



Clacton & District: Brotherhood back from brink

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Round Two of the Handicap Knock-Out Cup produced its usual mix of close matches and surprises but it was Second Division Brotherhood H who produced the performance of the Round, coming back from the brink of defeat to beat Division Three Windsor Penguins 5-4.

The unfancied Penguins came out of the traps like a greyhound and raced into a shock 4-1 interval lead. But Brotherhood, re-energised by their mid-session refreshments, turned the tie on its head to take the final three singles before Mark Ratcliffe and Frank Burbidge (-8) sealed the win with a 3-0 (11-7, 11-4, 11-6) doubles victory over Alan Charman and Jackie Bunce (+2)

Ratcliffe was Brotherhood's best player on the night, winning two singles, with Burbidge and Woody Fitzpatrick taking one each. For the Penguins, Sue Chillingworth won her two doubles and a singles, with Bunce taking the other singles victory.

Elsewhere, four teams from lower divisions surprised higher-ranked opposition, with pride of place going to Division Two strugglers Windsor Magpies who ousted Division One high-flyers and reigning Cup-holders Windsor Condors by a convincing 5-1 score-line. Dave Sweetland and Kayley Rodriguez were unbeaten on the night.

Second Division Brotherhood I also played well to defeat top-flight Walton B 5-3, Fred Gallone winning two singles and a doubles, whilst Paul Alden and Graham Parkes each won a singles and a doubles for the victors.

Two teams from the bottom of Division Three kept the flag flying for the underdogs by eliminating Second Division sides.

Robbie Strutt, Iris Howlett and Mark Lamb of Windsor Swallows made full use of their handicap advantage to sweep past Walton D 5-0, Howlett's (+1) 11-8 in the decider win over Toni Hayhow-Khan (-3) the only match which was extended to a fifth set.

It was slightly tougher for Nomads Ocelots, winning two of the three matches which went the distance to knock

out Windsor Harriers 5-2. Arthur Wells-Garrett was unbeaten whilst Dominic Joannou won a singles and a doubles. Sue Lee was successful in both her doubles.

On paper, the all-Division One clash between Brotherhood B and Walton A looked like being a close-run affair but it was Brotherhood who came up trumps, winning 5-2. Gracie Edwards won both her singles, Martin Edwards and John Owen one each, with Gracie Edwards and Owen sharing a doubles win.

It was bad night all-round for the Walton Club with only one of their five teams, Walton C, making it through to the next Round by defeating Windsor Hawks 5-1 in another top-flight clash. The Hawks took the first doubles of the evening but thereafter it was a clean sweep for Walton C, Graham Buxton staying unbeaten. The closest match of the evening was the final match played, Newbould (+2) clinching the win with a 3-2 (7-11, 7-11, 11-5, 11-9, 12-10) success against Andy Vincent (-6).

The only all-Division Two encounter turned out to be a nail-biting classic between two evenly-matched teams. Phil Wolski and John Hockley (-1) secured the 5-4 victory for Nomads Tigers with a last-gasp 3-2 (6-11, 11-7, 11-8, 7-11, 11-8) win in the final doubles over Brotherhood F's Barry Allen and Lee Allen (+1).

Five of the nine matches went the distance, the opening doubles setting the tone for the evening when Hockley and Eric Lemke beat Lee Allen and Sandie Krelle 17-15 in the decider in a match played off scratch. In her first appearance of the season after injury lay-off, Sandie showed she'd lost none of her old magic, winning two singles and one doubles. But the all-round performance of the Tigers saw them home – just.

Last season's beaten finalists Nomads Panthers made it through 5-3 after hard-fought resistance from Division Two side Nomads Jaguars. Sam Hume was unbeaten on the night with John Hatley winning a singles and doubles, and Colin Webber one doubles.

Division One also defeated Division Two in a Windsor derby, the Kestrels beating the Buzzards 5-1, Dave Martin unbeaten. But the scoreline disguises two tight matches which, had they gone the other way, might well have influenced the final result.

In the opening doubles, Dave Martin and Colin Beaumont (-8) edged past Alan Rutledge and Buzzards' reserve Chris Simson (+1) 12-10 in the fifth whilst Beaumont (-6) scraped past Rutledge (+1) by an even closer 15-13 in the fifth. Had the Buzzards taken both those matches, the match-score would have been level at 2-all rather than 4-0 to the Kestrels.

Two teams from Division Two beat teams from Division Three but neither found it easy.

Lawford were 5-2 victors against Nomads Caracals but the match turned out to be quite a marathon, as exemplified by match seven which saw Paul Hewitt (-8) struggle to defeat Vic Little (+1) 3-2 (11-9, 8-11, 5-11, 14-12, 18-16). Hewitt won both his singles and a doubles, Ian Sherwood one singles and two doubles, and John Colvin a doubles.

Brotherhood E suffered early worries against Brotherhood J when they found themselves 3-1 down. But, using their considerable experience, they rallied to take the next four matches to win 5-3. Duncan Dunne was undefeated in his two singles and one doubles.

Nomads Lions, Brotherhood D and Nomads Pumas all go through to the next round after their opponents conceded their respective matches. With regard to the 16th tie, no scoresheet had been received by the due date for the Nomads Lynx v Brotherhood G match and the winners thus face possible elimination from the competition.

Details about Round Three, to be played during week commencing 5th February, will be circulated to all teams remaining in the competition by Monday 22nd January.

* The first of the League's Tournaments, the Handicapped Singles, takes place Saturday 3rd February at Windsor's St James Hall. Play starts at 10am. Entries, with the entry fee of £3, can be sent to Tony Oswick or made online to pwhite@clactontabletennis.com with the entry fee payable on the day. Entries will be limited to 40 players and taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Full details have been sent to all players. The closing date

is Sunday 28th January.

RESULTS

Knock-Out Cup Round 2

Brotherhood I 5 Walton B 3

Windsor Swallows 5 Walton D 0

Windsor Kestrels 5 Windsor Buzzards 1

Nomads Ocelots 5 Windsor Harriers 2

Brotherhood B 5 Walton A 2

Brotherhood 5 Brotherhood J 3

Nomads Tigers 5 Brotherhood F 4

Windsor Penguins 4 Brotherhood H 5

Lawford 5 Nomads Caracals 2

Windsor Magpies 5 Windsor Condors 1

Nomads Panthers 5 Nomads Jaguars 3

Walton C 5 Windsor Hawks 1

Nomads Lions walk-over (v Windsor Eagles)

Brotherhood D walk-over (v Brotherhood C)

Nomads Pumas walk-over (v Walton E)

Nomads Lynx v Brotherhood G (result not to hand)

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