



Braintree League: Rare defeats for champions

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Paul Davison and Peter Hayden, who between them have won the men's singles nine times in the last 10 years, slumped to surprise defeats on successive days in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Davison, beaten only once this season, lost to Rayne A's Steve Pennell, who won the title the year before the pair's domination began, while an out-of-sorts Hayden lost twice in one match, his first defeats of the season.

Netts A's Davison began the evening with a struggle to get past Ian Whiteside, which he managed only at 11-7 in the final game, before running into Pennell at his most dogged. The set again went the full distance before Pennell clinched it at 3-2 (5-11, 11-7, 11-13, 12-10, 11-6).

Davison beat Jon Hill but Rayne won the rest for a crushing 8-2 win over the 2015 champions.

An out-of-sorts Hayden was beaten by Hector Rogers in the match against Rayne B, then rallied to beat Adam Buxton, but fell apart again against Paul Lombardi.

Rogers also beat Scott Dowsett while Buxton got the better of Simon Webber and the two combined to win the doubles to prevent Liberal A winning for the first time this season.

At the other end of the division, both Black Notley teams picked up four points to leave them level with Sible Hedingham, who were without a match.

Notley A were indebted to Chris Parr, who won his three singles for the first time this season, plus the doubles with Zach Harrington, in their 6-4 defeat by Rayne C, while an excellent win for Victor Chan over Andy Holmes was the highlight of the B team's defeat by the same score by Netts B.

Rayne E's hopes of establishing supremacy in the promotion race in division two was thwarted when they were beaten 6-4 by Notley C, for whom Dave Parker was unbeaten.

Liberal C, who also have their eyes on the title, were held to a draw by Notley D, where Sean Clift was unbeaten.

In any other week, Adam Purslow might have grabbed the headlines with an outstanding win over leading division two player Dave Marsh, arguably the best result of his career. He did it in four games too, as Rayne G beat their F team 7-3.

Purslow won all three and Keith Flowers came within inch of joining him, losing to Marsh only at 12-10 in the fifth game.

Kevin Saunders and Richard Kemp shared the wins between them as Nomads beat Rayne D 6-4.

Division three leaders Rayne H were surprisingly held to a draw by Notley F. Brian How won his usual three sets for Rayne but two each from Mike Smith and Leon Hewitt and one from Keller Pritchard Green gave Notley a share of the points.

Erstwhile leaders Notley E were the latest team to feel the might of the double prong of Derek Kennard and Joe Meleschko at Netts D. With Michael Goodchild also chiming in with a set, Netts won 8-2.

Notley I took nine sets off their own G team while Rayne J's new signing Russell Forde's unbeaten evening led his team to a 6-4 win over their own I team.

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