

BICC PREMIER DIVISION

CHESHIRE VS ESSEX

Following last month's defeat against league leaders Yorkshire Essex were looking to return to winning ways on their travels to Cheshire. The Ladies 'B' got Essex off to the best possible start with a win for Chelmsford's Julie Vickers (15.86) and this was soon followed by wins for the Braintree Trio of Jenny Powell (14.26), Lady of the match Carol Pinfold (17.15) and the maximum hitting Lynn Kelly (17.08) to give the visitors a 4-2 victory.

If the Essex Ladies were a little fortunate to come out in front the Mens 'B', once they had recovered from being 2-1 adrift, were totally dominant easing home by 10 sets to 2.

Southend's Paul Marsh (24.98) and Rayleigh Cavaliers Mick McCombe (25.36) both lost out in two of the first three sets to Mark Jodrill (28.10) and Paul Phillips (30.41) in between Walton's Nick Groves (27.42) aided by a maximum had won in 6 legs. At this stage of the match, following last months defeat against Yorkshire Essex could have been forgiven if they had stuttered, but Southend's Paul Barham (31.03) on his return to the Essex side steadied any nerves there might have been, and by the time Colchester's Robbie Turner (24.48) and Rayleigh Cavaliers Liam Pender (24.37) had won their sets Essex were in cruise control. Springfield's Alan Collins (23.48) led the way home in set seven with Rayleigh Cavaliers Dan Day (26.66) taking set eight. The Southend pair of Richie Howson (25.40) and Stephen Hardy (25.09) kept the ball rolling before Walton's Alan Currihan (26.84) who finished with a 14 dart leg and Springfield's Kevin Edwards (23.20) completed the rout leaving Essex leading 14 – 4 overnight.

Cheshire started the better on Sunday as Essex Ladies 'A' lost the first two sets, Stacey Ellis (19.63) and Sue Baker (15.67) were outplayed by Sue Cusick (20.25) and the Ladies Lakeside World Professional Champion Anastasia Dobromyslova who topped the Ladies averages throughout the BICC with 31.31 which included a final leg where she started with back to back maximums. Essex however are a difficult Ladies team to beat as Braintree's Amanda Dodd (17.40) displayed in coming from behind to beat Emma Pearce. This win gave the other Ladies a boost and further wins for Clacton's Viv Dundon (20.94) and the Rayleigh pair of Lady of the Match Donna Russell (21.39) and Sue Condon (21.03) kept the Essex charge for the title intact.

Essex Mens 'A' team secured the overall win in the first set as Colchester's Eddie Gosling (22.01) slugged out a nervy first set victory in the deciding leg and this was quickly followed by Saffron Walden's Man of the Match and 'A' team debutant Wayne Bloomfield (26.40) who held his nerve in another deciding leg victory. Cheshire responded with three successive wins before Riverside's Mr Essex Barry Adlam (26.29) picked up another deciding leg victory. Cheshire continued to prove just too consistent for the visitors continually picking off vital doubles before Walton's Scott Lawrie (25.74)

picked off Essex's final win in the penultimate set, leaving the Mens 'A' team 8-4 adrift but ensuring the overall win of 22 – 14 keeps them in the title running.

The next fixture for Essex is a second versus third clash against Lancashire at Chelmsford Social Club on the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of March.