



Braintree League: Hasler and Gowers in spotlight

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Roger Hasler and Tim Gowers are used to finding themselves playing second or third fiddle to their colleagues in the Braintree Table Tennis League. But both had their moment in the sun in their recent matches.

Gowers has spent the past few years playing in the shadow of Charles Wilkinson and Tony Stredder and this year of Brian How in Rayne's H team in division three. But in the 8-2 win over Black Notley H, it was he who held the side together with his three singles while Dave Allinson and Peter Taylor lost to Steve Baines and Takunda Nerutanga respectively.

Hasler also usually finds himself outscored by his colleagues at Rayne I. But not in their match against Notley G where he won his three singles, for only the second time this season, while two wins from Alan Cook and one from Nguyen Tran prevented his colleagues following suit in the 7-3 win.

Notley G and Rayne I played each other two weeks running following an earlier postponement, but the result of both matches was the same. In the second match, Tim Townsend, Brian Dixon and Ernst Midl all won twice but each lost to a different opponent.

Elsewhere in division three there were two good performances in losing causes, Leon Hewitt taking his three sets in Notley F's 7-3 defeat by Notley E and Liam Ebbs following suit in Notley I's 6-4 reverse against Rayne J. Leaders Netts C had an untroubled 10-0 win over their own D team.

The balance at the top of the second division has shifted slightly after Liberal C's 6-4 defeat by Felsted RBL A. Richard Upson was unbeaten for Felsted. It leaves them 12 points behind Rayne E with only one match in hand.

Rayne became the first team this season to beat a Nomads side with Ken Lewis playing. Lewis won his three singles as usual but a win for Kevin Saunders over Steve Siggs was Nomads' only other success.

Notley C moved seven points ahead of Rayne E, but from two more matches, with an 8-2 win over Rayne D, in

which Mick Richardson was undefeated.

Rayne G had an 8-2 win over bottom team Felsted B while Sean Clift had one of his best evenings of the season when he took his three singles in Notley D's draw with Rayne F, including a surprisingly convincing 3-0 (11-5, 11-2, 11-8) victory over Dave Marsh, currently behind only the unbeaten Lewis in the division's averages.

The second round of the handicap knockout cup has resulted in three Rayne teams, two each from Notley and Netts and one from Felsted making it to the quarter-finals.

Rayne A are the only first division team left in the competition after they came back from 4-2 to beat Notley F 5-4. Three wins from Lee McHugh, giving away between 12 and 15 points up to 21, were instrumental in seeing them through.

Rayne G were also taken to 5-4 before progressing and it was Keith Flowers' win over Kevin Saunders, off scratch, that was the clincher.

Felsted A, 8-1 winners over Rayne E, and Notley C, who beat Felsted B 7-2, are the other second division teams through.

The third division, which often provides the winners, will be represented by leaders and cup holders Netts C, who beat Notley D 6-0, Rayne H, 8-1 winners over Rayne F, Netts D, who beat Sible Hedingham 6-1 (three wins for Michael Goodchild) and Notley H, who beat their own B team 5-3.

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