

Only one team was promoted and one relegated under the new structure in this season's Braintree Table Tennis League – and that meant two teams within the same club swapping places.

Under the new system, the top six continued into a third phase while the other three teams joined the remaining 18 teams in a separate play-off section to determine next season's line-up.

Rayne B and Pillar House A retained their first division status without difficulty but the final place became a straight fight between Rayne's C and E teams.

The E team had already proved themselves superior to their own D team by taking the second division title in some comfort. They then set about upsetting the alphabet again in the final phase by rising above their C team to claim the final division one place.

If there was such an award, they could lay a serious claim to being the team of the year.

No eyebrows were raised when they were ranked below the D team at the start of the season. The last time the two teams had been in the same division, in 2007, the D team had finished comfortably ahead.

But Richard Whiteside and Phil Wade had tasted success last season when they earned the second division runners-up spot in the company of ex-first division player Paul Whybrow.

That seemed to give them fresh impetus and the returning Simon Fleming, back after missing most of the previous season through illness, also added extra bite to his game.

As a result they have earned the right to a crack at the higher sphere.

They were chased home in the first phase of the season by Sible Hedingham, who performed the rare feat of gaining the runners-up medals only a year after gaining promotion.

The third division title went, in some comfort, to new club White Lions who, like Rayne, suffered alphabetical embarrassment when it was their B team who took the honours ahead of their A team.

That was largely down to the fact that the B team managed to persuade Keith Perrins not to hang up his bat, as had been his intention at the end of last season, and join Steve and Stuart Ascott in a line-up that rarely faltered.

Unlike Rayne E, though, they could not make it stick and in the play-off stages just missed out on a place in next year's division two.

Instead, Black Notley D, who under the old system would have been relegated, proved their right to remain in division two by finishing above them.

Play off group 1

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
Rayne B	6	6	0	0	55
Pillar House A	6	4	1	1	36
Rayne E	6	2	0	4	31
Rayne C	6	4	1	1	30
Sible Hedingham	6	2	0	4	21
Rayne D	6	2	0	4	20
Liberal B	6	0	0	6	17

Play-off group 2

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
BNCA TTC C	5	5	0	0	38
Nomads	5	3	1	1	28
Rayne F	5	1	2	2	22
NETTS B	5	2	0	2	18
BNCA TTC D	5	1	0	4	18
White Lions A	5	0	1	4	16

Consolation trophy

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
White Lions B	6	5	0	1	38
Rayne G	6	4	1	1	37
BNCA TTC E	6	4	1	1	34
BNCA TTC H	6	3	0	3	31
Rayne H	6	1	1	4	26
BNCA TTC F	6	1	1	4	24
BNCA TTC G	6	0	2	4	20

Players will be asked to consider a return to the old scoring system at the league's AGM tomorrow (Thursday) to be held at the Liberal Club, Braintree, at 7.45.

The current system of a point per set has been used for the past three seasons, but the AGM will be asked to consider a proposal to revert to the system of four points for an 8-2 win or better, three for 6-4 or 7-3, two for 5-5 and one for 4-6 or 3-7.

To take account of the new requirement by the English Table Tennis Association for individual registration, the league is also proposing to change the system of payment.