

## ESSEX OPEN

Fords Sports and Social Club in Ilford was the venue for the 2009 Essex Mens Open. As usual the competition entry quota was filled, this year and because of a change of venue the limit was imposed at 316 players.

The standard was as usual of the highest quality, even in the first round Hampshire's Paul Gibbs the current British Open Pairs champion, went out to a former champion in Steve Johnson in what was described as a cracking match, Kent youngster Ben Songhurst picked up the £100 cheque for the highest shot out when he recorded a 170 checkout and Cressing Superleague player Robbie Turner missed double twelve for a nine darter.

With the competition reaching its climax the standard continued maintain a high level, Suffolk's Jason Evans was the first player to make the semi final overcoming former Welsh International Steve Alker in the last sixteen and Colchester's Coen Wiekamp in the quarter final. Harlow's Alex Hogg overcame the aforementioned Robbie Turner and Hertfordshire's Mark Elliott.

The bottom half of the draw saw Harwich's Scott Lawrie progress beating Witham's Scott Kinch and Cornwall's Sean Johns in the latter stages whilst London County player Wayne Brown was Lawrie's opponent overcoming the Essex pair of Darrell Claydon and Alan Collins.

The first semi final saw Evans (84.87) losing the first leg to Hogg (73.17) but an increased tempo and a maximum helped him to a 4-1 win. The second semi final saw Lawrie (85.53) check out in 12 and 16 darts with two maximums along the way but Brown continued to hold his nerve and a 13 dart sixth leg was sufficient to see him home 4-2.

Both players struggled to settle in the final but it was Evans (73.80) who drew first blood, but from there on in it didn't matter what was thrown at him Brown (83.37) took charge, a 134 checkout in the third leg put him 2-1 ahead and he never looked back going onto win and accept the Open Trophy from Fords Social Club manager Cliff Hill.

Reported by Barry Gilbey