



Braintree League: Notley nearly there

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It may have been their first failure to win in 14 matches, but Black Notley B's draw with Liberal C means that the Braintree Table Tennis League second division trophy is almost certainly heading in their direction.

They need just five points in their remaining match against Netts E, a team who have conceded at least three points in every match so far.

And that will only be relevant if Liberal C win their remaining four matches by something like 10-0 or 9-1. As they have to play third-placed Rayne E, not to mention Felsted RBL A and Rayne F, always tough opponents, and the reviving Notley C, that is likely to be several bridges too far.

The match between Notley B and Liberal C was as tight as one would expect, with four sets going the full five games. It was Jon Fieldsend who was mostly responsible for Notley not adding to their wins total. He won his three singles and partnered Gareth Davies in winning the doubles, while Davies's win over Dave Parker gave Liberal their final point.

Fieldsend's three included a rare defeat for Steve Noble, as well as one of the season's more curious scorelines in his win over Gordon Fairchild: 11-6, 11-0, 5-11, 7-11, 13-11.

Rayne E can no longer win the division after their 6-4 win over Notley C left them too far behind. Nick Hasler, Kelly Yuenyongpknan and Richard Whiteside all won twice, Hasler and Whiteside losing to Tim Huxtable and Yuenyongpknan to Leon Hewitt.

Richard Baxter and Richard Upson led Felsted A to a 9-1 win over Rayne F, where Dave Marsh's win over Matthew Laws was the only one that slipped away.

Another four-point haul from Notley D has lifted them a little further away from the bottom of the table, where two teams are likely to go down this year. They have lost 15 of their 17 matches, but nine of those were by 6-4, which has helped them up to 62 points.

Netts E were the latest team to come away with six points. Fred Evans and Joe Meleschko as usual were their main points scorers. Evans just got the better of Sean Clift at 11-7 in the fifth, while Meleschko lost to him 12-10 in the fifth.

Bottom team Rayne G still have to play both Netts D and Notley D, the two teams immediately above them, so the relegation battle still has considerable life left in it.

* Former league general secretary Brian Hill has died at the age of 79. Brian, who held the post from 1978 to 1980, originally played for Carier and then moved to Rayne, where he spent the bulk of his career.

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