



Braintree League: Leading pack pull clear

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After only five matches, the first division of the Braintree Table Tennis League has already split into two halves, with an 11-point gap between fifth and sixth places.

The divide was accentuated in the most recent set of matches when three teams in the top half beat teams in the bottom half, fifth-placed Netts B's 9-1 win over Sible Hedingham and sixth-placed Liberal B's 7-3 defeat by their own A team serving to increase the gap by six points.

Maria Boulton and James Hicks were unbeaten for Netts B but the surprise of the week was the failure of Scott Dowsett, who missed last season's men's singles final by a whisker, to take any against Liberal B.

Rayne A were the other top-half team to win, 7-3 against Black Notley A. Steve Pennell was unbeaten for Rayne while Notley's Chris Parr was the only one to lose to Keith Martin but the only one to beat Ryan Pitt.

In the bottom half, what could be regarded as a 20-pointer, Rayne C v Notley B, ended in a draw. Dean Andrews and Brian Riedling won two each for Rayne while Victor Chan and Andrew Pagett did likewise for Notley.

In division two, Notley C crept one point closer to leaders Liberal C with an 8-2 win over their own D team while Liberal beat Rayne F 7-3.

Garry Fryatt's good form continues. His three wins against Rayne F included the formidable Dave Marsh and took his tally this season to 14 out of 15, beaten only, surprisingly, by Rayne D's Rob Stannard.

In their latest match, Rayne D were forced to field two reserves against their own G team, who also had a reserve out.

The G team's reserve, Dave Allinson, had the more profitable evening, winning twice as the G team registered an 8-2 win. Keith Flowers was unbeaten.

Seventeen-year-old Matthew Laws continues to impress on his elevation to division two. His latest victims

included Nomads' Richard Kemp (11-9, 11-8, 13-11) and Kevin Saunders, players with 83 and 67 per cent records respectively in the division last season. His three wins, allied to three more from Richard Upson, helped Felsted RBL A to a 7-3 win.

There was no such success for Felsted's B team, who remain rooted to the bottom after a 10-0 defeat at Rayne E.

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