

Harry Warde 1918-2011

Eulogy given by his son Phil, September 20

Our father had a full life and a long one ~ 93 years ~ and I want to say to you all, at the very beginning of my address, that our father was able to enjoy his life right up to the end. This was due in huge part to the dedicated care given to him by his wife Mary. Nobody could have received better care than he did, and all of us who were close to him have been aware of how much he came increasingly to rely on her. I know I speak for everybody here in expressing my heartfelt gratitude for everything Mary has done for our dad.

He died peacefully, in his sleep, in no pain whatsoever. And he was able to retain his sense of humour right up to the end, responding to our little quips with typical humorous expressions, and highlighting the ironies of his situation.

Of course, I remember well our dad's sense of humour~ in fact I remember his first joke to me. I was about four years old when, whilst he was stirring the custard mix for Sunday lunch, he turned to me and said, "I hit my thumb with a hammer, and I cussed 'ard!" My lack of immediate understanding of this witticism rather disappointed him, I expect.

Our father was born in 1918, an only child, and from a humble background in Woodfield Road, Braintree, his achievements at school, both in academics and in sport, were truly staggering. Not only did he gain the highest grades in the then equivalent of 'A' level, at Pure and Applied Maths, Physics and Chemistry ~ not exactly easy options ~ but he also won the Braintree County High School's highest award for academic achievement ~ the Bartram Gold Medal. But as well as this outstanding academic record, he was also captain of both football and cricket, and also won the Bartram Silver Medal for athletic ability, being awarded the Victor Ludorum in 1936. How many of us can match a school record like this? I know I can't. And, as if all this weren't enough, whilst still studying at school, he took a part time job after school setting up the science laboratories for the staff for their next day's work!

Harry Warde won a scholarship to read Physics and Maths at Imperial College, London, and this was also a very significant sign of his quality. In 1937, fewer than 1 in every 600 of our dad's age group made it to university, and whilst there are some social reasons contributing to this, nonetheless it was an extraordinary feat for him to get to university at all. But Imperial College ~ this had a massive reputation at this time. Only a dozen years earlier, Alexander Fleming, researching at Imperial, had discovered penicillin, and Imperial was considered second only to the Cavendish laboratories at Cambridge for Physics. Dad graduated in 1940, & in the war, because of his academic ability and leadership qualities, he was eventually posted to the newly-founded R.E.M.E ~ the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers ~ where he rose to the rank of major. Once again, this in itself was a remarkable achievement in those days for a man from a tiny two-up, two-down terraced house with an outside privy and no bathroom.

Harry Warde did vital work on radar for our coastal defences, and as the war finished, he was considered important enough to be transferred to the Control Commission in Germany, where his administrative abilities were needed to get the country running again, and where he did very valuable technical de-briefing of German radar experts. He was also chosen as member of the official party which visited Belsen concentration camp in order to record the precise details of what happened there, lest the world disbelieve it. Over 50 years later, he tried to speak to me about this, but became overcome with emotion and had to stop. He never mentioned the subject again.

After the war, our father completed his Post Graduate Certificate in Education, and started in 1947 as a Maths and Science teacher at Braintree Technical and Arts Institute, which later became Braintree College of Further Education. He was recognized as a man of very high calibre, and after several promotions became Assistant to the Chief Education Officer at County Hall. He was then promoted once again to Vice Principal of Braintree College, and then Vice Principal of North-East Essex Technical College, his last full-time job. And it was a huge job. The college had over 300 full-time teaching staff, a vast number of part-time staff and over 300 non-teaching staff, for all of whom Harry Warde was responsible ~ and this is not to mention the huge number of students.

North-East Essex Tech was the largest educational establishment in Essex. Just imagine the complexities of constructing the timetable! But our dad coped with all this with ease. If I add that the principal of the college became seriously ill and took sick leave for our dad's last 18 months, thus leaving Dad as Acting Principal as well, you will all realize the colossal achievements and capabilities of Harry Warde.

I must add here, that our father was able to deal with this huge workload and yet still establish and maintain very positive relationships with his work colleagues, many of whom came to regard him as a friend. In my experience, a boss who is great at his job and is a pleasure to work with is so rare as to hardly exist. For me, this fact, this ability to be successful and inspiring at work, as well as being a friend and all-round decent bloke, is absolutely crucial in understanding the human qualities of the man.

After retiring from full-time employment, our dad worked part time as an assessor for several years for the City and Guilds Examination Board, a job he enjoyed because it maintained his sympathetic contact with young people. But in spite of all these work commitments, Harry Warde was in no way a slave to work. He was always a man of wide interests, perhaps the chief of these being sport.

Table tennis, for instance. In 1945, Harry Warde founded the Braintree and District Table Tennis League, which is still running today. He was chairman of the league for a total of 16 years, and president for a further 13. He encouraged and supported Harold in his playing, and helped him to become a very accomplished league player in his own right. (Indeed, on one occasion, with Harold as his partner, they made it to the men's doubles final at the League Championships.) And he taught me ~ at first on our dining room table, then taking me as a guest to

local table tennis clubs, and then later taking me, when I was 14, on a week's table tennis coaching holiday.

He also served for many years on the committee of the Essex County Table Tennis Association.

Harry was also an accomplished tennis player, and played for Braintree Tennis Club in the Halstead and District League, for which he became Press Secretary and eventually Chairman.

But whilst my dad was also a keen footballer, and started the Braintree Old Boys football team for his pals, it was cricket which was his real love. He was a very good player, and opened the batting at one time or another for Braintree, Rayne and Cressing. He took great pleasure in Harold's skills as a batsman and helped to develop them, partnering him at the crease whilst at Cressing, where Mary took on the task of club scorer.

But, retiring from playing in 1973, my dad undertook firstly the task of groundsman at Cressing, and then became an umpire. He developed a fine reputation, and was asked to umpire the 'Gentlemen of Essex' matches and served on the committee of the Lancaster League for several years.

Our father had many other interests apart from work and sport. He was an early member of CAMRA, and researched and wrote a pamphlet about independent breweries; he was a very knowledgeable collector of Clarice Cliff pieces; he took great interest in the local railway restoration project at Colne Valley. He made himself very knowledgeable about wines, classical music, and, of course, politics ~ he was tough to get the better of in discussion.

With a long life such as his, this necessarily short eulogy must inevitably miss out masses of memories from all of us. But my sole intention here has been to honour our father by reminding us all of his staggering qualities and achievements in what was a truly remarkable life.

Click below to read Harry's account of the early years of the Braintree League.

https://www.tabletennis365.com/Braintree/pages/History_The_Early_Years

The number of teams entering this year's Braintree Table Tennis League is the highest for ten years. A total of 28 teams swing into action this week with two new clubs entering the fray for the first time.

Stebbing and Felsted Royal British Legion are the newcomers and both will be hoping to emulate the last completely new club to enter the league, Sible Hedingham, who won division three at their first attempt.

Felsted have already made an impact by winning this year's summer league, but that is run on a handicap basis. The real stuff starts now.

It starts too for the reigning champions Netts A who will be relying on the same set of players who brought them the title.

Paul Davison, Kevin Gowlett and Nikki Kennard, with John Cleasby as back-up, won the title in some comfort last season and so long as that line-up turns out on a regular basis they are likely to do so again this year.

The challenge, as last season, will come from Black Notley A's team of Peter and Ian Hayden, Trevor Carter and Steve Northcott. They won the title, without Northcott, in 2010 and were also successful in 2007 when based at Cressing.

Rayne A, the longest surviving team in the top division and third in the league last year, have swapped Dean Andrews for the B team's Brian Riedling, largely to suit availability.

Apart from that Rayne B are unchanged, as are Notley B and Liberal A, the other two teams to make up last season's top six, although Notley B have added Steve Buer and Chris Buer as cover.

Rayne's Richard Whiteside, Phil Wade and Simon Fleming also remain together with the only difference that they are now the D team, as opposed to the C team last year and the E team the year before.

This year's Rayne C are a new collection. Jon Hill drops down from the first team to join partner Vicki Stredder, promoted from division two, Ryan Pitt, from last year's D team, and two Chelmsford-based players, Dave Moles and new signing Richard Storey.

The most interesting name in the division is that of Sible Hedingham. After winning division three in their first season, they have taken just two more seasons to jump up again to join the elite. Their progress will be watched with interest, not least in Felsted and Stebbing.

I will look at divisions two and three next week.

Two seasons ago Rayne E romped to a comfortable victory in division two of the Braintree Table Tennis League.

The chances are that they will do so again this season. But while the name will be the same the faces will be different.

The previous Rayne E team are now comfortably ensconced in division one and a reorganisation of resources within the Rayne club has produced a new E team that brings together last year's E team, minus Vicki Stredder, now in division one, together with Dave Punt and Keith Martin, of last year's D team, who drop down from the top division.

Adding their strength to the long-standing quartet of Cec Butcher, Tony Hammond, Mo Hardy and Paul Wellington has produced a combination that looks unlikely to lose many in this division.

Likely challengers include Black Notley's C and D teams, who have also undergone a change of personnel.

Gordon Fairchild and Bryan Speller remain from last year's C team and are supplemented by one up, one down: Rob Stannard drops down from the first division while 16-year-old Zach Harrington is given deserved promotion from division three.

The D team retain the core of Lyndon Griffiths, Sean Clift and Adam Pitt but are strengthened by the addition of Guy McKenzie, the division's top player last season.

Rayne's G team will be out to prove that they do not just rely on Tom Elder for their success. Fourteen-year-old Ryan Sanderson was given last year's Most Promising Boy award by the league and his father John, after many years out of the game, could lay some claim to a most promising man award, if there was one.

They, Elder, Dawn Baldry and Matt Millbank make up a formidable clutch.

All of them will need to keep an eye on the fast improving Netts B team of Ben Page and Patrick Gilbert, both 15, and 16-year-old Luke Tarrant.

All eyes in division three will be on the unknown quantities of new clubs Felsted RBL and Stebbing. New clubs often shake things up and these two will be hoping that pattern is followed this year.

Of the established teams, Rayne's H team of Chas Wilkinson, Tim Gowers, Barry Mouser and Geoff Long are no strangers to the top end of the division.

Their ranks also include the welcome return of former division one player Tony Stredder although he may well move up a division once he gets reacquainted with the game.

Notley's teams performed unpredictably last season, finishing H,G,I,F in the first phase and I,G,F,H. in the play-offs.

They may have got it right this season. On paper their F team certainly looks the strongest.

New signing Jenny Thomson is likely to be a force in the division, as is another returning face, former Braintree Youth Centre player Chris Parr. They are joined by Ian Wallace and son Matt, who both had high averages last season, together with new signing Victor Chan.

It has the makings of a very open division.

The two main challengers for this year's Braintree Table Tennis League title were pitted together in the first week of the new season. And it was champions Netts A who took a big stride towards retaining their title with a 7-3 win over last year's runners-up Black Notley A.

None of the Netts players could find a way past men's singles champion Peter Hayden, but Paul Davison, Kevin Gowlett and Nikki Kennard all overcame Ian Hayden and Trevor Carter with Davison and Gowlett adding the doubles.

Two sets were vital. An Ian Hayden in top form might have hoped for success against Kennard but she dealt with him relatively comfortably in the first set of the evening.

And in the doubles the Haydens led Davison and Gowlett, the current Braintree champions, 1-0 and 2-1 but scores of 11-9 and 11-7 against them in the last two games took it away from them.

Elsewhere in division one, newcomers Sible Hedingham were given a taste of life at the top when they failed to take a set against Liberal A. Roy Hooper and Graham Cannon both stretched Frank Neill to 11-5 in the fifth game but that was the closest they came.

Black Notley B beat Rayne's second string 7-3 with the help of three sets from James Hicks while Rayne C beat their own D team by the same score. Jon Hill was undefeated for the C team.

In division two Rayne E, one of the promotion favourites, had to work hard for a 6-4 victory over Nomads. Kevin Saunders won two for the Great Cornard side, but neither he nor anyone else could overcome Mo Hardy.

There were wins for two of Notley's teams in this division. The C team got the better of Rayne F 7-3, with Gordon Fairchild undefeated, while the D team had the upper hand against Rayne G, who had to call in a reserve.

Fourteen-year-old Ryan Sanderson impressed in his first outing at this level by taking Rayne G's two singles.

Division three was beset by eligibility and availability problems. Two teams lost points by turning out an unsigned player while two others faced each other a player short.

The latter match resulted in a 7-2 win for Notley F when Matt and Ian Wallace won all they could.

Rayne H saw a 7-2 win over Notley I turn into a 5-4 defeat after the league rules were applied while Felsted RBL's 8-2 victory over Rayne J became 10-0 under the same circumstances.

There were three wins each for Keir Hughes and John Breen in Notley G's 7-3 win over Rayne I.

