



Braintree League: Defeat spells curtains for Netts

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Posted On: December 19, 2016

Any lingering hopes that Netts A might have had of challenging for this year's Braintree Table Tennis League title have been pretty much extinguished after a heavy defeat to their own B team.

It was their second defeat this season by their second string and this time they only had two sets to show for their efforts, one of those an excellent win by Hannah Pitt over Maria Boulton.

After a couple of seasons out of the game, a season in division three and then a six-month absence through injury, that result – Boulton has an average of 66 per cent – and the fact that she stretched last season's men's singles finalist John Cleasby to 11-7 in the fifth game suggest that Pitt has quickly come to terms with the demands of division one.

But her team's defeat, coupled with Liberal A's third 10-0 win in a row – this time over Black Notley B – leaves them 37 points behind the leaders with only one match in hand.

Netts B are now 10 points ahead of them, level with Rayne A, who also took on their own B team but did not experience the same difficulties.

Not that it was all plain sailing. Matthew Brown and Adam Buxton both won twice for the B team and the A team needed an unbeaten hand from John Andrews, in his first match of the season, to bring them home 6-4.

The bottom of the league remains tight after Sible Hedingham's 7-3 defeat by Rayne C and Notley A's 8-2 reverse at Liberal B.

Division two's top two Rayne E and Notley C were both held to draws, by Nomads and Rayne D respectively. Ken Lewis made his fifth appearance of the season for Nomads and, as in the other four, remained unbeaten.

Rayne G have made news this year with some unexpectedly good results, but it was their turn to be on the

receiving end last week when they were held to a draw by bottom team Felsted RBL B.

Arthur Geen had good wins over Keith Flowers and Steve Willis while David Swash beat Willis and Adam Purslow. Felsted almost sneaked a win but Purslow just held on to beat Dean Wood at 16-14 in the fifth game.

Jamie Brooks' winning streak in division three has finally come to an end after 26 sets. He was beaten by Leon Hewitt in Notley E's 6-4 win over Notley F.

Surprisingly it was Hewitt's only win of the evening. Oddly, he, Mark Pritchard and Mike Smith all won once but all beat a different opponent.

Rayne's H and I teams had 10-0 wins over Notley's H and G teams respectively while Netts C dropped only one set beating their own D team, Michael Goodchild doing well to get the better of Max Plumridge.

Rayne J and Notley I had only two players each but the home side dropped only one set – Paul Martin's win over Ian Rubens – to give them a 6-3 win. Chris High was unbeaten.

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