

Netts A have emerged as champions Bocking's closest challengers in the Braintree Table Tennis League after two 8-2 wins pushed them up the league table.

But Black Notley A's challenge dissipated after an administrative mix-up meant they sent only one player to face the champions.

Netts' victories came over Rayne B and Black Notley B. Nikki Kennard played in both and won four out of the six while Philip Lawson was unbeaten against Rayne and Paul Davison against Notley.

Notley's two successes came from James Hicks while it was Peter Hance who took two for Rayne.

Trevor Carter's lone trek to Bocking for Notley A was in vain when no one turned up to join him. One-man teams are not allowed under league rules although he dutifully played, and lost, his three singles.

Notley did manage a 10-0 win against bottom team Rayne C but they have now dropped 19 more points than Bocking and that is a lot to make up.

Black Notley B did well to share the points with Rayne A. Wins for Graham Farmer over Steve Pennell, Rob Stannard over Dean Andrews and Laurie Sapiano over Jon Hill all come into the unexpected category.

Ten days after his eightieth birthday, Ray Fairless picked up his first win for nearly two years in Liberal B's match against Netts B in division two.

The venerable Fairless did not play last season but is back in action this time and had to work hard for his win over Patrick Gilbert, 67 years his junior, losing the first two games before showing his staying power and emerging triumphant in five.

Trevor Laird added his three singles and Paul Lombardi two to give Liberal a 7-3 win.

It was not only Notley A who suffered off the table this week. Division three leaders Pillar House B also had an administrative lapse and were forced to concede their match against Rayne H.

As a result Rayne G rise to the top after a draw with Notley E and a 6-4 win over Rayne H – but Pillar House still have a match in hand.

The division's top two players, Ron Celiz of Notley E and Tom Elder of Rayne H, both remained undefeated but there were two wins for Tim Gowers and Barry Mouser against Notley and Charles Wilkinson and Mouser against Rayne H.

White Lions A's slow start to the season has been one of the surprises of the division, but they began to set things right with a 10-0 win over Notley H.