

Peter Hayden overcame a longstanding wrist injury to record his fifth Braintree Table Tennis League title on Sunday.

The injury, largely caused by his table tennis style, restricts the range of shots he can now play, but he had enough in his repertoire to overcome the challenge of former champion Steve Kerns twice, once in the veterans' singles and again in the men's singles.

The veterans' final was the tighter of the two, Kerns matching Hayden all the way to 11-9 in the fifth game.

The men's final promised a similar pattern when Kerns took the first game, but Hayden gradually assumed control with his masterly close-to-the-table blocking – interspersed with the occasional unexpected long defence – and won the next three games 11-6, 11-9, 11-8 to take back the title he first won in 1992.

In the semi finals of both competitions, Hayden had had little difficulty overcoming the iron defence of Ian Whiteside while Kerns removed the challenge of Kevin Gowlett.

Again the veterans produced the tighter contest. Kerns edged home at 14-12 in the fifth in that but in the men's event, Gowlett's traditional failure to find his true game in front of a finals night crowd made life easier for Kerns who eased home 11-8, 5-11, 11-7, 11-5.

Gowlett's form returned in the men's doubles, an event he has won for the past four years in the company of Paul Davison.

He teamed up this year with 16-year-old Patrick Gilbert to dispatch the challenge of the No.1 seeds Kerns and James Hicks.

The doubles was one of the few occasions when an underdog triumphed although it was less unexpected than Zach Harrington's excellent win in the junior boys' singles.

With an average of 61 per cent in division one, Gilbert started the strong favourite to retain the title he won last year and duly won the first two games comfortably.

But Harrington, who averages 42 per cent, ignored the statistics and grew in stature as the match progressed.

From a 2-11 defeat in the first game, Harrington gained confidence in improving that to 8-11 in the second game, before turning the tables and winning the third 11-8.

As his confidence grew Gilbert's visibly waned. In the next two ends, Harrington found his true touch and left his opponent demoralised.

Gilbert had looked a different player in the first division singles, where he had little difficulty overcoming Chris Parr 11-4, 11-7, 11-9.

Parr went on to compensate for that defeat with an 11-9, 11-6, 14-12 victory over Adam Buxton in the restricted singles and could lay claim to being the man of the tournament.

In his second season back in action after a seven-year lay-off from the game, Parr is currently unbeaten in division two and was always a strong favourite for the restricted title.

In order not to duplicate the restricted event, the top two seeds are required to play in the division one singles where Parr had outstanding victories over Steve Pennell and John Cleasby, both seeded at equal five in the men's singles.

The division two singles went to Dave Parker, whose dogged defence was too much for the unusual floaty topspin style of Sean Clift, while the division three singles featured two stars of the future, Oliver Gregory, 16, overcoming Tom Brown, 14, with patience and no little flair.

Teammates Whiteside and Pennell took to the floor in the over 50s singles which produced another five-game battle.

Pennell took some time to settle and lost the first two games before choosing more accurately the right ball to hit in games three and four.

But Whiteside has seen it all before and dug in deeply again in the deciding game to snuff out the challenge.

Events decided before finals night will be discussed next week.

Results:

Men's singles final: Peter Hayden beat Steve Kerns 11-13, 11-6, 11-9, 11-8.

Semi finals: Hayden beat Ian Whiteside 11-6, 11-5, 11-9;

Kerns beat Kevin Gowlett 11-8, 6-11, 11-7, 11-5.

Men's doubles: Gowlett and Patrick Gilbert beat Kerns and James Hicks 11-6, 2-11, 12-10, 11-9.

Veterans' singles: Hayden beat Kerns 11-8, 6-11, 11-8, 4-11, 11-9.

Over 50s singles: Whiteside beat Steve Pennell 11-9, 11-4, 6-11, 5-11, 11-7.

Junior boys' singles: Zach Harrington beat Gilbert 2-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-7.

Restricted singles: Chris Parr beat Adam Buxton 11-9, 11-6, 14-12.

Division 1 singles: Gilbert beat Parr 11-4, 11-7, 11-9.

Division 2 singles: Dave Parker beat Sean Clift 11-5, 10-12, 11-7, 12-10.

Division 3 singles: Oliver Gregory beat Tom Brown 13-11, 11-5, 11-7.