



Braintree League: Netts ready to move up

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Netts C now have one hand and several fingers on the Braintree Table Tennis League division three trophy after dispatching their closest rivals Rayne H 9-1.

They now stand 18 points clear of Rayne with a match in hand and can safely look forward to division two next season.

Rayne were without Brian How, their leading player, and, apart from Charles Wilkinson's win over Kierlan Richards, could make little impact.

Both Max Plumridge and Joe Belsom were unbeaten, in Plumridge's case for the seventh match in a row.

Third-placed Black Notley E were held to a draw by their own I team, who had only two players. Three wins from Liam Ebbs and two from Paul Martin gave them a share of the points.

Joe Meleschko, whose unbeaten run is even longer than Plumridge's, led Netts D to a 6-4 win over Rayne I while Notley F beat Notley G 10-0 and Declan Baines took his three singles in Notley H's 8-2 win over Rayne J.

Division two remains the most intriguing contest and Rayne E sneaked one point further ahead of Liberal C after beating Notley D 8-2 while their rivals were restricted to a 7-3 win over Rayne D. Sean Clift gained Notley D's two points but could not find a way past Dave Miller while Jon Fieldsend was unbeaten for Liberal.

Notley C's fading hopes of making a pitch for the title receded even further after a draw with Rayne F where Dave Marsh became the first person this season to beat Mick Richardson.

Felsted RBL A took seven points from Rayne G and there was an encouraging result for their B team, who ended a run of five defeats with a draw against Nomads. Arthur Geen won twice but Kevin Saunders was unbeaten for Nomads.

Division one leaders Liberal A had to work hard for their 6-4 win over Netts B. Brandon Crouchman, beaten only

by Rik James in his 44 sets this season, found himself two games to one down to Andy Holmes and reached deuce in the fourth, but rallied to win 3-2 (11-8, 6-11, 8-11, 12-10, 11-8).

Holmes did, however, beat both Simon Webber and Scott Dowsett, Maria Boulton beat Webber and the two combined to win the doubles against Crouchman and Dowsett, Crouchman's first doubles defeat of the season.

Second-placed Rayne A had an 8-2 win over their own C team where Steve Pennell was the only one to beat Peter Hance, while Netts A beat Liberal B 7-3.

At the lower end of the table, Notley B have made life more interesting for their A team by recording only their second win of the season to move to within two points of safety. Three wins from Victor Chan and two from Glen Laing gave them a 6-4 victory over Sible Hedingham while the A team lost 8-2 to Rayne B.

Unusually Guy McKenzie was the only member of the A team to record a singles win in that match, 12-10 in the fifth over Paul Lombardi.

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