

His long-standing wrist injury has restricted him to a handful of league games this season, but Peter Hayden proved he was still the master at the Braintree Table Tennis League's annual individual tournament when he won the men's singles title for a record-equalling sixth time.

But he owed a big debt of gratitude to his nephew Scott Dowsett, who produced the surprise of the tournament in removing Paul Davison, winner of the title five times in the last eight years and a victor over Hayden on the three occasions the two have met in the final.

The scintillating quarter final between Dowsett and Davison brought play to a halt on the other tables. Although Dowsett failed to capitalise on match points in both the fourth and fifth games, it was he who held his nerve at deuce in the fifth game against the far more experienced Davison.

Dowsett met his match in Hayden in the semi final, while in the other semi final, John Cleasby brought off the tournament's second surprise when he put out the holder Steve Kerns.

The final was another cracking display of counter hitting from both players in which Cleasby gave almost as good as he got, but it was Hayden whose all-round control gave him a marginal edge.

Hayden also won the veterans' singles with a victory in the final over Kerns. It was his eighth success in the event, leaving him one short of Dan Pedder's record, and he added the over 50s' singles for good measure with a win earlier in the evening over Cleasby, this time in straight games.

Kerns, who last year did the treble of men's, veterans' and over 50s', this time had to be content with the men's doubles. In Andy Holmes, he had the perfect foil to break up the rallies against the faster Dowsett and Simon Webber. They seldom looked in trouble and won in three straight games.

Solid defence mixed with strong thumps on both sides of the table gave former men's singles champion Steve Pennell the division one singles title with a straight-games victory over Ken Lewis.

But Lewis did not go empty handed. He became the first division two player this season to get the better of Glen Laing in the final of the restricted singles, again in straight games.

Steve Noble took the division two singles for the second year running with victory over Dave Miller, in his first finals night appearance, while 16-year-old Matthew Laws beat Jamie Brooks, 15, in the division three singles final.

Two even younger performers contested the junior boys' singles final in which 11-year-old William Bettley beat his nine-year-old brother Alexander in a battle of two pint-sized warriors with a weight of shot that belied their lack of inches.

In events decided before finals night, Miller took home the handicap singles trophy with a win over Laws in the final while Brooks came up against father Matt in the handicap doubles.

Jamie won the event last year and Matt the year before and it was Matt who was on the winning side this year. He and Guy McKenzie held on to win against Jamie and Kerns.

Results: Men's singles semi finals: Peter Hayden beat Scott Dowsett 11-4, 13-11, 9-11, 8-11, 11-9; John Cleasby beat Steve Kerns 6-11, 12-10, 11-2, 12-10. Final Hayden beat Cleasby 11-9, 11-7, 9-11, 11-9.

Men's doubles: Kerns and Andy Holmes beat Dowsett and Simon Webber 11-6, 11-7, 11-8.

Veterans' singles: Hayden beat Kerns 11-3, 11-4, 11-5.

Over 50s' singles: Hayden beat Cleasby 11-9, 11-7, 11-8.

Junior boys' singles: William Bettley beat Alexander Bettley 8-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-8.

Restricted singles: Ken Lewis beat Glen Laing 11-9, 11-4, 11-5.

Division one singles: Steve Pennell beat Lewis 11-9, 11-8, 11-6.

Division two singles: Steve Noble beat Dave Miller 11-8, 3-11, 11-8, 11-8.

Division three singles: Matthew Laws beat Jamie Brooks 11-5, 5-11, 11-9, 11-7