Two of the league's youngest players produced the performances of the week in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Zach Harrington, 16, won his three singles in only his second match in division two while 15-year-old Ben Page not only remained undefeated but also took the notable scalp of Garry Fryatt, beaten only once in play-off group two last season.

Harrington's success came in Black Notley C's 8-2 win over their own D team.

What made it more notable was that he outscored his experienced teammates Rob Stannard and Gordon Fairchild.

Stannard lost to Adam Pitt while Fairchild was bettered by Sean Clift. Harrington beat both, including a cliffhanger against Clift when he had to come from two games down to win 11-7 in the fifth.

Page's full house was vital in Netts B's 6-4 win over Nomads in the same division.

His win over Fryatt was particularly notable as the Nomads player was the only person last season to register a win over the formidable Tom Elder.

Page, however, got through him 11-5, 11-9, 7-11, 11-7.

Promoted White Lions found it hard going against Netts B, where they failed to win a set, but held their own against Rayne F. Malcolm Wehmeyer was undefeated for Rayne F whose 6-4 win was turned into 5-5 after they included an unsigned player.

In division one, last year's runners-up Notley A did not have things all their own way in their match against Rayne A, who finished one place behind them.

John Andrews, Andrew McEwan and Steve Pennell all won once and Andrews and Pennell scored a good win in the doubles over former league men's doubles champions Peter and Ian Hayden.

Once again Peter Hayden was in a different class, winning his three singles without dropping a game, to give his side a 6-4 win.

It may not last, but Liberal A currently top the table after two matches. They followed their 10-0 win in the first week with an 8-2 victory over Rayne D.

Robin Armstrong and Mike Johnston were unbeaten in singles and combined to win the doubles.

Promoted Sible Hedingham, on the wrong end of that 10-0 scoreline last week, managed to rack up their first sets when Roy Hooper and Graham Cannon won one each against Rayne B.

In division three, Felsted RBL won the battle of the newcomers when they beat Stebbing 8-2. Andy Laws and Ian Butler were unbeaten.

Notley F and Notley G both recorded their second successive wins. Notley F beat Rayne H 10-0 while Notley G had a 9-1 win over their own I team. Mike Pitt and 13-year-old Oliver Hicks were unbeaten for the G team.

Notley H turned out a team of Baineses for their encounter with Rayne I. Warren was unbeaten while his father Steve took two and brother Declan one.

Fourteen-year-old Chris Hillman won twice, his first wins in the league, in Netts C's 7-3 defeat by Rayne J, for whom Tim Townsend was unbeaten.

Ron Fosker

9.10.11

table tennis

New club Felsted RBL have made a storming start to their Braintree Table Tennis League career.

They notched up their third win out of three when they travelled to Rayne I.

Captain Ian Butler won his three singles to make it eight out of eight for him, while Andy Laws added two and Keith Dicker one.

Their 7-3 win puts them top of division three, equal with Black Notley F, who won the battle with their own I team 8-2. Ian Wallace and Chris Parr were unbeaten.

Parr is returning to the league after many years' absence as is Netts C's Jean Thompson. She had an unbeaten evening in her team's 7-3 win over Stebbing.

Notley's G and H teams remain unbeaten but slipped back when they drew with each other. Notley H had earlier beaten Rayne I 7-3.

Warren Baines remained undefeated in both matches.

Rayne H came home 9-1 better off against Rayne J. Tim Townsend ensured the J team's evening was not entirely unrewarded by defeating Ian Rubens.

The division two fixtures brought together two potential title challengers, Rayne's E and G teams, and it was Rayne G who emerged the stronger by 6-4.

After a number of years being unstretched in division three, Tom Elder opened his account at the higher level with his three singles.

Ryan Sanderson almost joined him. He racked up excellent wins over Mo Hardy and Paul Wellington but just missed out at 14-12 in the fifth game against Tony Hammond, almost 60 years his senior.

It was the first time Rayne G had turned out a full team. With a reserve in against Notley E, they came through by 6-4.

Dawn Baldry was undefeated and reserve Tim Gowers played his part with a good win over Jenny Thomson.

Notley E were on the wrong end of the same scoreline in their next match against Notley D. Adam Pitt was unbeaten for the D team.

Nomads have yet to win, but after two 6-4 defeats, they went one better and drew with Rayne F. Kevin Saunders was unbeaten.

In division one, champions Netts A brought in John Cleasby for his first match of the season, but he was found wanting by Liberal A's Barry Pritchard.

It was a deserved success for Pritchard who had stretched both Paul Davison and Nikki Kennard to five games. In fact, he won the first two against Davison, the three times men's singles champion, and almost sneaked a win in the fourth game when Davison got home 12-10.

The Rayne A-Rayne C fixture produced a collection of the unexpected: Jon Hill playing against the team he played for for many years, Steve Elmes failing to win a single set, and an 8-2 victory for the C team.

Hill won all three and Ryan Pitt and new signing Richard Storey two each with Steve Pennell getting the A team's two sets.

As well as the A and C teams facing each other, the B and D sides were also paired up, but this time the alphabet ruled as the B team won 8-2. Dean Andrews and Peter Hance were unbeaten.

Sible Hedingham continue to find it tough after their step-up to division one. They went down 9-1 to Black Notley B. Roy Hooper broke the duck with a win in the final singles of the evening over Duncan Elloy.

Ron Fosker

16.10.11

table tennis

Division three looks like being the most closely fought in this year's Braintree Table Tennis League.

Black Notley F are top after four matches but three teams are within five points of them.

Notley F retained their record as the only unbeaten team in the division when they scored a 6-4 win over their own G team, who had been undefeated up to that point.

Chris Parr kept his own unbeaten record and now has nine out of nine.

After winning their first three matches, new team Felsted RBL tasted defeat for the first time when they encountered Notley H. Their 6-4 defeat leaves them two points behind Notley F with the H team three points further back.

Three wins for Warren Baines – giving him 12 out of 12 – led the H team to victory. Baines ended Ian Butler's three-match unbeaten run in the process.

Despite having a 10-0 defeat on their books, Rayne H are in third place, only four points behind the leaders. They took all ten points from Stebbing.

At the other end of the table Notley I scored their first win, 9-1 over Rayne J. Vernon King and Mike Smith were undefeated.

When Notley D met White Lions in division two, one was top, the other bottom. But table tennis is nothing if not unpredictable and the Lions came away with a very creditable draw.

Clare Johnson and Keith Perrins won twice for them but Adam Pitt held the leaders together with his three singles.

Rayne E are close at their heels after their 9-1 win over Notley E.

Tony Hammond and Dave Punt were unbeaten while Keith Flowers took Notley's one with a tightly fought victory over Paul Wellington. Peter Foster was unlucky not to follow suit as Wellington just edged home 13-11 in the fifth game.

After two 6-4 defeats and a draw, Nomads have at last put a tick in their wins column. They got home by 6-4 at Notley C, who were undefeated up to that point.

Garry Fryatt's three singles were instrumental in their success.

Liberal A still lead division one but only because they have played more matches. Their 9-1 defeat by Rayne A put things a little in perspective. Steve Elmes and Ian Whiteside both won their three singles for Rayne.

Notley A had a win by the same score against Notley B.

And there was good news for Sible Hedingham, who put an end to their run of defeats.

They could only turn out two players for the visit to Rayne D but Roy Hooper's three singles, one from Mark Brown plus the doubles brought them a draw.



Braintree Table Tennis League stalwart Cec Butcher celebrated his 50th anniversary in the league when he turned out for his first match of the season.

Butcher is the longest serving player currently in the league and has not missed a season since he first turned his bat over in 1961.

In all that time he has played for only two clubs, Dunmow Youth Centre and, when that closed down, Rayne.

A very youthful 72-year-old, he still holds down a spot in division two and last year finished with a respectable average of 36 per cent.

Like many table tennis players, knee problems have restricted his appearances but after missing the first three matches of the season, he was in action for Rayne E in a vital match against Black Notley D.

With six points covering six teams at the top of the division, every point was important and Butcher did not let the side down in getting the better of Keith Flowers, never an easy player to beat.

Mo Hardy remained unbeaten but Notley D won the rest for a 6-4 victory.

Predictably Rayne E fared less well in the team knock out cup when faced with first division Black Notley B. James Hicks, Graham Farmer and Duncan Elloy took the lot for a 9-0 victory.

Rayne A took all eight sets played against Netts A, who turned out their B team, and it was the Notley C-Rayne D clash that produced the tightest match of the round.

The Rayne team were boosted by the inclusion of Steve Elmes, normally an A team player, but he was made to work hard for both his wins.

He was taken to five games by both Chris Parr and Zach Harrington, Parr in particular giving him a hard time by stretching him to 11-9 in the decider.

The restricted knock out games were all relatively straightforward.

Notley E had the most comfortable passage, 9-0 against Netts C, while Felsted RBL dropped only one set, a good win for Brian Dixon over Chris Butler, in knocking out Rayne J.

Rayne F and White Lions had 7-2 wins over Notley I and H respectively.

Warren Baines illustrated his continuing promise by notching up two wins over the higher placed Lions team while Vernon King and Mike Smith also recorded wins over second division players Alastair Brown and Peter Taylor respectively for Notley H.

Rayne G have added the formidable Shirley Carroll, an ex Chelmsford ladies' singles champion, to their roster and she helped them to an 8-1 win over Rayne H.

With so little of the season gone, it is surprising how few players in the first division of the Braintree Table Tennis League have an individual average of more than two thirds.

Wins have been evenly spread around so that only five players, apart from those who have played only one match, have managed to register above that figure.

Men's singles champion Peter Hayden leads the way followed by Dean Andrews and the Netts trio of Nikki Kennard, Paul Davison and Kevin Gowlett.

Hayden made it 12 out of 12 last week when he reigned supreme for Black Notley A against Rayne C.

Ian Hayden and Trevor Carter were also unbeaten, not a straightforward matter with Jon Hill among the opposition.

Hill and Vicki Stredder spoiled the evening for Notley by pinching the doubles at 11-9 in the fifth game.

Kennard and Gowlett also won all they could in Netts A's win over Sible Hedingham, but with neither Davison nor John Cleasby available, they were forced to concede three sets.

Notley A lead Netts at the top by four points with Notley B sandwiched in between after their 7-3 win over Rayne D. Steve Buer, in only his second match in the league, took his three singles but the surprise of the evening was an excellent win for Simon Fleming over Graham Farmer.

Brian Riedling, promoted to Rayne A after a number of seasons in the B team, found his old teammates in good form when he faced them for the first time. Both Brian Cook and Peter Hance got the better of him in the A team's 8-2 win.

Nomads lead a tightly packed second division after their 10-0 win over White Lions, but Notley C and Netts B are well placed with matches in hand.

Notley C beat White Lions 8-2 while Netts had a 7-3 win over Notley E and Rayne G had a 10-0 win over their own F team.

Both Notley H and their leading player Warren Baines suffered their first defeats of the season in division three. After 12 consecutive wins, Baines fell to the wiles of the experienced Charles Wilkinson 11-7 in the fifth.

Wilkinson took the other two as well to lead Rayne G to a 6-4 victory.

Notley F bettered Rayne J by 7-3 while Rayne H beat their own I team by the same score. The latter match was a milestone for Roger Hasler whose win over Geoff Long was his first in the league after a season and a bit of trying.

Braintree veterans' B team got off to a good start in division two of the Essex League with a 6-3 win over West Essex A.

Jon Hill won both his singles.

Rayne D's Simon Fleming brought off the win of the season in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Indeed his victory over former men's singles champion Paul Davison probably qualifies as the win of the decade.

To put it into perspective, Davison won the men's singles for three consecutive years, from 2008 to 2010.

Last season he lost only three of his 48 sets, all to Peter Hayden, his successor as men's singles champion. By contrast, Fleming won just eight of his 41 sets.

Yet when Netts A entertained Rayne D last week, Davison found himself foxed by the ultra unorthodox Fleming style.

At 11-4, 8-11, 11-3 in his favour, all seemed to be going according to plan. But Fleming dug in, sneaked home at deuce in the fourth game and held his nerve to win the final end 11-8.

Fleming played down his win. 'I just kept it steady in my usual unorthodox way, as defensive as ever. I never give up however the scores go.'

As he pointed out, he has evened things up in the Davison household. Last year he managed to get the better of Paul's partner Nikki Kennard.

Fleming's victory was the only blot on the scoreline, Kevin Gowlett and John Cleasby both dispatching him in straight games to give Netts a 9-1 win.

Elsewhere in division one, Hayden kept his unbeaten record in Black Notley A's 8-2 win over Liberal A although Robin Armstrong did manage what only Davison and Gowlett have done so far in taking a game off him.

It was a good night for Armstrong as he followed that with wins over both Steve Buer and Trevor Carter.

Rayne A toppled Sible Hedingham 8-2 with Steve Pennell and John Andrews unbeaten, while Notley B registered the same score against Rayne C.

James Hicks and Steve Kerns were unbeaten for Notley while Duncan Elloy finished the evening with an excellent win over Jon Hill after going two games behind.

