

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 Cliff 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.