

Braintree veterans' B team have pulled off a dramatic success in the Essex Table Tennis League.

The table was so close that they went into their final match with Southend B knowing that defeat would cost them relegation from the five-team division three, but that a good enough win could give them the title.

With a strong team of Steve Pennell, Jon Hill and Ian Whiteside, they dominated the opposition to such an extent that only the final doubles eluded them.

By then they had scored enough to give themselves the title, two points clear of both West Essex A and Basildon A, with Basildon B just a point further behind.

All three players won their two singles while Whiteside was on the winning side in both his doubles sets, one in straight games but the other, with Pennell, at 12-10 in the fifth game.

The veterans' first team, with availability problems, were less successful and found themselves relegated from division one.

The men's team, however, also with a number of players missing, finished fifth out of six in their division.

In the Braintree League, Bocking fell even further adrift of the title when they were beaten 7-3 by Rayne A. Kevin Gowlett won his three singles but that was it.

Black Notley A left the door open for them by dropping five points in a draw with Netts A. Netts only had two players but three wins from Paul Davison and two from Nikki Kennard were enough to give them a share of them points.

In play-off group one, Sible Hedingham's Mark Brown's run of form continued when he took his three singles in a 6-4 win over Rayne E, a match that finished at midnight.

Elloy was undefeated in Pillar House's next match, a draw with Rayne C.

Play-off group two leaders Notley C ended a run of four successive 7-3 wins by taking all ten from Pillar House B while second-placed Nomads were held to a draw by Rayne F.

Netts B put an end to any relegation worries with a crushing 10-0 win over Notley D.

White Lions B are still the team to beat in the consolation trophy, and they racked up a 7-3 win over Notley H. Keir Hughes can be particularly pleased with a win over Steve Willis.