Rayne E ended Netts B's unbeaten run in division two – and they needed only two players to do so. Mo Hardy won three, Dave Punt two and they took the doubles between them.

The match marked the end of Ben Page's nine-set unbeaten run.

Nomads' sojourn at the top of the table turned out to be short-lived as they tumbled 8-2 at home to Notley D for whom Sean Clift was undefeated.

At the other end, Rayne F picked up their first win, 7-3 against Notley E. Malcolm Wehmeyer won all his singles.

Notley C moved into a strong position only two points behind their D team with a match in hand after their 7-3 win over Rayne G.

Four sets went to five games and Notley won them all, including Tom Elder's first defeat of the season, 11-9 in the fifth against Rob Stannard.

Notley F kept well clear in division three after a 9-1 win over Stebbing, who also lost by the same score to Notley I.

The latter match was a milestone for Leon Hewitt who took his three singles for the first time in his league career.

Notley I also recorded a 9-1 win over Rayne I, a result which ended Rayne's run of four consecutive 7-3 defeats, though perhaps not in the way they would have wished.

Felsted kept in the hunt for promotion in their first season with a 6-4 win over Notley G, but the Notley side recovered in their next match to beat Rayne J by the same score. Brian Dixon was unbeaten for Rayne.

It was a busy evening for Netts junior Ben Page last week. Not only did he take his usual place in the club's B team, but, with the A team a player short, he turned out for them as well.

Despite the scurrying between two tables at the Black Notley Community Association, he turned in an excellent performance in both matches. He won all three sets for the B team against Notley's D team – and wins against Lyndon Griffiths, Sean Clift and Jenny Thomson do not come easy. But it was on the other table that he showed the strides he has made recently. He beat the experienced Duncan Elloy and came tantalisingly close to repeating the feat against Graham Farmer. He led 10-4 in the final game, but agonisingly saw the lead slip away as Farmer won the last eight points.

In the first division match, Steve Kerns beat Paul Davison but lost to Kevin Gowlett whose three singles helped his team to a 7-3 win, the same score by which the B team triumphed.

The three sets dropped meant that Notley's A team were able to increase their lead at the top of the table with a 9-1 win over Rayne B.

Rayne's A and D teams were playing each other and it was Brian Riedling's first hat trick for the A team that led them to a 7-3 win.

Former A team player Jon Hill was another one to notch up three wins, in his case guiding Rayne's C team to a draw with Liberal A.

Notley C continue to lead division two after their 10-0 win over their own E team but Rayne G moved up two places to third after a win by the same score over White Lions.

Rayne E fell back a bit after being restricted to a 6-4 win over their own F team. Paul Wellington, Keith Martin and Dave Punt all won two for the E team with Malcolm Wehmeyer taking two for the opposition.

In division three, Felsted RBL climbed above Rayne H into second place by beating them 7-3. Ian Butler's three wins included a first defeat in his comeback season for Tony Stredder.

Notley F stretched further away at the top after a 9-1 win over Rayne I. New signing Chris High took Rayne's only point.

It was a big week for Rayne J who recorded their first win of the season, 7-3 over Stebbing. Three singles from Brian Dixon and Tim Townsend and one from Roger Hasler were responsible.

It's been a long time coming but there was success at last for two of the lower teams in the Braintree Table Tennis League last week.

Neither Black Notley E in division two nor Rayne I in division three have found the going very straightforward this season, but in their latest matches they both recorded their first win.

Notley's was due in no small measure to an excellent performance from Helen Barnett who won her three singles and shared in the doubles win with Keith Flowers.

Those four sets enabled her team to edge over the line 6-4 against White Lions.

It was a result that keeps Notley four points ahead of Lions at the foot of the table.

Rayne I's win over their own J team in division three, also by 6-4, was more of a team effort.

Ian Rubens and Chris High won twice and Ernst Midl once. Although none of them could get the better of Tim Townsend, it was Rubens and High's win over Townsend and Roger Hasler in the doubles that effectively sealed the win.

At the top end of division two Rayne G made up ground on leaders Notley C with an outstanding 9-1 win over Nomads.

A Nomads side that includes both Kevin Saunders and Garry Fryatt does not expect to lose by that score and it was only Fryatt's win over John Sanderson that broke the duck.

To gain three wins in that company is no mean achievement and Ryan Sanderson, just days past his 15th birthday, once again showed how quickly he is advancing.

The same goes for 16-year-old Zach Harrington who remained undefeated against Rayne E's formidable trio of Paul Wellington, Dave Punt and Mo Hardy. Gordon Fairchild followed suit to lead Notley C to a 6-4 win.

Alastair Brown edged home 13-11 in the fifth game of the first set of the evening for Rayne F against Netts B. But the rest all went the other way.

Black Notley F have opened an 11-point gap between themselves and Felsted RBL at the top of division three after their 8-2 win over Notley H combined with Felsted RBL's 6-4 defeat at the hands of Notley I.

Two missing players made all the difference. Felsted were minus Ian Butler, who has lost only once this season, while Notley F faced an H team without Warren

Baines, also with only one defeat behind him. Had both played, the gap would almost certainly be appreciably closer.

Baines won his three singles for the H team against Notley I but was given an unexpectedly hard time by the club's new signing, 14-year-old Regan Farley-Hearn, who bowed out only at 11-9 in the final game.

In a debut of much promise, Farley-Hearn lost by the same score to the experienced Alan Cook but scored his first league win over Declan Baines.

Notley H won 7-3.

Notley G registered two wins, 7-3 over Stebbing, with only John Breen and Mike Pitt on duty, and 8-2 over Netts C where Oliver Hicks and Mike Pitt were unbeaten.

Rayne H kept up their challenge at the top with a 9-1 win over Netts C and now sit only one point behind second-placed Felsted.

Five different clubs will be represented in the quarter finals of this year's Braintree Table Tennis League handicap cup.

Black Notley have three and Rayne two. Felsted, Sible Hedingham and White Lions, who all run only one team, are also through.

Notley's three victorious teams dropped only one set out of 27. Their H team comfortably beat Rayne F 9-0 while their I team had a walkover against Rayne A.

Rayne H's Geoff Long was the only one to disturb the pattern with a tight five-game win over Bruce Wickham in his team's 8-1 defeat to Notley E. Helen Barnett and Peter Foster were unbeaten for Notley E.

Rayne D also dropped only one game in coming past Liberal. Richard Whiteside and Dave Moles were undefeated but Barry Pritchard pinched Liberal's one with a victory over Simon Fleming.

The other three teams were involved in the closest matches of the round.

Felsted won the last three sets to move from 3-3 to 6-3 against Notley D, who had handicaps stretching up to 12 points (-7 against +5) a game.

Sible Hedingham overcame their tough handicaps to win 6-3 against Netts C. His team may have lost but it was an excellent evening for 14-year-old Chris Hillman who won all his singles for Netts.

The closest match of the round was White Lions' 5-4 win over Rayne G. Lions were 3-2 behind but won the next three sets to clinch the match before losing the final one at 11-9 in the fifth game. Ryan Sanderson won all his singles in vain for Rayne G.

In league division one, Netts A caught up on their match in hand and now lead Notley A by three points at the top after their 8-2 win over Rayne A.

Rayne C had a win by the same score over a two-man Rayne B while Liberal and Notley B fought out a draw. James Hicks was unbeaten for Notley B.

The exciting race bubbling at the top of division two of the Braintree Table Tennis League produced two cracking games in the space of three days.

Rayne G just scraped home 6-4 against Netts B, but then Netts shared the points with leaders Black Notley C to keep all three teams locked together at the top.

With the first set of matches complete – teams play each other three times – Notley lead the trio with 55 points while Netts B and Rayne G share second place just three points behind.

Rayne's win over Netts proved how evenly matched the teams are. No player won all three sets and no one lost all three.

Patrick Gilbert registered excellent wins over Tom Elder and Ryan Sanderson but unexpectedly found Dawn Baldry too much to handle.

Elder and Sanderson won their other two singles while Luke Tarrant and Ben Page both beat Baldry. A doubles win at 11-7 in the fifth game gave Rayne the win.

One player remained unbeaten in Netts' draw with Notley C, and it was the least likely of the six.

Short of players, Notley had to call on Chris Parr, from the third division. But Parr is no ordinary third division player and has the type of style that junior players find awkward. In this case, too awkward for all of them.

The table is actually led by Rayne E who have played one match more after bringing forward a fixture from the second phase. They finished part one with a 10-0 win over White Lions and then recorded a 7-3 win over Nomads to sneak one point ahead of Notley C.

Keith Martin won six out of six.

Notley D took their rally to 48 points with a 9-1 win over Rayne F, Alastair Brown's win over Sean Clift the one to escape them.

Nomads had only two players to visit Notley E which was enough to give them a 6-4 victory. But that was not before Peter Foster picked up an excellent win over Garry Fryatt.

The top two teams in division one both produced predictable 10-0 wins but while Notley A polished off Rayne D fairly comfortably, Netts A were made to work a bit harder against Rayne's C team.

Four sets went the full distance but Netts pinched them all, the tightest being the evening's closer, John Cleasby's 11-9-in-the-fifth win over Vicki Stredder.

The previous evening Rayne C had been the ones in command. They took nine points off Sible Hedingham for whom Mark Brown picked up the one win.

Rayne A were similarly dominant against Notley B although three of their nine wins came in the final end. Steve Pennell and Steve Elmes were unbeaten.

Barry Pritchard was undefeated as Liberal beat Rayne B 7-3.

Chris Parr may have triumphed in division two, but his unbeaten record in the third division has gone, as has Ian Wallace's – both to Felsted's Ian Butler.

Butler beat Parr 11-7, 11-4, 5-11, 11-6 and Wallace 11-8, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8.

His three singles helped Felsted to bring to an end Notley F's eight-match unbeaten run. He also won the doubles with Dave Swash and Swash picked up a singles to make it five.

But those five dropped points meant that Felsted fall to third behind Rayne H who beat Notley G 7-3. Charles Wilkinson took his three singles for Rayne.

Notley H are two points behind Felsted after their 7-3 win over Rayne J.

Vernon King had an unbeaten evening as Notley I beat Netts C 6-4 while John Mundy and Ian Rubens followed suit in Rayne I's 8-2 win over Stebbing.

Ryan Sanderson brought off two superb victories for Braintree in the Essex junior inter-league tournament held at Harlow.

Fifteen-year-old Sanderson, ranked at No.26 on the Essex junior ranking list, had an excellent match against Chelmsford where he beat the Essex No.5 Scott Dowsett and No.9 Robert Shrimpton.

It was a tough fight against Dowsett, Braintree junior champion in 2009 and now holding his own in the Chelmsford first division, but Sanderson battled through to win 11-9, 8-11, 11-8, 8-11, 11-8.

Against Shrimpton he was in dominating form, taking it in three straight games, 11-8, 11-9, 11-8.

A measure of his performance can be gauged by the fact that Shrimpton beat three Braintree first division players, Steve Pennell, Robin Armstrong and Barry Pritchard, in straight games in his last Chelmsford League match.

The junior squad faced tough opposition at the event.

They finished fifth out of five, but would have been higher if they had used their top four players in each match, as most of the other leagues did. Instead a squad of eight was taken in order to give them all experience of playing at this level.

There were other encouraging individual performances.

Warren Baines and Patrick Gilbert both scored wins against Colchester and Baines, Gilbert and Zach Harrington took one each against Clacton, where they drew.

Back in the Braintree League, Sanderson found things tougher when he encountered a top-form Lyndon Griffiths in Rayne G's second division match against Black Notley D.

Griffiths succeeded where Dowsett and Shrimpton failed, by 11-8, 5-11, 11-7, 11-8.

He also won his other two singles to lead his side to a 6-4 win.

Notley C enhanced their position at the top with a 7-3 win over Rayne F.

There was something of a déjà vu feeling about the match. Not only was the scoreline a repeat of the first match between the two teams in the opening week of the season, but Gordon Fairchild won his three singles for Notley while Malcolm Wehmeyer won two for Rayne, just as they did first time round.

Netts B beat White Lions 7-3 with Patrick Gilbert and Ben Page unbeaten.

The top two teams in division three, Notley F and Rayne H, kept their season on course with 7-3 victories, Notley's over Netts C and Rayne's against Notley I. Vernon King took all three points for Notley I.

Notley H's match against Stebbing was another one where earlier results were repeated. As last time, Notley won 8-2 with three sets from Warren Baines while Glenn Maddern won the two for Stebbing.

The win pushes Notley H up to third place after Felsted were held to a draw by Rayne J.

Keir Hughes and Mike Pitt were both unbeaten as Notley G beat Rayne I 8-2.

Ron Fosker

w/e 18.12.11

table tennis

Black Notley A's chances of regaining the Braintree Table Tennis League title took two knocks in the space of a few days.

