

A stunning and totally unexpected victory by 15-year-old Scott Dowsett turned this year's Braintree Table Tennis League team knock out cup final on its head and brought the cup back to Black Notley A when all seemed lost.

Dowsett had only been drafted in to the team at the last minute when Ian Hayden became unavailable.

He joined Peter Hayden and Trevor Carter against a Rayne A line-up of John Andrews, Jon Hill and Steve Pennell.

It produced what looked a very evenly matched event on paper. And so it proved.

To win Notley calculated that they would probably need to win at least two of the three doubles sets.

Agonisingly, they lost the first one – Dowsett and Hayden against Hill and Andrews – at 17-15 in the final game.

Then with the score at 2-2, Andrews and Pennell repeated the dose against Carter and Dowsett, this time at 11-9 in the fifth.

In between Hayden had scored an expected win over Andrews and Hill had dealt comfortably with Dowsett 11-5, 11-3, 11-6.

And in what turned out to be a vital win, Carter had got the better of Steve Pennell.

But after the doubles defeat Hill's victory over Carter at 11-7 in the fifth looked to have tipped the match decisively Rayne's way.

They needed only one of the final three sets to lift the cup and with Andrews, a player of vast experience, still to face Dowsett, victory looked assured.

Pennell almost clinched it himself in the next set when he stretched Hayden to five games.

But when Dowsett took to the table against Andrews he clearly had not read the script. He set out to dominate from the off and the former Clacton champion found himself floundering.

There were one or two wobbly moments and had Andrews managed to take an end, he may well have gone on to take two more, but his younger opponent stuck to his game to take it 11-9,11-6,11-8.

That left the match score at 4-4 with Hayden and Carter to face Hill and Pennell and initially it looked as though Dowsett's sterling efforts were to be for nothing as the Rayne pair took the first game.

But Hayden and Carter settled down and reeled off the next three to round off an evening of intriguing table tennis.

The restricted cup final followed a similar up and down path as Sible Hedingham strove to become the first team for ten years to retain the title.

They led Nomads 1-0 and 3-1 but were pegged back on both occasions. They dug in, though, and took the final three sets to lift the trophy.

Roy Hooper and Graham Cannon took the opening doubles before Kevin Saunders' victory over Mark Brown brought the scores level.

Cannon then scored a narrow 11-8-in-the-fifth win over Lorraine Burgess and Hooper beat Barrie Applegate to bring the score to 3-1.

A five-game victory for Saunders and Burgess in the doubles followed by another five-game win for Saunders against Cannon and the scores were level again.

This was where Hedingham got stuck in, however, and straight-game wins for Brown over Applegate and Hooper over Burgess brought them the trophy.