



Braintree League: Liberal find winning Brand

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Once it became clear that Brandon Crouchman intended to play regularly for Liberal A, there was very little doubt where the Braintree Table Tennis League title would end up this year.

Crouchman, 21, had dipped his toe in the water last season in winning 12 out of 12, but played a full part this season, missing only eight of his team's 27 matches and winning all but one of his sets – and that was in one of only two appearances this season by former Chelmsford and Colchester champion Rik James.

Allied to strong performances from his regular team-mates Scott Dowsett and Simon Webber and occasional appearances from Peter Hayden, it produced the most comfortable of Liberal A's three title wins in the last four years – last season they won by nine points and in 2014 by 16 points. This time it was a massive 45 points.

Rayne A, second in 2014 but fourth for the past two years, climbed back up to claim the runners-up spot again as Netts A, champions in 2015 and second last year, dropped back.

Instead it was Netts' B team who stole the club honours, finishing third, one place above their A team, and winning the team knockout cup after knocking their A team out in the semi-final.

The fight to avoid relegation was largely an internecine affair between the two Black Notley teams, although Sible Hedingham, Rayne C and even Liberal B flirted with the lower spots for a while.

In the end it looked quite comfortable thanks to a walkover from Hedingham, but with three matches to go there was only one point in it and the A team finally saved themselves with a 7-3 win over the B team in what presumably should be called a 20-pointer.

For a time divisions two and three looked like producing tight finishes but Rayne E in division two and Netts C in division three gradually took their divisions by the scruff of the neck and surged away as the season progressed.

With 16 matches played the division two title could have gone one of three ways. Rayne E were on 101 with Black Notley C and Liberal C both on 98.

But Rayne then shifted up a gear and won their remaining 10 matches to leave the others in their wake, Liberal C, sadly, leaving three matches unplayed.

Netts C's run was even more impressive. They could field only two players for their first match and lost 8-2 to Notley E and then in their fourth match were held to a draw by Rayne H.

For a time it was those two teams who fought out the top spot, but once Netts C got going, they did so in earnest, winning everything from match seven onwards.

Rayne H and Notley E continued to keep each other company and in the end Rayne just held out by two points to claim the runners-up spot.

	Division 1					
	P	W	D	L	A	P
Liberal A	27	26	1	0	52	218
Rayne A	27	19	2	6	97	173
Netts B	27	16	2	9	103	167
Netts A	27	16	3	8	108	162
Rayne B	27	13	7	7	125	145
Liberal B	27	6	6	15	153	117
Rayne C	27	8	3	16	168	102
Sible Hedingham	27	8	2	17	175	95
Black Notley A	27	4	2	21	177	93
Black Notley B	27	3	4	20	192	78

	Division 2					
	P	W	D	L	A	P
Rayne E	26	18	5	3	78	182
Black Notley C	27	18	3	6	100	170
Nomads	27	13	3	11	123	147
Liberal C	24	14	4	6	95	145
Rayne F	27	9	8	10	136	134
<u>Felsted RBL A</u>	27	12	7	8	137	133
Rayne D	26	9	6	11	139	121
Black Notley D	27	5	6	16	161	109
Rayne G	26	7	5	14	153	107
<u>Felsted RBL B</u>	27	2	3	22	198	72

	Division 3					
	P	W	D	L	A	P
Netts C	26	23	2	1	51	209
Rayne H	27	19	4	4	87	183
Black Notley E	27	19	2	6	89	181
Black Notley I (3)	27	11	5	11	137	129
Black Notley F	27	11	3	13	141	129
Netts D	27	11	2	14	146	124
Black Notley H	26	12	3	11	138	122
Rayne I	27	9	0	18	159	111
Rayne J (3)	27	7	2	18	160	106
Black Notley G	27	0	1	26	231	39

Figures in brackets indicate points lost for late scorecards

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/local-news/braintree-league-liberal-find-winning-brand/>