They lost for the second time this season to Netts A and then, more seriously, lost the services of current men's singles champion Peter Hayden, who fractured an ankle while playing golf.

Hayden still had two good legs to stand on against Netts but that did not stop him losing his unbeaten record, the last one in the top division.

Kevin Gowlett was the man to take it away from him, in three straight games in the opening set of the evening.

Gowlett won his other two sets but Hayden took two for Notley and wins for Steve Northcott over Paul Davison and Ian Hayden over John Cleasby restricted Netts to a 6-4 win.

In other first division matches Rayne C had a straightforward 10-0 win over their own D team, although Ryan Pitt was stretched to 12-10 in the fifth game by Simon Fleming, and Notley B a relatively straightforward 8-2 against Rayne B, for whom Peter Hance won the two.

There was evidence that Sible Hedingham are getting to grips with their new life in division one. In the first match of the season, they lost 10-0 to Liberal, but second time round they restricted them to 8-2.

Roy Hooper beat Mike Johnston while Graham Cannon beat Robin Armstrong. Barry Pritchard remained undefeated for Liberal.

In the Essex veterans league division two, Braintree's B team were beaten 6-3 by a strong Becontree A side.

Jon Hill scored a good win over John Monk after being two games down and also took his two doubles sets, with Steve Pennell and Duncan Elloy.

Ron Fosker

for 25.12.11

table tennis

In a week of predictable results in the Braintree Table Tennis League, there were some individual successes that stood out.

Rayne I's new signings Chris High and John Mundy, for example, can be pleased with their wins over the experienced Alan Cook and the more youthful Declan Baines in their team's 6-4 defeat against Black Notley H in division three.

Mundy took both sets in four games and High in three.

Tim Townsend is another one who will have gone home happy. He took his three singles in Rayne J's 6-4 win over Netts C, a reversal of the scoreline in the first meeting of the two teams.

That included a five-game victory over Jean Thompson, who does not lose many at this level and who beat him first time round.

Less surprising were Ian Wallace's three sets that helped leaders Notley F overcome a stubborn Rayne H 6-4 in the top-of-the-table meeting.

Also not unexpected were the full houses scored by David Swash and Ian Butler in Felsted RBL's 9-1 win over Stebbing that takes them back up two places to second.

It was a good night for Warren Baines when he was called up to make his second division debut for Notley E against Rayne G. With only one defeat behind him in division three, he found the step up no problem and took two singles to help his temporary team to a draw.

Also at Notley, Adam Pitt scored a couple of good wins for the D team, but they could not prevent the club's C team from registering a 7-3 victory.

Netts B's 9-1 win over Nomads was most notable for Luke Tarrant's return to form. With only two wins in his last nine sets, he had been slumbering somewhat but on this occasion it was Patrick Gilbert who dropped the only set after a five-game battle with Kevin Saunders.

White Lions have yet to pick up their first win, and saw another chance slip away when they missed out on the last two sets after standing level at 4-4 against Rayne F. Malcolm Wehmeyer was unbeaten for Rayne.

One-time title challengers Notley A found themselves with no regular players available for their first division match against Rayne A. Unsurprisingly their second division replacements could get nowhere against strong opposition although Rayne did have to concede one set.

Richard Jennings returned to Braintree League action for Sible Hedingham against Rayne B where he, Mark Brown and Roy Hooper took one singles each in a 7-3 defeat.

There were wins for Dave Punt over Robin Armstrong and Simon Fleming over Mike Johnston in Liberal's 7-3 win over Rayne D. Barry Pritchard took his three singles safely for the home team.

Two duos had double singles success – and won the doubles – to upset higher placed teams within their own club in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Division three table-toppers Black Notley F and third-placed Notley H found the going tough against their own I and G teams respectively.

The F team needed three wins from Ian Wallace to secure a draw after Vernon King and Mike Smith had won two singles each and combined to win the doubles.

Notley F have yet to lose and this was only their second draw.

The club's G team may have been ranked above the H team at the start of the season but they started their fixture 15 points behind – and they finished there too after holding them to a draw.

Keir Hughes and Oliver Hicks were the players responsible, again taking two singles each and combining to win the doubles.

The H team were indebted to Warren Baines, who got the better of both of them, although Hicks stretched him to 11-9 in the fifth game.

The club clash at Rayne was more predictable. The H team duly polished off the J team 9-1 with Tim Townsend's win over Barry Mouser the one to get away.

Rayne's I team found Felsted RBL too strong, although Chris High can be pleased with his two wins in the 8-2 defeat, while Netts C beat Stebbing by the same score.

Nick Osborne's win over Phil Gardner was Stebbing's only singles success.

Another Notley match to go against the form book was the E team's excellent win over the D team, 22 points ahead of them, in division two.

It was a solid team effort with two wins each from Keith Flowers and Helen Barnett. Bruce Wickham, who won once, was unlucky not to join them on a double, succumbing only at 11-7 and 11-8 in the final game in his other two sets.

Rayne E gained revenge on their own G team for their defeat earlier in the season with a 7-3 win second time round.

Keith Martin and Paul Wellington were unbeaten.

Division leaders Notley C introduced new signing Dave Parker who instantly showed his credentials with three singles wins in the 8-2 win over White Lions.

Garry Fryatt's three wins helped Nomads to share the points with Rayne F.

Rayne C caught their own A team cold in the first fixture between the two with a thumping 8-2 victory. But their seniors gained their revenge second time round by 6-4.

The C team's Jon Hill, clearly relishes playing against his former colleagues. He won his three singles against them for the second time.

Rayne's B and D teams also faced up to each other and took away five points each.

Simon Fleming and Keith Martin took two for the D team and Peter Hance and Paul Mitchell two each for the B team.

Meanwhile Netts A sailed along serenely at the top. Their latest victory was by 9-1 over Liberal where Mike Johnston's win over John Cleasby was the visitors' only success.

Champions Netts A have entered the new year with a comfortable cushion at the top of the Braintree Table Tennis League and very little left to do to retain their title.

They have overcome the injury to Nikki Kennard that ruled her out of all but the first three matches by calling on their stand-by John Cleasby more than they intended.

And in times of difficulty they have been able to give 15-year-old Ben Page some experience of the top flight.

They did so in their last match against Rayne B and he showed his right to be there with wins over both Peter Hance and Paul Mitchell. He only slipped up against Brian Cook and helped his team to a 9-1 victory.

With injuries hitting Black Notley A hard, Rayne A are now favourites to take the runners-up spot. They also had a 9-1 victory, in their case over Liberal.

Liberal's point came from a first ever win for Mike Johnston over Ian Whiteside – at 12-10 in the decider.

Notley A meanwhile continued on their downward slope with an 8-2 defeat against their own B team for whom James Hicks and Steve Kerns were unbeaten. Adam Pitt, playing up from division two, scored an excellent win over Steve Buer.

At the other end of the table Rayne D eased slightly away from Sible Hedingham by beating them 6-4, their first win of the season at the 12th attempt.

Keith Martin's three singles plus a share in the doubles pushed them strongly in the right direction.

Division two leaders Black Notley C were surprisingly held to a draw by a Nomads side without Kevin Saunders.

Three wins from Garry Fryatt and one each from Barrie Applegate and Lorraine Burgess meant they could even afford to lose the doubles.

The five points actually strengthened Notley C's lead as second-placed Netts B, without Page, tumbled 7-3 at Rayne G.

The evening was a triumph for the venerable Shirley Carroll, Chelmsford ladies' singles champion way back in 1968, who showed her three teenage opponents how it's done.

Rayne E's 7-3 win over Notley E and Notley D's 9-1 against White Lions mean the four teams in second to fifth places are covered by just one point.

Mo Hardy and Keith Martin were unbeaten for Rayne E while White Lions' win was picked up by Steve Willis who just crept home 11-9 in the fifth against Lyndon Griffiths.

The teams at the top of division three found life difficult. Leaders Notley F just pulled through 6-4 against their own G team while second-placed Felsted RBL were held to a draw by a two-man Notley H.

The F team needed Chris Parr's usual three sets to survive.

The Notley H-Felsted encounter was a tight affair in which five of the seven sets played went the full five games.

For Notley Warren Baines won three and father Steve two. The younger Baines's 11-8, 11-3, 11-9 win over Ian Butler was only Butler's second defeat of the season, the first having been at the hands of the same opponent.

Rayne H took advantage of Felsted's difficulties to slip back into second place with a 10-0 win over Stebbing.

It was a good week for Rayne's Tim Townsend. He won his three singles to help Rayne J to a draw against Notley I then stepped up to the I team and led them to an 8-2 victory over Netts C with another three.

End of year tables:

DIVISION 1

	P	W	D	L	A	P
Netts A	10	10	0	0	19	81
Rayne A	11	8	0	3	37	73
B Notley A	10	6	0	4	39	61
B Notley B	10	6	1	3	43	57
Liberal	12	5	2	5	64	56
Rayne C	10	5	1	4	46	54
Rayne B	11	3	1	7	68	42
Rayne D	12	1	2	9	87	33
Sible Hedingham	10	0	1	9	77	23

DIVISION 2

	P	W	D	L	A	P
B Notley C	12	9	2	1	38	82
Netts B	11	7	1	3	39	71
Rayne G	12	7	1	4	49	71
Rayne E	11	8	0	3	40	70
B Notley D	12	7	1	4	50	70
Nomads	12	3	3	6	68	52
Rayne F	11	2	3	6	70	40
B Notley E	11	2	1	8	72	38
White Lions	12	0	2	10	94	26

DIVISION 3

	P	W	D	L	A	P
B Notley F	13	11	2	0	36	93
Rayne H	13	10	0	3	41	89
Felsted RBL	13	8	3	2	45	85
B Notley H	13	8	3	2	50	80
B Notley G (6)	12	6	2	4	50	64
B Notley I	12	5	2	5	60	60
Rayne I	12	3	0	9	76	44
Rayne J	13	2	2	9	86	44
Netts C (3)	12	3	0	9	77	39
Stebbing	13	0	0	13	108	22

Figures in brackets indicate points lost for late scorecards

Rayne could be on course for a double success in this year's knock out cup competitions in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

In the absence of entries from Netts A and Black Notley A, Rayne's A team, currently second in division one, are favourites for the team knock out title.

They had a tussle with their own C team in the quarter final but emerged unscathed with a 6-2 victory.

Once again former A team player Jon Hill was the thorn in their flesh. He beat both Ian Whiteside and Andrew McEwan while the A team took the rest.

In the semi final Rayne will face second division Notley D, who sprang the surprise of the round by overcoming Sible Hedingham 8-1.

Sean Clift beat both Roy Hooper and Graham Cannon while Adam Pitt added the scalp of Hooper in three straight games.

The second semi final will feature the evenly matched Notley B and Liberal.

Notley B had little difficulty coming past Rayne D where only the final doubles got away from them at 15-13 in the fifth game.

Richard Whiteside came closest to a singles victory. He won the first two games against Duncan Elloy and reached deuce in the third, but Elloy called on all his experience and dug in to survive.

Liberal's passage was even more straightforward against Rayne B where they won all five sets played.

Rayne G, promoted from division three last season and currently riding high in division two, are clearly the team to beat in the restricted knock out cup.

And Rayne I were not the team to do that in the quarter final. It was little surprise that the G team dropped only one game all evening.

They will face another Rayne team in the semi final after the F team's 8-1 victory over Notley F.

Matt Wallace scored a good win over Peter Taylor but the F team were otherwise undisturbed.

The two teams currently below Rayne F in the second division will contest the other semi final.

Notley E came past their own G team but not before 13-year-old Oliver Hicks had scored good wins over the experienced Helen Barnett and Peter Foster.

They will face White Lions, who gave promotion-chasing Felsted RBL a chance to see what life might be like at the higher level.

Ian Butler proved that he may well cope with the step up by beating both Steve Willis and Clare Johnson but apart from a doubles win by Butler and David Swash, Felsted could get no further.

Three players were back in action in the Braintree Table Tennis League last week after lengthy lay-offs.

Men's singles champion Peter Hayden has made a quicker than expected recovery from a broken ankle sustained while playing golf in early December.

He returned to the table as if he had never been away. His three wins against Rayne C included the scalp of Jon Hill, a player in good form this season and one never to be taken lightly.

Trevor Carter also got the better of Hill – at 11-9 in the fifth game – as Black Notley A won the match 6-4.

Hill has been in good form this season and only four days earlier he had included Kevin Gowlett and Nikki Kennard among his victims, only Gowlett's second defeat of the season. Paul Davison prevented him making it a hat-trick.

Kennard herself was making a comeback in this match. Out of action since the third match of the season she weighed in with two singles in Netts A's 8-2 victory.

Netts also beat a two-man Sible Heddingham 10-0 while Notley B had a 7-3 win over Rayne D.

The other player to return was Tony Stredder who sustained a leg injury while playing in October.

He emulated Hayden by winning his three singles in his comeback match, in his case for Rayne H against Rayne I in division three.

