



Clacton & District: Lions avenge cup final defeat

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No fewer than eight teams from the Nomads' Club have made it through to the third round of the **Handicap Knock-Out Cup** organised by the Clacton & District League – with pride of place going to Nomads Lions.

The Lions, last season's losing finalists, exacted a measure of revenge in their **round two** tie with a narrow 5-4 win over holders Windsor Eagles, the team which had beaten them by the exact same score eight months ago in the 2016 final.

With both teams fielding their strongest sides, and little difference in the handicaps, it developed into a keenly-fought contest. But a good all-round performance from the Lions edged them home, with Paul Hume, Adam Cuthbert and Adam Wilkin all winning a singles apiece, whilst Cuthbert shared two doubles victories with each of his partners.

Gary Cattermole was the Eagles' most successful player, taking both his singles and, with Phil Smith, sharing an 11-6 in the fifth doubles victory against Hume and Wilkin in a scratch-match. But, in the final doubles of the evening, also played off scratch, it was Hume and Cuthbert who took it 3-1 (11-6, 6-11, 11-9, 11-7) against Cattermole and John Pattrick to guarantee their place in round three.

There was another 5-4 nail-biter between Division One sides at Lawford's Ogilvy Hall where the home side surprisingly defeated Walton B. Skipper Ian Sherwood led the way, winning the opening doubles with Richard Spence and taking both his singles, including (+1) beating Paul Woolnough (-5) 3-2 (11-9, 11-7, 10-12, 9-11, 11-9) in the closest match of the evening.

Kevin James won two singles and one doubles for Walton but he failed to make it a clean sweep, Spence and Andrea Alleyne (+1) beating James and Woolnough (-3) 3-0 (11-9, 11-9, 11-9) in match nine.

In a third top-flight encounter, the title-chasing Windsor Condors' trio of Colin Stallwood, Greg Green and Felipe Rodriguez proved too strong for relegation-threatened Windsor Owls and took the tie 5-0.

Three more First Division sides made it through at the expense of Division Two opposition.

Nomads Panthers were given a tough fight by Brotherhood I before winning 5-1, three of their points coming from matches that went close in five. The most eagerly-anticipated of the encounters lived up to expectations with James Denyer (0) having to come back from two sets and 9-3 down to defeat a tiring Kris Stefanov (0) 3-2 (7-11, 8-11, 15-13, 11-8, 11-7). Denyer remained unbeaten on the night whilst Brotherhood's sole success saw Mark Ratcliffe (+1) beat John Hatley (-3) in five (11-4, 11-9, 8-11, 8-11, 11-7).

It was also 5-1 for Brotherhood B against club-mates Brotherhood H and, once again, three of their points came from matches that went the distance. Martin Edwards stayed unbeaten in his two singles and one doubles, as did John Owen in his one singles and two doubles partnered with Edwards and John Cleasby.

Andy Vincent and George Berry were Windsor Hawks' undefeated stars in their 5-2 success against Nomads Tigers. The closest match of the contest saw Berry (-3) scrape past John Marshall (+1) 3-2 (11-9, 7-11, 8-11, 11-6, 13-11).

But although the Panthers, Brotherhood B and the Hawks all prospered against lower division opposition, three teams from Division Two overcame the odds and defeated First Division opponents.

Windsor Magpies upset the formbook by beating the fancied Walton B outfit 5-3. In a good team performance, there was a singles win each for Dave Sweetland, John Plummer and Kayley Rodriguez whilst, crucially, they took both the doubles. Rodriguez (+2) administered the coup de grace in match eight against a dispirited Jason Gale (-8), winning 11-0, 11-0, 11-5.

Windsor Harriers will also feel pleased with the unexpected 5-0 winning scoreline against a Brotherhood C team without Alan Burgess but still boasting the talent of Kevin Gowlett. The closest match was – what turned out to be – the final match of the evening, Ferdy Rodriguez and Jenny Higgins (+1) beating Gowlett and Fred Gallone (-6) 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 11-2, 9-11, 11-3).

Despite playing in different divisions, five of the players in the Brotherhood D v Windsor Kestrels tie played off the same grade so it was hardly a surprise when Brotherhood won 5-1. Russell Hillier and Lee Harvey starred for the Brotherhood side, staying unbeaten.

