



Braintree League: Stuttering Liberal under pressure

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Another 10 points for Rayne A and some surprising points dropped by Liberal A have tightened up the top of the table in the Braintree Table Tennis League to just two points.

Rayne's win over their own D team occasioned little surprise but champions Liberal A, after a storming start, have stalled somewhat in their last three matches, dropping a total of 10 points in that time despite keeping up their 100 per cent win record.

Their latest encounter was with Rayne C where they needed a solid performance from Simon Webber to see them through to their 11th win of the season.

Webber won his three singles but wins for Lee McHugh and Peter Hance over Peter Hayden and for McHugh and Keith Martin over reserve Robin Armstrong meant their win was restricted to 6-4.

Their 100 per cent record came under fire more than once. Both Webber and Armstrong needed five games to overcome Hance while the doubles was a perilously close 3-2 (11-6, 10-12, 8-11, 11-9, 11-8).

Alan Burgess, Adam Buxton and Steve Pennell took the 10 points for Rayne A.

Netts A slipped four points further adrift of Rayne A when they beat their own B team 6-4. Paul Davison took his three singles, John Cleasby two and they combined to win the doubles.

At the other end of the table Black Notley A jumped above Netts C after beating them by the unexpectedly convincing margin of 9-1. Lucy Wang, in her first match for some weeks, and Chris Parr were unbeaten while James Mullane picked up Netts' sole point with a win over Victor Chan.

It was the other end of the table that provided the talking point in division two when bottom team Notley C had a thumping 8-2 victory over Rayne F. Glen Laing was unbeaten while Tim Huxtable and Leon Hewitt picked up two

each. Hewitt's first double at this level included a particularly notable victory over Dave Moles, sixth in last season's individual averages.

Two other teams involved in the dogfight at the bottom, Rayne G and Notley D, came up against each other and it was the former who edged home 6-4, thanks to three sets from Steve Siggs.

Netts E, also in the mix at the wrong end, could only muster one point against promotion challengers Rayne E, while Netts D went two better against Nomads, for whom Kevin Saunders was unbeaten.

Liberal C kept up their promotion challenge with a 7-3 win over a strong Felsted RBL A side. Garry Fryatt was unbeaten.

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