

Notley F

Steve Willis
Clare Johnson
Karan Baxi

Liberal B

Derek Finch
Matthew Finch
Ray Fairless

Umpire = Tim Huxtable

Witham Town Football Club will host this year's Handicap Cup Final. Both teams being from Division 2 this year and with Notley F having got relegated have a point to prove. Liberal finishing 6th in Division 2, with twice as many points as Notley will go into this match confident. This season they have met twice and both times have had even matches to level at 5-5.

The match gets underway with Steve against Matthew. A rather slow start from both but having to come from behind Matthew does not make it easy for Steve. A rather high tempo game from Matthew, but Steve keeps his composure and manages to pull off the victory with a 3-2 win.

In the second game Karan takes on Derek Finch. Karan breaks ahead to a 2-0 in games lead, but then seems to lose his composure and Derek takes full advantage by leveling it at 2-2. Every shot Karan makes, Derek is more than equal to it by playing some unbeatable returns. With the final game underway both battle it knowing that every point counts. Thankfully for Liberal B, Derek shows his experience by beating Karan in the fifth game.

With the scores at 1-1 Clare steps up to face Ray Fairless. Once again both get off to a slow start but they take little time to both begin playing some highly entertaining table tennis with some good rallies. Unfortunately for Steve and Karan, Clare loses the game and Ray takes Liberal B into the lead at 2-1.

Karan steps up to face Matthew in what before has proved to be a grueling, yet enjoyable, 5 game match in the league. Karan having gathered his thoughts again after his defeat, shows just how much he wanted it by beating Matthew in 3 games. Matthew pulled off some special shots but Karan was equal to them and manages to level the night at 2-2.

Then Clare and Derek take to the table and get started. Derek, with a win already tonight over Karan, carries on this vein of form. Clare, initially, gets caught off guard but then pulls back. After a long game, Derek pulls through and beats Clare. Liberal now go into the lead again at 3-2 overall.

Steve and Ray are next with both wanting a win to get them closer to the win. With Steve finding some form, makes some great backhand returns, which leaves Ray standing. Ray, though, seemed untroubled and gave Steve a run for his money by putting up a fight right until the very last point. The relief on Clare and Karan's face was visible as Steve took the game and brought the score level once again to 3-3.

Ray now faces the 15-year-old Karan. Both know the importance of this game as it could take Notley to within 1 game of victory or could level it for Liberal. Karan gets right in and plays some confident drives and loops. Ray responds by placing a series of smashes down both wings. Karan stays on top to take a 3-0 victory.

Clare steps up knowing that this could be the final match with the scores now 4-3 to Notley. Clare gets some words of wisdom from her team before with her consistent, pushing game commences. Clare may not like it but she was aware that Matthew will be unable to respond and took a, surprised in her eyes, but a well-deserved win.

Notley F take the win, 5-3, repeating Notley H's triumph a year earlier.

Many thanks to:

- Tim Huxtable for umpiring all the games
- The Braintree League for organising the tournament
- Braintree Removals B for setting up and hosting the match