

Black Notley A have regained the Braintree Table Tennis League title after their main rivals Bocking ran out of steam.

Bocking needed convincing wins in their last two matches to stand any chance of keeping the title on their shelf but dropped three points against Liberal A and ended with a crushing 8-2 defeat at Netts A.

The Netts defeat was irrelevant to the title as Notley had clinched it two days earlier when they took the seven points they needed from Rayne A.

Steve Pennell scored a good win over Ian Hayden and Jon Hill an even better one over Peter Hayden but it was not enough to stop them lifting the title.

Kelly Skeggs turned out for Netts for only the fourth time this season and after a surprise defeat by Richard Jennings, went on to take the scalp of Nigel Hodder.

Hodder also found Liberal's Barry Pritchard too much for him.

Earlier Netts had drawn with Notley B for whom James Hicks was unbeaten.

In play-off group one, Rayne E have earned the right to a place in next season's top division after just edging out their own C team.

The C team needed a 7-3 win to edge out their clubmates, but ended just one set short despite three wins from Dave Moles.

The final league table shows that it is not just the Westminster voting system that can throw up curious results. Because of the point-per-set system, Rayne E, who lost four out of six, finish ahead of their C team, who won four out of six.

Rayne B and Pillar House A had already maintained their first division status and finished in some style, Rayne with a 10-0 win over their own D team and Pillar House with an 8-2 win over Liberal B. Trevor Laird took the two points for Liberal.

It was Liberal's Dave Hardy who was in form in their 6-4 defeat by Rayne D. He won all three plus the doubles with Diane Garner to complete an excellent comeback season after many years out of the league.

The fight for the final place in next season's division two went to the wire.

Black Notley D looked in danger of losing their place as they went into the final week two points behind White Lions A but their four points from Rayne F coupled with Lions' 10-0 defeat by Notley C saved their status.

Ted Sims was unbeaten for Rayne F.

The destination of the consolation trophy also depended on the final week's results.

White Lions B had hoped to wrap the title up in their fixture against Notley G but they reckoned without cadet Warren Baines, who won all his singles to restrict them to a 6-4 victory.

That left Rayne G in with a chance of pinching the title if they could beat Notley F 9-1.

But that proved a step too far. Despite three wins by Charles Wilkinson, they could only register a 7-3 win and so finished one point behind their rivals.

Elsewhere Tom Elder returned to Rayne H's ranks and helped them to four points against both Notley F and Notley E, Notley H beat their G team 9-1 and Will Jackson was undefeated as Notley E beat the H team 7-3.