



Braintree League: Laws steps up in style

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Posted On: September 18, 2016

With a number of eye-catching performances, the younger end of the Braintree Table Tennis League was to the fore in the first week of the new season.

From the relatively experienced Matthew Laws and Jamie Brooks to the debutants William Bettley and Keller Pritchard Green, there were results of considerable promise.

Laws is in his first season in division two after gaining promotion last term but he made the step-up appear a minor hurdle by winning four out of five singles in his first two outings.

A win over Sean Clift, one of the division's leading players for several seasons, was particularly noteworthy as his efforts helped his team, Felsted RBL A, to a 6-4 win over last season's runners-up Liberal C, and a draw with Black Notley D. Felsted's new signing Richard Upson won three out of five.

Bettley was having his first taste of league table tennis but, even at the age of 12, he no longer comes into the inexperienced category. Having been nurtured through the training programme by both Keith Martin and Paul Davison he has many miles under his belt, including two successive junior boys' singles title.

The nitty gritty of the league programme is a different matter, however, and it is much to his credit that he found a way to cope with the unorthodox and contrasting styles of his opponents, so much so that all three perished in straight games. His wins helped Netts D to a 6-4 win over Rayne J.

Brooks was also unbeaten, in his case leading Notley E to an 8-2 win over Netts C. Netts' two wins came from 15-year-old Max Plumridge.

Pritchard Green, also 15, has competitive experience only in the summer league, which is played on a handicap basis. But he immediately settled in to the real thing with hard-fought wins over the experienced Brian Dixon and Roger Hasler in Notley F's 6-4 win over Rayne I.

Elsewhere in division three, Liam Ebbs' three singles helped Notley I to a draw with Rayne H.

In division two, Liberal C beat Nomads 7-3 while Notley C took all ten against Felsted B.

The Rayne F-Rayne D game produced the curio of the week. Not only did the lower-ranked team score a convincing 9-1 win, but it was Dave Marsh, normally their leading player, who dropped the one game. Richard Whiteside got the better of him, having failed to unravel the mysteries of Alastair Brown and Dave Moles.

In division one, last year's top two Liberal A and Netts A both started handsomely, with 10-0 wins over Rayne C and Sible Hedingham respectively.

Rayne A had a 6-4 win over Netts B despite three wins by Andy Holmes, while unbeaten evenings for Adam Buxton and Hector Rogers helped the new-look Rayne B to a 7-3 win over Liberal B.

Three wins from Victor Chan helped Notley B to draw with their A team after injury forced Glen Laing to concede two singles.

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