



Braintree League: Punt the marathon man

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In an impressive feat of endurance, Dave Punt played in two matches in one evening in the Braintree Table Tennis League – and won five of his six singles, two of them in a rare excursion into division one.

Not only that, he also played in one doubles set, and was on the winning side there too.

Punt, one of the very few players whose Braintree League career stretches back to the 1960s, was representing his own Rayne E team in division two when the call came to help out the club's C team, who were playing on an adjacent table at Black Notley Community Association.

No problem, said Punt, moving from table to table and sweeping almost all before him. His three wins for Rayne E came in a 7-3 win against Notley C, where he was the only one to beat Gordon Fairchild. He also joined Dave Miller in winning the doubles.

Stepping up to the first division, he cast aside both Zach Harrington and Guy McKenzie and found only Chris Parr too much for him. With three wins from Alan Burgess, the C team beat Notley A 6-4. The result was a significant one for Notley A as it took the back above their B team, who lost 10-0 to Netts B, at the bottom of the table.

At the top end, Liberal A confirmed what has long been a foregone conclusion and clinched their third league title in four years. They beat Rayne B 8-2 in a match that saw the end of Hector Rogers' fine run of 15 sets without defeat. Simon Webber and Brandon Crouchman got the better of him.

Netts A probably have too much to do to equal last season's second place, but they had a creditable 6-4 win over Rayne A, their likely successors in the runners-up spot, with only two players. Paul Davison won three singles, James Mullane two and they won the doubles.

Chris Buer won three singles in straight games in Netts B's 7-3 win over Liberal B while Adrian Pitt was unbeaten in Liberal B's earlier draw with Sible Hedingham.

A surprise defeat for Liberal C, 6-4 at the hands of second from bottom Notley D, pushed their division two

promotion hopes further into the realms of the unlikely.

Sean Clift won three and brother Adam almost joined him. He won twice and missed out only at 3-2 (11-9, 11-5, 5-11, 9-11, 9-11) against Garry Fryatt, a player with an 80 per cent average.

In addition to their win over Notley C, Rayne E also beat Felsted RBL B 8-2, Steve Siggs unbeaten this time, and have opened up a 24-point lead over Liberal C, who have only two matches in hand.

Other results: Rayne D 8 Rayne G 2; Rayne F 6 Rayne G 4; Rayne D 3 Nomads 7.

In division three, Brian How, beaten only once this season, tumbled twice in the same evening, beaten by Leon Hewitt and also in an outstanding performance by 16-year-old Keller Pritchard Green, a player in his first season of competitive table tennis. Their wins helped Notley F to beat Rayne H 7-3.

Other results: Notley E 9 Netts D 1; Rayne I 7 Rayne J 1; Netts C 9 Notley H 1; Notley G 4 Notley I 6.

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