Rayne won 8-2.

Notley A's win over Rayne C enabled them to keep pace with Rayne A in the race for second place in division one as Rayne also registered a 6-4 win, in their case against their own B team.

Steve Pennell was unbeaten.

In division two, Netts B played their match in hand over leaders Notley C and the 9-1 win over Notley E left them just two points off the top. Helen Barnett's win over Luke Tarrant was the one that evaded them.

Rayne G, who were level with them, slipped back after being held to a draw by Rayne F, despite three wins from Shirley Carroll.

The next two teams, Rayne E and Notley D, started one point behind and produced the expected tight match in which Rayne sneaked home 6-4.

No one was undefeated but Paul Wellington, Dave Punt and Mo Hardy for Rayne and Dave Parker for Notley D all won twice.

At the bottom White Lions again came close but not close enough to their first win of the season. They lost sets at 13-11 in the fifth and 11-8 in the fifth against Nomads. If they had reversed those they would have reversed the 6-4 result.

In division three, Rayne H's 8-2 win mentioned above was not enough to prevent them slipping back at the top after leaders Notley F's 10-0 win over Rayne J.

But they stayed four points ahead of Felsted RBL who also won 8-2, in their case against Notley G.

The match was closer than the score suggests with final-game wins of 13-11, 15-13 and 11-8 all going Felsted's way.

In a 2v2 match, Notley H won all they could to beat Netts C 7-2 while Notley I won all but one – Glenn Maddern's win over Leon Hewitt – against Stebbing.

- **News has reached me of the death of former men's singles champion Peter Ogilvie.**

Peter first won the title at the age of 17 in 1953 and went on to win it in four consecutive years, a record only equalled once, by Steve Dettmarr in the late 1990s.

One record unlikely to be equalled is that his first title came in his first year of competitive table tennis, having only played on his home table until he took up the game seriously at the start of the 1952-53 season.

In addition to the singles, he also picked up eight men's doubles titles, six with Peter Byford and one each with Colin Davidson and John Tibbles, plus three mixed doubles wins, all with Jean Darlow.

Just occasionally the Braintree Table Tennis League throws up one of those anomalies that defies logic.

How, for instance, can each member of a team lose only one singles, but each to a different opponent?

It may not be unique but it certainly does not happen often.

It happened in division three last week when Rayne H played Black Notley H.

Notley won the first two sets before Steve Baines brought off an excellent and unexpected win over Charles Wilkinson.

Baines has an average around 50 per cent whereas Wilkinson, the reigning division three singles champion, does not lose many at this level. He lost this one, though, in straight games 11-4, 11-9, 11-8.

Declan Baines, with a record of nine wins out of 23 this season, then took over from his father to score an equally unexpected win over Tim Gowers, who had lost only three of his previous 21 sets.

Rayne put their foot down after that and won the next five sets in straight games. But Alan Cook was not to be left out and in the final set registered his only win - and Barry Mouser's only defeat.

The seven points were enough to take Rayne H to the top of the division, although Notley F, one point behind, have a match in hand.

Felsted RBL are one point further back after their 9-1 win over Netts C. Jean Thompson grabbed Netts' only success with a win at 11-8 in the fifth game against Chris Butler.

Notley G had only two players to face Rayne J but three sets from Mike Pitt, two from Keir Hughes plus the doubles was enough to give them a win.

Vernon King and Mike Smith were unbeaten in Notley I's 8-2 win over Rayne I.

Division two's top team Notley C increased their lead over Netts B from two points to four following their 8-2 win over Rayne G and Netts' 6-4 success at Rayne E.

Ben Page was unbeaten for Netts while Shirley Carroll picked up Rayne G's only singles set against Notley C.

At the other end of the table, Notley E reversed the scoreline from earlier in the season to beat Rayne F 7-3.

Keith Flowers picked up his first maximum of the season, including a straight-games win over Malcolm Wehmeyer, beaten only four times in his previous 18 sets.

In division one, Notley A managed to turn out their recognised first team of Ian and Peter Hayden and Trevor Carter for the first time since the fourth match of the season, and duly disposed of Liberal 10-0.

Rayne A dropped only one set against Sible Hedingham while Notley B and Rayne C fought out a close encounter in which Steve Kerns' three sets were instrumental in giving the home side a 6-4 victory.

Players are reminded that entries to the individual championships must be in by this Sunday. Entry forms are in the centre of the league handbook.

The leading players' unbeaten records all disappeared quite early in the season in the Braintree Table Tennis League, but there are a number who still have only one defeat to their name.

And the most recent set of results did nothing to change that.

Peter Hayden in division one, Keith Martin in division two and Warren Baines, Ian Wallace and Chris Parr in division three all maintained their only slightly blemished reputations.

Hayden led Black Notley A to an 8-2 win over Rayne B. But he was the only member of his team to remain undefeated. Peter Hance got the better of Trevor Carter and Paul Mitchell scored an excellent win over Ian Hayden.

Rayne A increased their advantage over Notley in second place with a 10-0 win over their own D team while Rayne C registered a surprisingly comfortable 9-1 win over Liberal.

Keith Martin's one defeat was against Malcolm Wehmeyer in his first outing of the season. He has won 15 in a row since then, but the last of those was by no means easy.

It came in Rayne E's 10-0 win over their own F team, their first 10-0 of the season, and in an evening where he had won his first two sets in straight games.

But then he came up against a determined Peter Taylor who stretched him all the way – 11-8, 10-12, 11-9, 7-11, 11-9.

Rayne E's win leaves them only a point behind second-placed Netts B who were held to a draw by Notley D.

Notley C stretched their lead over Netts to seven points with an 8-2 win over Notley E in which Keith Flowers scored a good win over Rob Stannard.

Notley D beat Nomads 7-3 with three wins each by Sean Clift and Lyndon Griffiths – and a rare double failure for Garry Fryatt.

Rayne G's female contingent of Dawn Baldry and Shirley Carroll remained unbeaten and there was a first division two win for reserve Brian Dixon in their 8-2 win over White Lions.

In division three, Ian Wallace and Chris Parr retained their records of only one defeat with little difficulty in Notley F's wins over Stebbing (9-1) and Rayne I (10-0) respectively.

But Warren Baines was given a hard time keeping his in Notley H's match against the club's I team.

He crept home at 11-7 in the fifth game against Vernon King and against Mike Smith it was even closer – 14-12 in the final end.

Felsted RBL's Ian Butler has lost twice, both to Baines, but has won more sets than anyone else. He added three more in his team's draw with Rayne H, including his second win this season over Tony Stredder.

And at the opposite end of the scale there was a first league win for Stebbing's Tom Richards, at the 45th attempt, in his team's 7-3 defeat by Rayne J.

Two of the promotion-chasing teams in division two of the Braintree Table Tennis League came up against each other – and it was little surprise when they emerged with a share of the points.

Leaders Black Notley C, unbeaten in their previous 11 matches, came close to surrendering that record when they stood 5-2 down to third-placed Rayne E. But they battled their way back, winning the eighth set in three games, the ninth in four and finally the last set of the evening at 11-9 in the fifth.

Gordon Fairchild had to come back from two games down to beat Paul Wellington, who had won his other two sets. But his 7-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-9 victory ensured his team escaped with a draw. It was Fairchild's second win of the evening, matching his teammate Zach Harrington and Wellington and Dave Punt on the other side.

Rayne G have fallen away in the title race in recent weeks, but they kept themselves on the coattails of the leaders with a 7-3 win over Nomads in which Ryan Sanderson was unbeaten.

At the other end of the table, Notley E picked up their second win in three matches when they beat White Lions 6-4. Keith Flowers was unbeaten.

In division one, Notley A made up a little ground with a 7-2 win over Sible Hedingham in a two-a-side match. The closest set was Trevor Carter's win in five games over Graham Cannon.

Three sets from James Hicks helped Notley B to a 6-4 win over Liberal while Rayne C once again proved themselves superior to their B team by beating them for the second time this season, this time with only two players. Three from Jon Hill, two from Richard Storey plus the doubles were enough.

After 24 successive wins, Warren Baines' record in division three has got a second dent in it. It was inflicted by his clubmate Victor Chan 11-8, 3-11, 11-6, 11-9 in Notley H's defeat by Notley F.

Baines then had a titanic struggle to prevent a second set slipping away when Matt Wallace took him all the way to 11-9 in the fifth.

No such problems for Ian Butler, who took his three singles in Felsted's win over Notley I, nor for Tim Townsend and Brian Dixon who did likewise in Rayne J's win over their I team, nor Notley G's Keir Hughes and Oliver Hicks in their win over Stebbing.

All four matches in the division finished 7-3.

Will Peter Hayden win his fifth men's singles title? Could either Paul Davison or Steve Kerns grab his fourth? Or will Kevin Gowlett at last get his hands on the trophy?

These and other questions will be settled at this weekend's Braintree Table Tennis League individual championships to be held at Black Notley Community Centre.

Hayden took the title last season to add to those he won in 1992, 1994 and 2007 after Davison, winner in the previous three seasons, had been surprisingly eliminated at the group stage.

Gowlett remains the enigma of the championships, rarely producing his best form but capable of beating any of the others when out of the limelight. He managed to take the Clacton title in 2008. Could this year, his first as a veteran, be the one when he finally fulfils his promise?

Hayden has taken the veterans' title in the four years he has entered (he was injured in 2009) and again Kerns and Gowlett will be among those aiming to prevent him making it five.

Gowlett's turn should come in the men's doubles which he and Davison have won for the last three years.

But it will not be easy. They had a tough time last season before overcoming Kerns and James Hicks 11-9 in the fifth game and were also stretched to five the previous season by Peter and Ian Hayden.

Sadly the league are for the fifth time in six years unable to hold a ladies' singles competition as only one entry was forthcoming but variety will be provided by a strong junior boys' contingent, led by Ben Page and Patrick Gilbert, and a wide open restricted singles where the four seeds, Gordon Fairchild, Steve Clift, Adam Pitt and Rob Stannard, are evenly matched.

The finals are scheduled to start around 5.30 on Sunday.

Four Black Notley teams have won through to the last eight of the handicap cup, and at least one will be in the semi finals after two were drawn to play each other.

The E and F teams will be the ones facing each other.

The E team came past Rayne I 6-3, with the help of three sets from Bruce Wickham.

The F team had a much more difficult evening, having to come back from 4-3 down to beat White Lions.

Tom Brown (off +2) beat Steve Willis (-3) to level the scores.

Then the handicaps were turned round as Chris Parr (-3) had to give away points to Keith Perrins (+1). He lost the first game 11-3 but held on to win the next three 11-9, 11-5, 11-6 to take his team through.

Division two leaders Notley C take their place in the next round after a 5-2 win over Rayne J in which Gordon Fairchild won the two sets he played.

Keith Dicker was unbeaten in Felsted's 7-2 win over Notley H while Mike Smith took his three sets to lead Notley I through by 6-3 against Rayne D.

Rayne C were the only first division team to reach the quarter final. They lost two of the first three sets against Rayne B but won the rest. Vicki Stredder was unbeaten.

A devastating display of powerful hitting brought Paul Davison his fourth men's singles title at the Braintree Table Tennis League finals night on Sunday.

After a closely fought opening three games, Davison moved not just up a gear but on to a different plane as he won 22 of the last 26 points

He wound himself up as his opponent, reigning champion Peter Hayden, wilted.

He darted around the table, hit the ball with maximum force on both wings and hit some stunning shots from short balls over the table that looked as if they demanded more respect.

It is rare to see Hayden as a passenger. He looked to be in control when he took the second and third games with his customary excellent positioning and quick reactions.

But after that Davison was unstoppable as he roared to a 13-11, 10-12, 7-11, 11-2, 11-2 win.

Davison showed glimpses – but only glimpses – of what was to come in his semi final victory over Steve Kerns in which the former champion looked sluggish against his more mobile opponent.

Hayden was equally untroubled in his semi final against Kevin Gowlett, the only man to beat him in the league this season. He had already beaten Gowlett 11-4, 11-5, 11-5 in the semi final of the veterans' singles and although the scores were less convincing this time, Gowlett rarely looked like producing an upset.

Gowlett's form always deserts him in singles events on finals night, but he is much more at home with a doubles partner at his side, especially when that partner is Paul Davison.

The two had won the men's doubles for the previous three years and went on to make it four, the first pairing in the league's history to win four in a row.

It was a game of nip and tuck and cat and mouse against Peter and Ian Hayden and again it was Davison's speed about the table that was the difference between the two.

There was some consolation for the Hayden brothers as Peter retained his veterans' singles title while Ian took home the over 50s' title in his first year in the new age bracket.

It was Peter Hayden's fifth title in six years (he missed out only when he was injured) and he was seldom in any trouble against Kerns in a repeat of last season's final.

Kerns never really got going in the first two games which Hayden took 11-3, 11-4 and although he came to life to stretch the third game to deuce, Hayden was able to hold him off.

