

Paul Davison's chances of retaining his Braintree Table Tennis League men's singles crown were greatly enhanced when Kevin Gowlett, many people's tip for the title, had his progress unexpectedly stopped at the quarter final stage.

Trevor Carter brought off a superb win over the No.2 seed to reach his first men's singles semi final with the convincing scores of 11-9, 12-10, 9-11, 11-3.

On finals night at Black Notley Community Association tomorrow (Thursday) night, Carter will face Ian Hayden, runner-up in 2007 and flying the family flag in the absence of original No.2 seed Peter Hayden, sidelined with a knee injury.

Davison beat Scott Dowsett in the last eight and will now face Dowsett senior, six times champion Terry, in the other semi final.

Dowsett, back in action this year after an eight-year lay-off, is not yet the player he was but had too much for Rob Stannard in the quarter final.

Hayden and Carter joined forces to reach the men's doubles final but it was a close run thing.

In their semi final they lost the first two games to Stannard and James Hicks and just pulled home at 11-9 in the third before taking the last two games 11-7, 11-6.

Davison and Gowlett, runners-up for the last three years, dropped a game to Dean Andrews and Sean Clift in the quarter final but came past the two Dowsetts comfortably in the semi final.

The veterans singles final features two players who may well have contested the men's final had they been available on Sunday.

Steve Kerns and Nigel Hodder were both committed elsewhere but took their places in the veterans' events on Friday and made their way through to the last two.

Kerns had a comfortable victory over Hayden in the semi final while Hodder was stretched to four games by Ken Lewis.

Scott Dowsett and Adam Pitt will contest the junior boys' final where Pitt will be hoping to go one better than his brother Ryan who lost in the final in 2004.

And Ryan will be making two finals night appearances himself this year, in both the restricted singles and the division two singles.

It was in the restricted that Sible Hedingham's returning stars Graham Cannon and Roy Hooper made their mark.

Promising juniors some 30 years ago, Cannon and Hooper have picked up their bats again after a long lay-off and showed how quickly they have come to terms with the game by scoring victories over the Nos 2 and 3 seeds Sean Clift and Chris Ciniglio respectively..

Cannon reached the semi final where he lost to Pitt who had beaten Hooper in the previous round.

Ciniglio also lost to Kevin Saunders which meant he did not progress from his group.

By coming second in his group, Clift lost his position in the draw and found himself facing No.1 seed and teammate Duncan Elloy in the next round where he perished in four games.

Elloy went on to beat Saunders to reach the final of the event he won in 1987.

The top two seeds in the restricted singles are taken out of the division two singles to avoid duplicating the event and as a result are allowed to play in the division one singles.

And that gave Elloy a chance to shine again as he removed two first division players, Laurie Sapiano and Dean Andrews, to reach his second final of the evening.

He will face Stannard who came past Clift with the undulating scoreline of 8-11, 13-11, 11-4, 1-11, 11-8.

Ryan Pitt's second final will be the division two singles where he faces Ciniglio.

And Hedingham's Cannon and Hooper got their reward for their weekend's endeavours with an appearance against each other in the final of the division three singles final.

Adam Pitt has already secured one trophy, the handicap singles which was played through to a finish at the weekend.

He had a titanic battle to come past Lyndon Griffiths in the semi final at 12-10 in the fifth, but in the final found a way through Ian Whiteside's defences where everyone else had failed. He won 13-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-0.

Whiteside had more success in the over 50s singles in which he beat No.1 seed Ken Lewis 11-8 in the fifth then No.2 seed Trevor Carter 11-9 in the fifth.

Juniors were to the fore in the handicap doubles in which partners are drawn at random on the day.

Griffiths and 11-year-old Oliver Hicks emerged victorious against Ryan Pitt and 16-year-old Will Jackson.

Jackson and Adam Pitt won the junior doubles with a victory over Dowsett and Hicks 11-8, 7-11, 11-6, 11-6 while Dowsett won the cadets' singles with Hicks in second place.