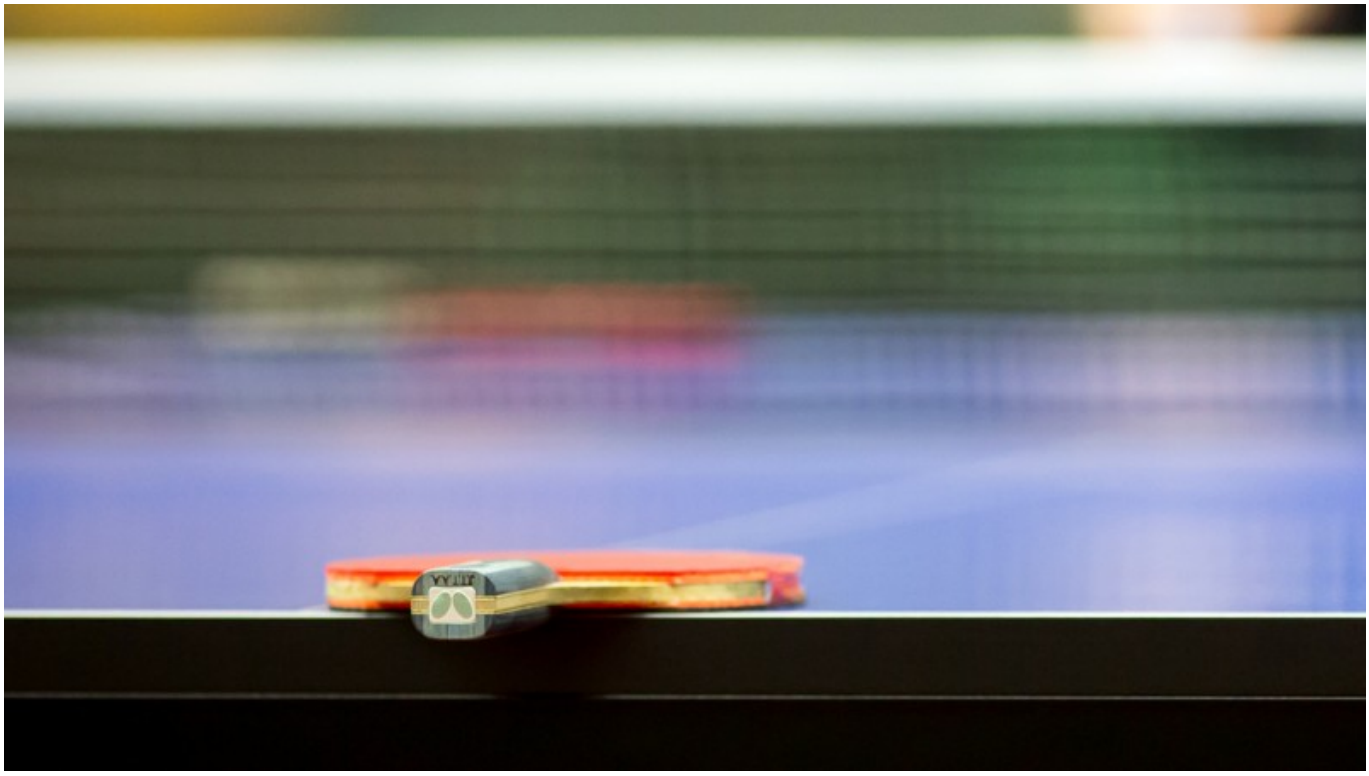


Braintree League: Baines & Cooch seal thrilling win

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It could scarcely have been tighter when Black Notley H faced Netts D in the Braintree Table Tennis League restricted cup.

After a see-sawing evening, the match score stood at 4-4 with the final doubles pairings at the table. Their set stood at two games each and they reached 10-10 in the final game.

It was only then that Notley claimed their place in the next round by winning the final two points. Declan Baines and new signing Melvyn Cooch were the winning combination.

Earlier they and Takunda Nerutanga had each won one singles. Peter Hardy won both his singles for Netts.

Netts' C team were also involved in a tight battle with Notley D, which stood at 3-3 before Notley took the next two sets.

Joe Belsom and Kierlan Richards both won one singles while Max Plumridge put up an excellent performance against the steady Sean Clift before bowing out at 11-7 in the fifth game. Sean and brother Adam both won their two singles for Notley D.

Ian Rubens won both his singles for Rayne J but Notley I came through 6-3 while David Allinson's two wins for Rayne H equally failed to affect the outcome of the match against Rayne G, which also finished 6-3.

Felsted RBL B were little troubled in overcoming Notley F 9-0.

However, it is Rayne F who look by far the strongest side in the competition. They came past Felsted A 5-3, with Dave Marsh unbeaten.

In the team knockout cup the fact that Netts A, division one runners-up last season, beat second division Notley

C 5-0 should occasion few raised eyebrows.

But the scoreline disguises the fact that the Netts team included William Bettley, who celebrated his 12th birthday only last month.

Bettley won his three singles on his division three debut earlier this season, but a 3-0 (16-14, 11-7, 11-8) victory over the formidable Gordon Fairchild, sixth in the division two individual averages last season, suggests that he would not be out of place a division higher, if Netts had a team in the second division.

Rayne B had a comfortable 5-1 win over Notley A while Notley's B team fell 6-3 to Liberal C, where Gareth Davies and Neil Freeman were unbeaten.

Alan Burgess won twice, but Rayne C could get no more against Liberal B, while Rayne A won by the curious looking score of 4-0 in a 2 v 2 battle with their own D team.

In the league division three, 13-year-old Louis Jenkins remained unbeaten on his debut for Notley I to help his team to an 8-2 victory over Notley H.

Leaders Notley E took all ten against their own G team while Mike Smith and Leon Hewitt took all seven between them as the F team beat Netts D 7-3.

Brian How maintained his unbeaten record as Rayne H beat their own I team 7-3.

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