The over 50s event was held before finals night and gave Ian Hayden his first Braintree singles title. He was taken to four games by Steve Buer in the semi final, but saw off Mike Johnston without dropping a game in the final.

There was also a first Braintree title for Sean Clift on his first finals night appearance.

His wiry approach held just too much for Rob Stannard. He was able to get under Stannard's deep backspin with some rolled backhands and finish off the point with a few healthy thumps.

But Stannard did not go home empty-handed. He picked up the division two trophy with a victory over Guy McKenzie.

McKenzie's block and loop approach was not dissimilar to Clift's but less successful. He took the first game but Stannard held on to take the next three.

Ryan Pitt completed a full house of the divisional singles wins. After winning the division three title in 2004 and division two in 2009, he added the division one trophy with a victory over Vicki Stredder.

Pitt was the steadier of the two players, prepared to wait longer for the decisive move and more accurate when it came to making it.

The division three singles went to 16-year-old Warren Baines, who overcame the reigning champion Charles Wilkinson.

Willkinson is one of only 2 players to have beaten Baines in division three this season, but the Notley junior was not going to let that happen again. His back-from-the-table lobbing effectively cut off his opponent's favourite backhand shot and he allowed him a total of only 11 points over the three games.

The junior singles, played earlier, was a reverse of last year's final, Patrick Gilbert gaining revenge on teammate Ben Page with a closely fought victory at 11-8 in the fifth end.

Last season they gained one title each, Page the junior and Gilbert the cadets, but age prevented that happening this year and it was the turn of Oliver Hicks to step up to the podium for the cadets' trophy after winning a round robin event. Joe Nourse was in second place.

Page and Gilbert retained their junior doubles title but only after Zach Harrington and Matt Wallace had put up a tremendous fight. They took two of the first three games and only succumbed eventually at 11-8 in the fifth.

Ian Wallace, Matt's father, was also on the wrong end of a five-game battle in the final of the handicap doubles. He and Baines just missed out against Chris High and Roy Hooper.

High also got to the final of the handicap singles but this time had to give second best to Keith Martin

Results: Men's singles final: Paul Davison beat Peter Hayden 13-11, 10-12, 7-11, 11-2, 11-2.

Semi finals: Davison beat Steve Kerns 11-5, 10-12, 11-9, 11-8; Hayden beat Kevin Gowlett 11-7, 11-8, 12-10.

Men's doubles: Davison and Gowlett beat Hayden and Ian Hayden 11-8, 11-8, 8-11, 11-8.

Veterans' singles: Peter Hayden beat Kerns 11-3, 11-4, 12-10

Over 50s singles: Ian Hayden beat Mike Johnston 13-11, 11-8, 11-6

Junior singles: Patrick Gilbert beat Ben Page 3-11, 12-10, 11-5, 6-11, 11-8

Junior doubles: Gilbert and Page beat Zach Harrington and Matt Wallace 9-11, 11-7, 7-11, 11-3, 11-8

Cadets singles: Oliver Hicks beat Joe Nourse in round robin event. Hicks beat Nourse 12-10, 11-9, 11-9

Restricted singles: Sean Cliff beat Rob Stannard 13-11, 12-10, 11-9

Division one singles: Ryan Pitt beat Vicki Stredder 11-8, 11-9, 11-7

Division two singles: Stannard beat Guy McKenzie 8-11, 11-9, 12-10, 11-5

Division three singles: Warren Baines beat Charles Wilkinson 11-5, 11-2, 11-4

Handicap singles: Keith Martin beat Chris High 14-12, 4-11, 11-8, 15-13

Handicap doubles: High and Roy Hooper beat Baines and Ian Wallace 8-11, 11-4, 11-8, 9-11, 11-5

Life has not been easy for new club Stebbing in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Their three players, all new to league table tennis, have found it tough going against some experienced opponents in the league's third division.

But they have kept plugging away and their leading player Glenn Maddern has just achieved the league player's holy grail, an unbeaten evening.

Maddern has won two out of three on three occasions but against Rayne I he went one better and took all three in his team's 7-3 defeat.

Although he unsurprisingly failed to register in his next match, a 10-0 defeat by division leaders Black Notley F, he came back strongly in the following match when he won twice against promotion-chasing Felsted RBL.

And they were not easy encounters. He was taken the full distance by both Andy Laws and Chris Butler but won both at deuce in the fifth game.

They were Felsted's only defeats of the evening.

In an earlier match against Notley F, there were two defeats for the Felsted No.1 Ian Butler, who has won more sets in the division than anyone else.

He lost to Chris Parr, a player beaten only once – by Butler – this season, and also found himself bettered by Matt Wallace, a considerable coup for the 15-year-old.

Butler scored Felsted's only success of the evening when he got the better of Ian Wallace.

Felsted also had an 8-2 win over Rayne J while Notley H beat the same team 10-0.

Charles Wilkinson led the way in Rayne H's 7-3 win over Netts C while John Breen picked up Notley G's sole point in their defeat by Rayne H.

Division two leaders Notley C were given a hard time against Netts B and needed a full house from Zach Harrington to see them through to a 6-4 win.

Harrington, seeded at three in the junior singles, beat both the top two seeds Ben Page and Patrick Gilbert.

Chasing Rayne E pulled themselves up four points closer by taking all ten against White Lions.

Sean Clift took his three singles in Notley D's 6-4 win over Rayne F while Kevin Saunders did likewise in Nomads' 7-3 success at home to Notley E.

Rayne A's faint hopes of mounting a challenge for the division one title became fainter still when they tumbled 8-2 to Notley B. Ian Whiteside's win over James Hicks and Steve Pennell's over Steve Buer were all they had to show for their evening's efforts.

Their lapse allowed Notley A to slip back into second place after a 9-1 win over Rayne D.

Sible Hedingham, still without a win, came close again when they shared the points with highly placed Rayne C.

Liberal had only two players against Rayne B but that was enough to give them the win. Mike Johnston won his three singles while Robin Armstrong won two, giving second best only to Paul Mitchell.

The league's junior awards for the season have been announced.

The most promising boy title went to Zach Harrington, who has advanced to the upper end of division two in only his second season of league play.

Nine-year-old Katie Archer, not yet in the league but a keen participant in the league's coaching sessions, was given the most promising girl award, while Joe Nourse won the coaching award, given to the player who shows promise, keenness and determination in the coaching sessions.

After winning their first 12 matches, Braintree Table Tennis League leaders Netts A have stumbled for the first time.

They could only raise two players for their match with second-placed Black Notley A, but as the home side were fielding two reserves, the odds were more or less evened out. What was unexpected was that Kevin Gowlett, beaten only twice in 29 sets, should double that total in one evening.

He was second best against both Ian Hayden and the B team's James Hicks.

Paul Davison held the side together by taking his three singles, together with a doubles win with Gowlett that enabled his side to share the points.

In his own team, Hicks featured in a comfortable 9-1 win against Rayne B where the only blip on the scorecard was in the doubles.

Richard Jennings made only his third appearance of the season for Sible Hedingham and came close to leading them to their first win. He took his three singles against Liberal, but Roy Hooper's win over Barry Pritchard was the only other set on the credit side.

They did, however, climb two points closer to Rayne D who went down 8-2 to their own C team.

Division two leaders Notley C were another team who won all the singles but somehow contrived to lose the doubles in their match against Rayne F. It was in straight games too, Malcolm Wehmeyer and Peter Taylor discovering something in tandem that was missing when they were on their own.

Rayne E kept in touch with an 8-2 win over Nomads whose two wins came from Barrie Applegate against Paul Wellington and Mo Hardy, both riding high in the division's individual averages.

Netts B promoted Joe Nourse from the third division and he did not let them down by taking two singles in the 8-2 win over White Lions.

After two defeats against Notley D, Rayne G finally found a way past them. Ryan Sanderson's three singles led them to a 7-3 victory.

Rayne I were another team to turn the tables after two defeats by overcoming Notley G in division three. Chris High made the difference with three wins.

Leaders Notley F and challenging Felsted RBL had 8-2 wins over Netts C and Rayne J respectively.

There will be few matches this season that will be more evenly matched, more closely fought or more unpredictable than the clash between Rayne's G and E teams in division two of the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Seven of the ten sets went the full five games, four one way and three the other. Three of those were decided by two points in the final game. And no player either won all his sets or lost them all.

After struggling for a team in recent weeks – they have used a reserve in four of their last six matches – Rayne G at last turned out probably their best side of Tom Elder, playing his first match since the beginning of December, John Sanderson and son Ryan.

Rayne E fielded Mo Hardy, Dave Punt and Paul Wellington, all nestling close to the top of the division's averages.

The evening started as it meant to go on. Punt lost the first two games to Ryan Sanderson before pulling one back and then going to the wire in the next two before clinching the win 12-10, 11-9.

Wellington made it 2-0 with a more straightforward win over John Sanderson before the G team notched up three wins in a row, all in five games and all after coming from behind.

Elder and Ryan Sanderson both beat Hardy while John Sanderson overcame Punt.

Elder then beat Wellington to make it 4-2 to the G team but a doubles defeat left the result still in the balance.

The next two sets were the closest of the evening, Hardy beating John Sanderson 13-11 in the fifth and Punt denying Elder an unbeaten evening at 14-12 in the fifth.

Ryan Sanderson then lost the first two games to Wellington, just took the third at 14-12 and held on to win the final two to make the match score a fitting 5-5.

Without any of those players the previous week, Rayne G had lost resoundingly to Black Notley E by 8-2. Keith Flowers was unbeaten for Notley E.

Division two leaders Notley C were little troubled by their D team but their 8-2 victory included an excellent win by Oliver Hicks, playing up from the third division, over Rob Stannard.

Notley E remain just ahead of Rayne F who won by the same score against White Lions. Ted Sims won his three sets.

Nomads had both Kevin Saunders and Garry Fryatt in the side against Netts B but neither could get the better of Ben Page or Patrick Gilbert and it was Netts who took the match by 7-3.

Netts' first team remain in command in division one. They had a 9-1 win over Rayne C where Ryan Pitt's win over John Cleasby avoided the whitewash.

But it was by no means easy. Netts won no fewer than four sets by two points in the fifth game. That made a long evening for Nikki Kennard who was involved in all four.

Notley A and Rayne A, who occupy the next two slots behind Netts, shared the points. Rayne had one reserve and Notley two and it was Notley's one regular player, Ian Hayden, who held them together with his three singles.

Liberal had an 8-2 win over Rayne D where Robin Armstrong was the only Liberal player to get the better of Richard Whiteside, while Rayne B's two players took six of the seven sets available against Sible Hedingham.

The top two teams came together in division three and it was leaders Notley F who once again saw off Rayne H, this time by 7-3. Chris Parr was unbeaten.

Felsted RBL's 8-2 win enabled them to jump above Rayne H with Notley H one point behind them after a win by the same score over Rayne I.

Fresh from his win in the league's cadets' singles, Oliver Hicks won his three singles in Notley G's 7-3 win over their I team while Joe Nourse, the player he beat in the final, did likewise in Netts C's 7-3 win over Rayne J.

In a tight match, Braintree veterans' B team beat Burnham B 6-3 in the Essex League division two.

Four sets went the full five games and Braintree won them all.

Jon Hill set the side on their way with a win at 14-12 in the fifth against Ev Lucas, once of Witham FC.

Burnham then went into a 3-1 lead but Braintree allowed them to get no further. Hill won his other singles, Robin Armstrong beat Ken James and Duncan Elloy, also once of Witham FC, had an excellent win over Lucas.

Sixteen-year-old Warren Baines brought off probably the win of his career in the Braintree Table Tennis League when he overcame the highly ranked Sean Clift.

Baines has won almost everything in division three but has only been given one previous outing to show his potential in division two.

On this occasion he was filling in for Black Notley E and dealt with Clift, currently fifth in the division's individual averages, in convincing fashion 11-9, 11-8, 11-9.

He also overcame Adam Pitt but found Lyndon Griffiths just a bit too much for him.

His two wins, added to two from Keith Flowers, were not quite enough to prevent Notley D from claiming a victory.

Notley's C team had less trouble with White Lions and dropped only one set, Adam Purslow's win over Guy McKenzie.

After a moderate season, veteran campaigner Alastair Brown sprang to life for Rayne F against Nomads. He won his three singles for the first time this season to help his side to a 7-3 victory.

Warren Baines' outing for the E team was not his only excursion to the table that evening. He also played in his own team, Notley H, against Notley G, and this time things did not all go his own way.

Instead he found fellow junior Oliver Hicks out for revenge for the two defeats in their other meetings this season. And he got it, 7-11, 11-8, 11-5, 12-10.

That ensured an 8-2 win for the G team.

At the 21st attempt new club Stebbing have recorded their first win. Netts C only had two players but even so Stebbing had the moral victory as well as the actual one by winning 4-3 on the night (7-3 overall). Glenn Maddern won both his singles and Tom Richards one while Maddern combined with Nick Osborne to take the doubles.

