



Braintree League: Liberal pair top averages

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The reason for this season's closer than expected title race in the Braintree Table Tennis League can be seen in the end-year individual averages.

Rayne A, just five points behind leaders Liberal A, have all four of their players in the top 12 – Adam Buxton at four, Steve Pennell seven, Hector Rogers nine and Alan Burgess at 12.

Liberal have all four of their players in the top dozen too and while there is little surprise in seeing men's singles champion Brandon Crouchman at No 1, it has been the improved form of Simon Webber, up from eighth at the end of last season to second place now, that has underpinned the team's success.

The returning Lucy Wang makes an impressive entry at three, while former men's champions Paul Davison and Peter Hayden are both down three places.

A champion from an earlier vintage – he won his first title in 1979 – Terry Dowsett makes a welcome return at eight.

The strength of Black Notley B's reserves is highlighted by Steve Noble's place at the top with Paul Nicol fourth in division two, while Felsted RBL C's domination of division three puts their three regular performers in the top four.

Both Dean Wood and Nick Butler lost to Peter Taylor in the first match of the season and have remained unbeaten since while Andy Laws has tasted defeat only five times.

Individual averages at the end of 2017 (qualification one third of team's matches.):

Division 1 (positions at the end of last season in brackets): 1 (1) Brandon Crouchman 21-23, 91.3 per cent; 2 (8) Simon Webber 29-32, 90.6; 3 (-) Lucy Wang 16-18, 88.9; 4 (10) Adam Buxton 26-30, 86.7; 5 (2) Paul Davison 12-14, 85.7; 6 (3) Peter Hayden 19-23, 82.6; 7 (9) Steve Pennell 22-27, 81.5; 8 (-) Terry Dowsett 11-14, 78.6; 9= (-) Lee McHugh 14-18, (11) Hector Rogers 21-27, 77.8; 11 (6) Scott Dowsett 13-17, 76.5; 12 (5) Alan Burgess 16-21, 76.2; 13 (14) Ian Whiteside 17-23, 73.9; 14= (4) Andy Holmes 22-30, (-) Chris Buer 11-15 73.3; 16 (-) Gus Heath 13-18, 72.2; 17 (-)

John Cleasby 10-14, 71.4; 18 (16) Matthew Brown 12-17, 70.6; 19= (12) Maria Boulton 10-15, (17) Ryan Pitt, 16-24, 66.7.

Division 2: 1 Steve Noble 12-12, 100; 2 Dean Andrews 17-18, 94.4; 3 Glen Laing 14-15, 93.3; 4= Richard Kemp 15-18, Richard Whiteside 15-18, Patrice Elonge 10-12, Paul Nicol 10-12, 83.3; 8 Dave Marsh 21-27, 77.8; 9 Richard Baxter 16-21, 76.2; 10= Gordon Fairchild, Garry Fryatt 25-33, 75.7.

Division 3: 1 Dean Wood 26-27, 96.3; 2 Nick Butler 23-24, 95.8; 3 Stewart Ireland 15-18, 83.3; 4 Andy Laws 21-26, 80.8; 5 Brian How 20-26, 76.9; 6 Jill Canning 9-12, 75; 7 Alan Billing 20-27, 74.0; 8 Takunda Nerutanga 26-36, 72.2; 9= Jamie Brooks, Peter Taylor 15-21, 71.4.

Results of recent matches:

Division 1: Netts B 7 Rayne C 3 (Lee McHugh three wins for Rayne C); Netts A 4 Liberal B 6 (a good win for Mike Johnston over Andy Holmes); Black Noltey A 3 Rayne A 7 (Steve Pennell the only one to beat Lucy Wang); Rayne D 2 Rayne B 8.

Division 3: Rayne I 1 Notley F 9; Netts F 0 Rayne H 10; Rayne J 7 Notley H 3; Rayne I 7 Netts F 3; Notley H 2 Rayne H 8; Notley F 3 Notley E 7 (three wins for Stewart Ireland); Rayne J 5 Notley G 5.

The last match was probably most notable for the set between Ian Rubens and John Wickins, whose combined ages total 164.

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