



Braintree League: James impresses on debut

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Eight-times Colchester champion Rik James made his much anticipated debut for Sible Hedingham in the Braintree Table Tennis League, but it was not enough to lift his team off the bottom of the table.

James won his three singles with some ease against Liberal B – 11-6, 11-9, 11-4 against Mike Johnston, 11-1, 11-7, 11-9 against Adrian Pitt and 11-5, 11-6, 11-5 against Frank Neill – and led his team to a 6-4 win.

It was Hedingham's second win of the season, in contrast to the three teams above them, Liberal B, Black Notley B and Black Notley A, who have yet to win.

Liberal B's position owes much to the fact that they have played all three of the top teams, but the two Notley clubs are both just holding their heads above water after 8-2 defeats.

The B team's defeat by Netts B was not unexpected but the A team will have hoped for more against Rayne C, who started the match one point behind them.

Rayne had to call on two reserves, but when a player of Alan Burgess's standing is waiting in the wings that is no hardship. He and Peter Hance won three singles and Dave Miller chipped in with one, a notable achievement as he was playing for his own team, Rayne E, at the other end of the hall in the same evening.

Leaders Liberal A had little difficulty overcoming Rayne B 9-1 but last season's runners-up Netts A dropped to a surprise 6-4 defeat at the hands of Rayne A where Steve Pennell and Ian Whiteside won twice each.

Miller's efforts for his own team were not quite enough against division two leaders Notley C, who won 6-4 with the help of three wins from Dave Parker.

Nomads can be fairly confident of victory whenever Ken Lewis and Richard Kemp turn out in tandem and so it was against Rayne D. But Richard Whiteside's win over Kemp made sure it was a close run thing at 6-4.

Arthur Geen played up for Felsted RBL A against his own B team and took his three singles to help his temporary

team to an 8-2 victory.

Rayne G jumped above their own F team by beating them 6-4.

In division three, leaders Notley E took all 10 for the second week running, Netts D following Notley G down that path, while Leon Hewitt's three sets limited second-placed Rayne H to 7-3.

Ten-year-old Alexander Bettley made his debut for Netts C, one of the youngest players ever to play in the league. And he immediately showed he was not out of place by winning everything in his team's 10-0 win over Notley H.

Brian Dixon remained unbeaten as Rayne I beat Rayne J while Paul Martin and Louis Jenkins did likewise in Notley I's win over their own G team.

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