomads Panthers completed their programme with a comfortable 10-0 victory over already-relegated Windsor Kestrels. Sam Hume, Colin Webber and John Hatley took predictable hat-tricks. The win sees them finish on 160 points, 36 points ahead of their nearest rivals, the biggest winning margin for the champion side since the 2004/05 season.

If the top spot had been decided several weeks ago, the battle for second place went down to the final week of the season. And it was Windsor Eagles who secured the runners-up spot with an 8-2 win over a patched-up Nomads Lions' team which was forced to field two reserves. Gary Cattermole and Phil Smith remained unbeaten for the Eagles who thus end the season just a single point ahead of Windsor Hawks in third place.

Windsor Condors' final match was a 9-1 success over bottom-team Brotherhood D, Greg Green and Colin Stallwood taking their expected hat-tricks. Elliott Attrill's couple for Windsor included a hard-fought 3-2 (7-11, 9-11, 14-12, 12-10, 11-8) victory over Paul Alden. Russell Hillier took the losers' sole point.

These nine points were good enough to edge the Condors into a final fourth-place position, a point ahead of Walton C who could only draw their last fixture with Brotherhood B in a repeat of their early-season score. Paul Meikle and Derek Willis each won two for Walton, Willis defeating John Owen 11-7 in the fifth in the closest match of the encounter. Martin Edwards stayed unbeaten for Brotherhood, his tightest victory being an 11-5 in the decider win over Meikle. Owen and David North picked up a point apiece for Brotherhood.

In the one remaining Division One match, Walton B edged out Brotherhood C 6-4 in a fixture where four of the matches went the distance. Gavin Price, as so often this season, was the Walton hero, his hat-trick including a narrow 3-2 (11-7, 12-10, 9-11, 9-11, 14-12) win over Alan Burgess. Paul Woolnough won two for Walton and, with Price, took the doubles 11-9 in the fifth against Burgess and Kevin Pryor. Burgess took two, and Pryor and Fred Gallone one each, for Brotherhood, Gallone defeating Graham Buxton 12-10 in the decider in a nail-biting contest.

In **Division Two** Nomads Tigers shocked champions Windsor Owls, winning four of the five matches that went the distance to record an impressive 7-3 success. Tigers' skipper John Marshall beat Frank Burbidge 11-5 in the fifth and Mark Salter 11-8 in the fifth to complete an excellent treble. Roger Hance won two, including a 3-2 (11-9, 10-12, 11-8, 8-11, 11-9) success over Burbidge, whilst Daryl Lott's pair included an 11-4 in the decider win over Tricia Salter. Mark Salter won two for the Owls and shared a five-game (15-13, 5-11, 6-11, 11-5, 11-6) doubles win with Burbidge against Hance and Lott.

The Tigers followed this with a 9-1 victory over Brotherhood E, Marshall again leading from the front with an unbeaten three. Lott won two, although it was a close 12-10 in the fifth against Tony Edmonds, but he failed to make it a maximum, losing 11-6 in the decider to Duncan Dunne.

But bravely though the Tigers fought, their efforts proved in vain as Lawford – on the penultimate day of the season – powered to a whitewash 10-0 win against Brotherhood H, a result which sees them take the second promotion spot. Richard Spence, Ian Sherwood and James Tindle, who replaced Paul Hewitt, all took hat-tricks. The closest matches saw Tindle beat Grant Sharpe 3-2 (8-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-8) and Sherwood edge past the same player also in five (11-7, 7-11, 10-12, 16-14, 11-9).

So, at the end of the season, just six points separate the top three teams in what has been one of the best promotion contests for many years, the Owls ending with a three-point lead over Lawford who finish three points ahead of the Tigers – who, paradoxically, end the 2015/16 season as the only unbeaten team in all three Divisions of the League.

At the other end of the table, Brotherhood E's defeat by the Tigers means they end the season three points shy of

Nomads Jaguars and thus are relegated along with Windsor Magpies.

The Jaguars ended their programme with an 8-2 defeat at the hands of Brotherhood I. Mark Beckham and Maurice Hardy were unbeaten for the winners although Beckham was taken to five by both Kevin Hume and Andrew North. Jonathan Found took two for Brotherhood.

Finally, Nomads Bobcats won the three matches that went close in five to edge out Windsor Harriers 7-3. Tony Beezer was the only undefeated player although it was a tight 11-8 in the fifth against Ferdy Rodriguez and an even closer 12-10 in the fifth against Isabel Barton. Tony Robinson and Doug Green won two each for the Bobcats.

RESULTS

Division 1

Nomads Panthers 10 Windsor Kestrels 0

Walton C 5 Brotherhood B 5

Windsor Eagles 8 Nomads Lions 2

Brotherhood C 4 Walton B 6

Windsor Condors 9 Brotherhood D 1

Division 2

Nomads Bobcats 7 Windsor Harriers 3

Lawford 10 Brotherhood H 0

Nomads Tigers 9 Brotherhood E 1

Windsor Owls 3 Nomads Tigers 7

Brotherhood I 8 Nomads Jaguars 2.

Division 3

Nomads Cougars 0 Walton D 10

Nomads Leopards 9 Windsor Kites 1

Nomads Lynx 3 Windsor Ospreys 7

Brotherhood G 7 Nomads Lynx 3

Windsor Swallows 3 Nomads Cougars 7

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