



Clacton & District: Kestrels' relief after cup thriller

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Windsor Kestrels of Division One survived their Handicap Knock-Out Cup Round Three tie against Windsor Swallows – but only just.

The Kestrels were cruising at 3-0 and then 4-2. But the Swallows, struggling at the bottom of Division Three, dug in tenaciously and fought to take the tie into the deciding doubles which Dave Martin and John Harvey (-8) edged 3-2 (11-6, 6-11, 9-11, 11-8, 11-3) for the Kestrels in a nervy five-setter against Angela Barratt and Robbie Strutt (+1).

In retrospect, the Kestrels will reflect on the importance of winning the first doubles of the night, a narrow 3-2 (7-11, 6-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-8) victory for Martin and Graham Bunce (-8) against Strutt and Ashley Ivell (+2). Indeed, the Kestrels were indebted to the good form of former skipper Martin who remained unbeaten in both singles and doubles. Strutt won his two singles for the gallant losers.

One Third Division side did make it through to the next round, Nomads Pumas causing a minor upset by beating Division Two side Brotherhood I 5-2. Alan Dockerill and John Bowers were unbeaten. The Pumas took both matches which went the distance, Dockerill and Lionel Goddard (+1) defeating Graham Parkes and Fred Gallone (-6) 9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 10-12, 11-4 in the opening doubles, whilst Dockerill (+2) sealed the victory in match seven with an 11-6, 7-11, 10-12, 12-10, 11-6 success against Paul Alden (-8).

There was also something of a surprise at the Red Triangle Annex where the last remaining Walton side in the competition, Walton C of Division One, unceremoniously crashed out 5-0 to Nomads Tigers of Division Two. Phil Wolski, Daryl Lott and Eric Lemke were the Nomads' winners.

In the only all-First Division clash, Nomads Lions beat Brotherhood D 5-2, Ethan Lloyd undefeated. The Lions won both matches which went to five, Ethan and Jason Lloyd (-1) beating Lee Harvey and Scott Campbell (+1) 11-9 in the decider, and Arran Hutchinson (-3) beating Harvey (+1) 11-6 in the decider.

The all-Brotherhood clash saw the 'H' team of Division Two win 5-1 against the 'G' team of Division Three. In a hard-fought match, closer than the scoreline might suggest, Frank Burbidge was the only player to remain unbeaten.

There was hardly a whisker between the grades of the six players in the all-Second Division clash between Windsor Magpies and Brotherhood E but it was the Magpies who emerged victorious 5-2. Both Dave Sweetland and Kayley Rodriguez were undefeated.

Round Four of the competition takes place during week commencing 5th March. The draw will be circulated to team secretaries by 19th February at the latest.

* In the Division Three Handicap Challenge competition, a potential crunch match between the two unbeaten teams at the top of Group One proved an anti-climax when Nomads Ocelots failed to appear against Brotherhood G, thus conceding the match and allowing the Brotherhood side to take a firm grip on the group.

The other match in the group was between the two teams without a win so far and it was Nomads Leopards who took the honours 8-1 against a Windsor Swallows' side obviously fatigued after their Cup efforts. Stuart Wilkinson and Dave Wright were unbeaten for the Leopards with only a win for Diane Self (+1) over Norman Jacobs (-5) sparing the Swallows' blushes.

There was a similar 8-1 result for a Nomads team against a Windsor team in Group Two where the Lynx defeated the Penguins. Doug Green and Liam Harris stayed unbeaten, with Cameron Cini taking one singles and sharing two doubles. The Penguins' sole success was an 11-9 in the fifth win for Paul Dale (-5) over Cini (+1), the same score by which Green and Cini (-1) beat Jackie Bunce and Sue Chillingworth (+1) in the only other match which went the distance.

The result means there are now three teams – the Lynx, the Penguins and Brotherhood J – linked together on four points at the top of the Group, with Brotherhood having a match in hand.

* Older members of the League will be saddened to learn of the death of former player Dave Johns. Dave died suddenly last week, aged 77, after suffering a heart attack. A native Devonian, he was a regular player in the Clacton League for over 40 years, mostly with the Brotherhood Club in Divisions One and Two.

Dave was never a star performer but he always gave his all whenever he picked up a table tennis bat. Off the table, he was a friendly, sociable man, proud of his family. His last season in the Clacton League was in 2005/2006, leaving the area to move to Aylsham in Norfolk. He continued to play table tennis in the North Norfolk League and, in his later years, earned himself the nickname of 'five-set Dave' because so many of his matches went the distance.

The League sends its sincere condolences to his wife Janet, his children and grandchildren.

RESULTS

Knock-Out Cup Round 3

Brotherhood I 2 Nomads Pumas 5

Windsor Kestrels 5 Windsor Swallows 4

Brotherhood H 5 Brotherhood G 1

Walton C 0 Nomads Tigers 5

Brotherhood E 2 Windsor Magpies 5

Nomads Lions 5 Brotherhood D 2

Nomads Panthers w/o v Lawford

Division Three Handicap Challenge

Group One

Nomads Leopards 8 Windsor Swallows 1

Brotherhood G 9 Nomads Ocelots 0 (walk-over)

Group Two

Nomads Lynx 8 Nomads Penguins 1

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