In an all-Division Two clash, Walton C and Windsor Buzzards enjoyed a ding-dong battle before Walton staged a Lazarus-like recovery to come back from 3-1 down to win 5-3. As is often the case, Rivhu Khan held the team together by staying unbeaten in his two singles and one doubles but it was Toni Hayhow-Khan (+1) who proved the unlikely heroine, defeating Alan Rutledge (-5) 3-2 (7-11, 11-9, 9-11, 12-10, 12-10) in match eight.

But it was something of a surprise as Nomads Jaguars, languishing towards the bottom of Division Two, won 5-0 against a Brotherhood F side which is harbouring hopes of promotion. Caroline North, Kevin Hume and Allen Denyer comprised the successful Jaguars' team.

There were three Division Two v Division Three battles, with the Second Division coming out on top in two of them.

The exception was Brotherhood E's defeat at the hand of Nomads Lynx, Liam Harris staying unbeaten in their excellent 5-2 victory to leave the Brotherhood team free to concentrate on their survival struggle in the League.

Nomads Pumas, without a win in the League this season, enjoyed a first victory by defeating Division Three side Windsor Swallows 5-1. But it was a hard-fought success, with three of their five wins needing a fifth set. Eric Lemke remained unbeaten in his two singles and one doubles. The tightest matches saw Lionel Goddard (-1) beat Sue Chillingworth (+1) 3-2 (6-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-13, 11-7), and Lemke and Goddard (-1) edge past Angela Barratt and Iris Howlett (+1) also in five (7-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-7, 11-8).

However, it was a more straightforward 5-0 for Nomads Bobcats against Division Three's bottom side Brotherhood J – who'd done well to reach Round Two. The Bobcats came through unscathed despite having to retrieve some heavy handicaps.

In the first of two all-Division Three matches, second-placed Nomads Wildcats were 5-0 winners against a Walton D team hampered by Jared Chelski having to play despite suffering an ankle injury.

Finally, Nomads Ocelots will feel pleased with their victory over Windsor Kites, Arthur-Wells Garrett, Sue Lee and

Barbra Rodgers surprising themselves as much as anyone else with their 5-1 win.

So, in the next round, there will be six teams from Division One, seven from Division Two and three from Division Three – but, more remarkably, eight of Nomads' 11 League teams will feature in the next round of the cup. The Windsor club has four teams remaining in the competition, Brotherhood only two and Walton just one, whilst the sole Lawford team will continue their quest to repeat the success they had in 2005 when, as Mistley, they won the trophy.

Details about round three will be circulated to all teams remaining in the competition by Thursday January 12.

* The only League match played was in **Division One** where Windsor Kestrels pulled further away from the relegation zone with an 8-2 win over Lawford. With Lawford's two defenders absent, the match turned out to be a feast of all-out attacking play. Dave Martin was unbeaten for the Kestrels whilst John Harvey and Colin Beaumont each contributed a couple, as did James Tindle for the losers. The two closest matches saw Martin defeat John Colvin 11-5 in the fifth and Harvey edge past Ian Sherwood 11-9 in the fifth.

* The first of the League's Tournaments, the Handicapped Singles, takes place Saturday February 4 at Windsor's St James Hall. Entries, with the entry fee of £3, can be sent to Tony Oswick or made on-line to pwhite@clactontabletennis.com with the entry fee payable on the day. The closing date is Monday January 29.

Results

Knockout Cup, round 2

Windsor Kestrels 1 Brotherhood D 5
Windsor Magpies 5 Walton B 3
Brotherhood J 0 Nomads Bobcats 5
Windsor Condors 5 Windsor Owls 0
Nomads Wildcats 5 Walton D 0
Brotherhood I 1 Nomads Panthers 5
Walton C 5 Windsor Buzzards 3
Nomads Lynx 5 Brotherhood E 2
Lawford 5 Walton A 4
Brotherhood B 5 Brotherhood H 1
Nomads Lions 5 Windsor Eagles 4
Brotherhood C 0 Windsor Harriers 5
Windsor Hawks 5 Nomads Tigers 2
Windsor Kites 1 Nomads Ocelots 5
Brotherhood F 0 Nomads Jaguars 5
Windsor Swallows 1 Nomads Pumas 5

League

Division 1

Lawford 2 Windsor Kestrels 8

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