At the top end of the table Notley F sailed on majestically with a 10-0 conquest of their own I team.

Second-placed Felsted beat Rayne I 6-4 but Rayne H drew within two points of them by beating their own J team 8-2.

In division one leaders Netts A dropped three sets against Liberal, a team they had beaten 9-1 twice this season. Barry Pritchard's win over Nikki Kennard and Mike Johnston's over John Cleasby added to a doubles win for the two of them brought in Liberal's three points.

Rayne A had their usual tussle with their own C team where Jon Hill won his three singles against his former teammates for the third time. It was not quite enough, though, as the A team emerged with a 6-4 victory.

Rayne's B team were indebted to Dean Andrews' three singles for their 7-3 win against their own D team while Notley B overcame Sible Hedingham 9-1. Roy Hooper's win over Duncan Elloy in five games was their sole success.

All three divisions will be represented in the semi finals of the Braintree Table Tennis League handicap knockout cup.

Rayne C and Sible Hedingham from division one, Black Notley C, the division two leaders, and Notley F, top of division three, will vie for a place in the final in May.

Notley F had a fairly comfortable quarter final passage against their own E team. Tom Brown starred with three singles in their 7-2 win.

The other three matches were considerably tighter, Rayne C coming past Felsted RBL 5-3, with the help of two wins out of two for Jon Hill, while the other two ties finished 5-4.

Hedingham were given three sets start by Notley I, who only had two players. But they had to fight for their 5-4 win. Roy Hooper and Graham Cannon both won one singles while Mike Smith and Vernon King took two each for Notley.

Notley C's win was the closest of all, indeed as close as it could be, Zach Harrington beating Keith Martin 11-9 in the fifth game in the final set of the evening with the score at 4-4.

In a seesawing match, it was the fifth set to go the full distance.

Hedingham were unable to match their success in the league. They lost 7-3 to Rayne D, the team just above them, and are rapidly running out of opportunities to break their duck for the season.

Richard Whiteside was unbeaten for Rayne D.

Notley B's chances of finishing above their A team took a tumble when the A team won the match between them 7-3. That meant the A team closed the gap to six points and have a match in hand.

Zach Harrington, 17, playing up from division two, won a further set at the higher level to make it four in four matches.

Rayne A are one point ahead of Notley A after their 8-2 win over Liberal.

Like Hedingham, White Lions in division two are also running out of matches with a zero still in their wins column.

Notley D had to call in a reserve to face them, but Warren Baines has already proved he is no slouch in division two and he remained unbeaten in the D team's 7-3 win.

At the top Notley C had a 9-1 win over Nomads but the visitors pushed them hard. They took four sets the full five games but came up short in each.

Rayne E and Notley E almost produced one of those curios where three players in a team win two sets each but each loses to a different player.

Bruce Wickham's win over Dave Punt was followed by a Keith Flowers success against Mo Hardy.

The final piece in the jigsaw would have been a victory for Peter Foster over Paul Wellington but the Rayne man declined to play ball. It went all the way to deuce in the fifth game but Wellington just held on at 13-11 to give his side an 8-2 victory.

Division three leaders Notley F had a rare hiccup when they could only draw with their own G team after nine successive wins.

And they came close to their first defeat. At 4-5 down, Victor Chan just hauled himself over the line against Mike Pitt at 11-8 in the fifth.

Rayne H and Felsted RBL continue to play nip and tuck behind them, Rayne slipping back into second place after a 7-3 win over Stebbing.

That was closer than they might have expected after two 10-0 wins against the same opposition so far this season. But they reckoned without a sterling performance from Glenn Maddern who illustrated his considerable improvement by taking all three singles.

There were three wins each from two of the league's youngest players, Chris Hillman and Joe Nourse, in Netts C's 7-3 win over Rayne I, and a first success of the season for the league's oldest, the redoubtable 85-year-old Harold Jones, in Notley I's 7-3 defeat by Rayne J.

All three divisional leaders strengthened their hold in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

League champions Netts A and Black Notley F, who are out in front in division three, both had 10-0 wins while Notley C, the top team in division two, had no match but sat back while their two closest rivals lost.

Netts A's win, over bottom team Sible Hedingham, improved their position by two points as their three closest challengers, Notley B, Rayne A and Notley A, all won 8-2.

Notley B's win came against Rayne D while Rayne A beat Rayne B and Notley overcame Rayne C.

In division two, second-placed Rayne E, who have already been involved in one of the tightest matches of the season, featured in another unpredictable tussle against Notley D.

Just as in their recent battle with Rayne G, this was a match in which no player won all three sets or lost all three.

Rayne E started off in storming mood and took the first three singles, but then stalled as Notley took six of the remaining seven sets to take the match – and three of those wins came at either 12-10 or 11-9 in the fifth game.

Lyndon Griffiths and Guy McKenzie won two singles for Notley and Mo Hardy two for Rayne.

Netts B, in third place, encountered an unexpected obstacle in the shape of lowly Rayne F.

Netts were without the reigning boys' singles champion Patrick Gilbert, but still could not have foreseen a 7-3 defeat at the hands of a team they had beaten 9-1 earlier in the season.

Ted Sims and Malcolm Wehmeyer won twice but it was that gloriously unorthodox old warrior Alastair Brown who wiped away the years and ran through all three of them.

Netts recovered to win their next match 7-3 against Notley E but their chances of the title are fading fast.

Rayne F on the other hand went in the opposite direction in their next match, a 10-0 mauling at the hands of Rayne G.

Nomads ended a run of four successive defeats with a 6-4 win over bottom club White Lions. Kevin Saunders was unbeaten for Nomads but came perilously close to defeat against Adam Purslow, scraping home 10-12, 9-11, 13-11, 11-6, 11-9.

Notley F's 10-0 win in division three came against Rayne J, a match in which only one set was stretched beyond three games.

Their closest challengers, Rayne H and Felsted RBL, dropped further behind with wins of 7-3 and 6-4 respectively.

Rayne H's win came over their own I team. Charles Wilkinson and Tony Stredder took the seven sets between them.

Felsted were stretched by Notley G but three singles from Ian Butler and two from Dave Swash helped them over the line.

Tim Townsend and Brian Dixon put seven sets on the board for Rayne J against Notley I but in their next match Notley I encountered few difficulties in taking all ten sets against a two-man Stebbing.

Braintree Table Tennis League men's singles champion Paul Davison tumbled to his first league defeat since winning the title in February.

And it was Black Notley B's James Hicks, the man who had helped end his run of three successive title wins, who was responsible.

Hicks and Steve Northcott both beat Davison at the group stage to knock him out of the men's singles last season and the Netts A captain found it no easier this time.

Hicks won in three straight games 12-10, 11-9, 12-10.

He also added John Cleasby to his victims, but not Kevin Gowlett, who got the better of him in four games to give his side an 8-2 victory.

In their previous match, Notley B had a 6-4 win over Rayne C, with Hicks this time winning all three.

Notley's A team had a comfortable 9-1 win over Liberal. Barry Pritchard's 13-11-in-the-fifth win over Trevor Carter made sure it was not 10-0.

There was no such saviour for Rayne G against division two leaders Notley C. All ten sets went to the home side.

Kevin Saunders won his three singles in Nomads' draw with Notley D.

On the face of it, the Rayne F-Notley E game should have been a close one. They stood one point apart and had won one each of their first two meetings. But Rayne had other ideas and stormed to an 8-2 win.

Keith Flowers took the two for Notley E and came within a whisker of making it three. But Ted Sims held firm at 12-10 in the fifth to register an unbeaten evening.

In division three, Warren Baines won all five sets in Notley H's 8-2 win over a two-person Netts C and their 6-4 win over Rayne H.

Oliver Hicks was unbeaten in Notley G's 7-3 win over Rayne J while Vernon King was similarly all-conquering in Notley I's 6-4 victory over Rayne I.

Leaders Notley F dismissed bottom team Stebbing 10-0.

Braintree are the new champions of the Essex Veterans Table Tennis League.

They clinched the title with a series of excellent wins over a weekend's play.

They beat both Harlow and Burnham 7-2 and took all nine sets against Colchester to finish three points clear of Ilford, a team they had lost to in the first set of matches.

League veterans' champion Peter Hayden and new veteran Kevin Gowlett were the stars of the weekend. Both remained unbeaten in their six sets.

Jon Hill won three out of six and the team won eight out of the nine doubles.

A total of 11 doubles out of 15 were won over the two weekends, a vital factor in taking the title. Steve Kerns, Ian Hayden and Robin Armstrong also contributed over the first weekend.

Peter Hayden, who played in every match, won eight of his ten singles.

In the Braintree League first division, Rayne A played three matches in six days.

They began with a 10-0 win over Rayne D, lost 8-2 to Netts A the following day and finally beat Sible Hedingham 7-3.

Steve Pennell played in all three and won six out of nine.

Richard Jennings made a rare appearance for Hedingham and won twice, including a win over Pennell at 16-14 in the fifth game.

There were good wins for Peter Hance over both Ian Hayden and Trevor Carter in Black Notley A's 8-2 win over Rayne B while Jon Hill and Ryan Pitt won all seven sets between them in Rayne C's 7-3 win over Liberal.

Division two leaders Notley C moved a notch closer to the title with a 9-1 win over their own E team. The only blot on their landscape was the doubles which Helen Barnett and Bruce Wickham managed to pinch after three deuce games 6-11, 9-11, 13-11, 15-13, 12-10.

Rayne E kept in touch with an 8-2 win over their own F team. The doubles was again one that got away: Ted Sims and Brian How won it in straight games.

Notley D managed to win the doubles, and six singles, in beating Netts B, whose three wins all came from the bat of Patrick Gilbert.

White Lions continue to fall just short. They took four sets to the full five games against Rayne G but could win none of them, or any of the others.

And that meant a particularly impressive three wins for Rayne's Brian Dixon, who normally plies his trade in division three.

Black Notley F are the new champions of division three of the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Two 7-3 wins, one over their own H team and the other against Rayne I, put them beyond the reach of their pursuers and maintained their unbeaten record.

All five of their players contributed to the wins. Chris Parr was unbeaten against the H team while Ian Wallace had a similar status against Rayne I. Victor Chan picked up three wins out of six while Matt Wallace won two against Notley H and Tom Brown one against Rayne I.

Just below them Felsted RBL and Rayne H have swapped places regularly for most of the season and had another close tussle in their latest encounter before Rayne H emerged with a 6-4 win.

In their next match, Felsted turned that scoreline around against Notley I. Ian Butler was unbeaten in both matches.

Notley I earlier lost 9-1 to Notley H. Regan Farley-Hearn took the I team's point with a good win over Alan Cook.

Oliver Hicks won his three singles in Notley G's 7-3 win over Netts C while Nick Osborne and Tom Richards picked up rare singles wins in Stebbing's 8-2 defeat by Rayne J.

In division one, leaders Netts A had a comfortable 8-2 win over Rayne A, a result that enabled Notley A to jump above Rayne after a 10-0 win over Sible Hedingham.

Liberal stretched five sets to five games against Notley B but their only victory came from a Barry Pritchard fightback against Steve Buer who had taken the first two ends.

Rayne C got the better of their own B team for the third time this season and for the second time by 8-2. Jon Hill was unbeaten.

Men's singles semi finalist Kevin Gowlett went two stages better at the Clacton League finals when he took the title for the second time in five years.

Never at his best in the Braintree championships, Gowlett was in sparkling form by the coast, knocking out reigning champion Greg Green 11-3, 11-4, 11-8 in the semi final and then overcoming former champion Gary Young 14-12, 11-4, 5-11, 11-5 in the final.

The Black Notley club have scored a double in the Braintree Table Tennis League

The week after their F team took the division three title, their C team followed suit in division two.

They secured the title with a match to spare, but it was not in the way they would have wished as it was a match that ended a 19-match unbeaten run.

It was second-placed Rayne E who got the better of them, but not by enough to affect the outcome of the division.

Keith Martin led the Rayne team to a 6-4 success by winning all his sets, three in straight games and one in four.

Notley C finished off their programme with another tough assignment, this time against third-placed Netts B, and again they were unable to record a win.

Patrick Gilbert was the player who held the opposition together this time with three singles while Ben Page took two. They failed to go on and win the match, however, when the two of them were bettered in the doubles by Rob Stannard and Zach Harrington.

Netts B had earlier beaten Rayne F 7-3 and went on to beat Rayne G by the same score.

Rayne E had a 9-1 win over White Lions who embarrassed their hosts by taking the doubles.

The Lions' last chance of at last putting a tick in their wins column came and went at home to Notley E, the team just above them in the league.

They led 2-1, 3-2 and 4-3 but the last three sets eluded them.

Notley E's final match was a 7-3 defeat by Nomads who had earlier lost 8-2 to Rayne G.

