



## Braintree League: Felsted aim to bounce back quickly

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Felsted RBL C are clearly determined that their stay in division three of the Braintree Table Tennis League will be a short one.

Relegated last year, Andy Laws and Dean Wood have been joined by Nick Butler, who had originally been slated to play in division two until the club were forced to withdraw their B team.

For the second match running all three players remained unbeaten – and this was a potentially tough fixture against last season's third placed team Black Notley E.

Notley's decisive 3-0 (11-3, 11-9, 11-3) win in the doubles was a bit of a curio as Felsted took the rest to open up an eight-point gap at the top.

In the only other match in the division Joshua Akparanta took his three singles for Notley H for the second successive match but again finished on the losing side, Rayne J taking all the rest.

Felsted's A team are also looking strong in division two. Ian Butler turned out for the first time this season and helped his team to a 9-1 win over Rayne G.

Notley B continue to lead the way after their 8-2 win over their own D team although Adam Clift can be pleased with his win over Gordon Fairchild.

Liberal C also recorded their third win, but they needed three singles from Jon Fieldsend to overcome Nomads 6-4.

Rayne E are also looking lively. Richard Whiteside and Laurie Sapiano remained unbeaten as they beat Netts D 9-1.

In division one it was a case of meet the new Peter Hayden, same as the old Peter Hayden.

Having been forced to abandon his normal fast blocking game, Hayden took to the table with his new anti-loop bat and promptly won his three singles for Liberal A against Netts B while his team-mates Scott Dowsett and Simon Webber both lost to Chris Buer. They lost the doubles as well to make it 7-3.

The new-look Rayne A are the early leaders after a third convincing win, this time 9-1 over their own B team. Hector Rogers and Adam Buxton were unbeaten while John Andrews' win over Steve Pennell was the B team's only consolation.

Lucy Wang was unbeaten in her second match for Notley A but Liberal B took the rest.

Rayne D's hopes of avoiding an immediate return to division two took a serious knock when they could take only one point from their match against Rayne C, one of the teams they will have hoped to compete against.

Dave Miller beat Matthew Brown but Paul Lombardi and Keith Martin won their three singles, Lombardi's first unbeaten evening since his return to the first division three years ago.

\* Long-time Braintree Table Tennis League division one player and former league title winner Dave Willoughby has died. He was 79.

Dave was a member of the Crittall Witham side that won the league title in 1974, ending a six-year monopoly of the title by the company's Braintree-based team Crittall A.

He was in the illustrious company of men's singles champion Colin Hughes and former Chelmsford champion Charlie Wheeler, who finished first and third in that year's individual averages, but Dave played his full part, finishing ninth in the averages with 67 per cent.

He then spent a year with the ill-fated Bocking End team before moving to Crittall and then to Witham FC before retiring around 30 years ago.

Dave was a natural striker of the ball and played the game in a laid-back relaxed manner – always in a pair of jeans – an approach that won him many friends on and off the table.

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