As well as two league titles, the Notley club have a chance to a clean sweep of the knock out cups as they have at least one team through to each of the three finals.

They cannot fail to win the handicap cup as it is being contested by their C and F teams, the third Notley v Notley handicap final in the last eight years.

The F team, the holders, overcame Rayne C 6-3. Matt Wallace led the way with his three singles.

The C team had a tougher battle with Sible Hedingham before coming through by 5-2.

Three of the seven sets played went to five games and only one finished in three straight. Zach Harrington won both sets he played and Rob Stannard won two out of three.

Stannard was in stunning form in the team knock out cup. Representing Notley D this time, he scored a superb win over former men's singles champions Steve Pennell 11-5, 11-8, 11-8.

He nearly made it a double when he took Brian Riedling to deuce in the fifth game, but the Rayne player just held on to take it at 13-11 and clinch the match 5-1.

In the final Rayne will face Notley B, who they knocked out Liberal.

That was a much tighter affair and looked at one stage as if it was going to go the other way. Liberal led 3-1 but then became becalmed as Notley B reeled off the remaining five sets.

The middle doubles turned the tide. A win for Liberal at that stage would have made it 4-1 and that was the way it looked like going as they led by two games to one. But Steve Buer and James Hicks dug in to take the final two games 11-9, 11-8.

Hicks then beat Robin Armstrong in four games before Duncan Elloy clinched another vital set 8-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 12-10 against Mike Johnston.

Buer then beat Barry Pritchard in straight games to take his side through.

Rayne G are another of last year's winner through to a final. They won the restricted cup last year as Rayne H and start strong favourites against Notley E, who finished 52 points behind them in the league.

Rayne G had little difficulty coming past their F team 7-2 while Notley E, finalists three years ago, won the last three sets to beat White Lions 6-3. Peter Foster and Keith Flowers were unbeaten.

All three finals will be played tomorrow (Thursday) night at Black Notley Community Association. Spectators are more than welcome.

Netts A are the champions of Braintree Table Tennis League for the second year in succession.

They made certain of the title with two 10-0 wins in the final week of the season. Neither Rayne B nor Rayne D were able to make any impression on them.

Rayne B's Peter Hance came closest when he led John Cleasby by two games to one, but the Netts player emerged the winner in five.

Dean Andrews also stretched Cleasby to five, in his case 11-9, 10-12, 12-10, 10-12, 11-6, but otherwise Cleasby, Paul Davison and Kevin Gowlett carried all before them.

Black Notley A ensured second place when their two-man team (Peter Hayden and Trevor Carter) scored a 7-3 win over Rayne D.

Notley B denied Rayne A third place by beating them 8-2. James Hicks and Duncan Elloy were unbeaten.

Andrews and Hance both won their two singles in Rayne B's 7-3 win over Liberal's two-man side while Rayne C's Jon Hill, Vicki Stredder and Ryan Pitt went through the card unbeaten against Sible Hedingham.

In division three, Rayne H secured second spot behind Notley F with 8-2 wins over both Netts C and Notley G. Tony Stredder won six out of six.

Felsted RBL held on to third spot after a spirited draw against division champions Notley F. It was Notley's fourth draw of the campaign and their second against Felsted.

Notley H finished only two points behind Felsted after a 9-1 win over Rayne J.

Fifteen-year-old Oliver Gregory registered the first unbeaten evening of his career in Rayne I's draw with their own J team while Stebbing finished with two defeats, 10-0 against Notley G and 8-2 at Rayne I.

The league's annual general meeting will be held at the Braintree Liberal Club on Thursday May 24 at 7.45. Divisional and cup trophies will be presented at the meeting.

Rayne had a double success at the cup finals day in the Braintree Table Tennis League.

Their A team won the team knockout cup, an event they last won in 2004, while their G team took the restricted cup, for teams in the lower half of the league.

Black Notley F took the handicap cup.

Rayne A had visions of a tough evening against a Black Notley B side with former men's singles champion Steve Kerns in their line-up.

Possibly the last thing they expected was a 6-0 win.

Brian Riedling and Steve Pennell got the evening going with a victory in the doubles in four games and then John Andrews pulled off the win of the evening when he got the better of Kerns in five games.

Pennell and Riedling added singles victories before Kerns was on the losing side again, this time in the doubles with Steve Buer, a set that fluctuated intriguingly before Pennell and Andrews crept home 7-11, 14-12, 11-8, 10-12, 12-10.

The G team's 8-1 win over Black Notley E was not as straightforward as the scoreline suggests.

The first two sets both went to five games and the third was settled at 13-11 in the fourth before Notley pulled one back when Peter Foster scored an excellent win over Shirley Carroll.

A doubles win in four games followed by another five-game battle – Dawn Baldry just getting the better of Keith Flowers at 11-8 in the final end – and the trophy was theirs.

They played the match to a finish, enabling Baldry and Tom Elder to remain unbeaten.

The line-up in the handicap final ensured that there would be a double of a different kind as both protagonists had won their respective divisions.

In the event it turned out to be a double double. Notley F not only completed the double of the division three and handicap cup, it was also the second year running that they had taken the latter, which they achieved with an 8-1 win over their clubmates, division two champions Notley C.

It was the team's younger element, Matt Wallace, 15, and Tom Brown, 14, who commanded the stage, both taking all three singles.

The doughty Chris Parr faced his opponents either off scratch, or with only a small handicap. He scored an excellent scratch win over Zach Harrington, beat Rob Stannard without needing the handicap (Stannard started on minus 2 but lost 11-7, 11-7, 11-5) and just missed out against Gordon Fairchild, who actually had the toughest handicap.

They will have their work cut out to make it three in a row as their elevation to division two will mean tougher handicaps next season.

But that won't concern them for now.

Two of the three divisional winners in the Braintree Table Tennis League went through the season without tasting defeat.

Champions Netts A remained unbeaten on the table but their administration was not as impressive as their table tennis. Their two 'defeats' were matches they conceded.

They and division three winners Black Notley F were given a few stiff examinations. Netts were held to a draw by runners-up Notley A while Notley F shared the points no fewer than four times.

Division two winners Notley C were beaten twice, once early in the season and once late on. In the middle they had an unbeaten run of 19 matches.

Netts A had to overcome the loss of Nikki Kennard for seven matches early in the season because of an arm injury but John Cleasby stepped forward more frequently than he had expected to keep the title bid on course. Mainstays Kevin Gowlett and Paul Davison lost four and six sets respectively.

Notley A suffered their own availability problems with each of their regular trio of Peter and Ian Hayden and Trevor Carter missing for chunks of the season. They called on seven reserves to help them out, a figure dwarfed by Rayne A who called on no fewer than 14 players during the season.

At the top of division two, Notley C were dogged by both Rayne E and Netts B for most of the season and ended up with the narrowest winning margin of the three divisions.

Their early defeat was by Nomads, not an easy nut to crack when both Kevin Saunders and Garry Fryatt were in the side, and then runners-up Rayne E pipped them 6-4 in their last but one fixture.

Their wins were fairly evenly spread around their basic line-up of Gordon Fairchild, Zach Harrington and Rob Stannard.

Division three winners Notley F were the most convincing champions, with a 23-point winning margin.

They looked the likely winners from the start after winning their first eight matches.

The combination of the steady determination of Chris Parr, returning to the league after some years' absence, and the youthful promise of Matt Wallace, plus the steady backing of Ian Wallace, Victor Chan and Tom Brown saw them over most of the hurdles.

Felsted RBL, new to the league this season, made a promising start and for a time looked possible runners-up before finishing a creditable third. Their captain Ian Butler won more sets (68) than anyone else in the league.

Final tables:

	DIVISION 1					
	P	W	D	L	A	P
Netts A	24	21	1	2	57	183
Black Notley A	24	18	2	4	69	170
Black Notley B	24	18	1	5	83	157
Rayne A	24	16	1	7	90	150
Rayne C	24	11	2	11	112	128
Liberal A	24	8	2	14	145	95
Rayne B	24	6	1	17	157	83
Rayne D	24	3	2	19	174	66
Sible Hedingham	24	0	2	22	192	47

	DIVISION 2					
	P	W	D	L	A	P
Black Notley C	24	18	4	2	68	172
Rayne E	24	17	2	5	77	163
Netts B	24	14	3	7	98	142
Black Notley D	24	14	3	7	102	138
Rayne G	24	13	3	8	102	138
Nomads	24	7	4	13	140	100
Rayne F	24	6	4	14	152	88
Black Notley E	24	6	1	17	154	86
White Lions	24	0	2	22	187	53

	DIVISION 3					
	P	W	D	L	A	P
Black Notley F	27	23	4	0	62	207
Rayne H	27	21	1	5	86	184
Felsted RBL	27	17	5	5	100	170
Black Notley H	27	17	3	7	101	168
Black Notley I	27	13	2	12	126	144
Black Notley G (6)	27	14	3	10	121	143
Rayne I	26	6	1	19	164	96
Rayne J	27	6	3	18	177	93
Netts C (3)	26	5	0	21	180	75
Stebbing	27	1	0	26	221	49

Figures in brackets indicate points lost for late scorecards

Peter Hayden may have run out of steam in the men's singles final, but he maintained an impressive record in league matches in the Braintree Table Tennis League this season. He lost only once – to Kevin Gowlett – in 56 sets, to finish comfortably top of the individual averages.

Gowlett, who lost four, moves up one place to second, displacing men's singles champion Paul Davison, whose six defeats relegated him to fourth place. In between them comes James Hicks, whose steadily consistent season saw him move up four places to No.3.

Keith Martin tops the division two averages. He lost a set in his first match of the season – to Malcolm Wehmeyer – and remained undefeated thereafter.

Chris Parr, who tops division three, had a similar record of just one defeat, in his case to Ian Butler.

Individual averages, last season's positions in brackets:

Division 1:

1 (1) Peter Hayden 55 wins in 56 sets, average 98.2; 2 (3) Kevin Gowlett 52-56, 92.7; 3 (7) James Hicks 43-48, 89.6; 4 (2) Paul Davison 43-49, 87.7; 5 (10) Ian Hayden 40-50, 80; 6 (-) John Cleasby 26-34, 76.5; 7 (5) Nikki Kennard 21-28, 75; 8 (8) Jon Hill 52-71, 73.2; 9 (-) Steve Elmes 19-27, 70.4; 10 (11) Steve Pennell 42-61, 68.9; 11 (6) Ian Whiteside 24-35, 68.6; 12 (12) Trevor Carter 30-44, 68.2; 13 (-) Andrew McEwan 15-24, 62.5; 14 (-) Ryan Pitt 29-50, 58; 15 (-) Steve Buer 14-25, 56; 16 (-) Dean Andrews 19-35, 54.3; 17= (13) Peter Hance 30-60, (9) Graham Farmer 21-42, 50; 19 (14) Mike Johnston 25-54, 46.3; 20 (17) Duncan Elloy 17-38, 44.7.

Division 2:

1 Keith Martin 28-29, 96.6; 2 Tom Elder 23-26, 88.5; 3 Ben Page 50-59, 84.8; 4 Gordon Fairchild 57-69, 82.6; 5 Patrick Gilbert 50-62, 80.7; 6 Sean Clift 32-42, 76.2; 7 Ryan Sanderson 31-41, 75.6; 8 Zach Harrington 45-63, 71.4; 9 Mo Hardy 29-41, 70.7; 10 Dave Punt 39-56, 69.6.

Division 3:

1 Chris Parr 46-47, 97.9; 2 Warren Baines 67-71, 94.4; 3 Ian Butler 68-73, 93.2; 4 Ian Wallace 55-61, 90.2; 5 Tony Stredder 28-33, 84.9; 6 Charles Wilkinson 47-57, 82.5; 7 Vernon King 41-50, 82; 8 Oliver Hicks 37-47, 78.7; 9 Matt Wallace 36-47, 76.6; 10 Tim Gowers 32-44, 72.7.

Black Notley chairman Lyndon Griffiths is this year's winner of the Martin Bawden Award for Service or Achievement. Griffiths has been chairman at Notley for the past four years and was treasurer for two years before that. He is also general secretary of the league and a qualified coach. Since retiring from work he has qualified as an umpire and travels the country officiating at tournaments and league events.

At the league's AGM, it was decided to change the entry fee from an individual one of £10 per player to a team fee of £45 a team.

Officers elected were:

President, Len Woolmer;

Chairman, Ron Fosker;

General Secretary, Lyndon Griffiths;

Treasurer, Kevin Saunders;

Fixtures Secretary, Ian Whiteside;

Competition Secretary, Keith Martin;

Development Officer, Brian Davison;

Inter-league Secretary, Peter Hayden;

Coaching Secretary, Robin Armstrong;

Press Officer, Ron Fosker;

Auditor, Brian Cook;

Child Protection Officer, Clare Johnson;

Management Committee members, Steve Ascott, Mark Brown, Zach Harrington,
Alan McEwan
