

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

PREMIER DIVISION

DEVON vs. ESSEX

At the start of the weekend Essex were in a position to win three or possibly four titles, however, only the Ladies 'A' came away from Devon by retaining their title; with both 'B' teams missing out on the count back rule.

The **Ladies 'B'** match started with a defeat; but Chelmsford's Nicky Mynard and Wendy Reader put Essex 2-1 in-front. Lady of the match, Carol Pinfold (20.04) put Essex back in the lead after Essex lost the fourth set; missed doubles in the final set cost Essex the win and subsequently the 'B' title; although on the same-points as Lancashire, who finish top on count back.

The **Men's 'B'** gave their all in a top class game that saw Essex race into a three set lead, with wins from Southend's Richard Howson, Saffron Walden's Wayne Bloomfield (28.71) and Riverside's Craig Vickers (27.94). Springfield's Alan Collins on his 100th appearance fought back well to draw level, but lost out 4-3. Rayleigh Cavaliers Michael McCombe got Essex back on track, and Colchester's Jamie Robinson (25.64), who'd broke a point on one of his darts just prior to going on stage, put Essex 5-1 ahead at the halfway stage. Devon took the next two sets before Southend's Stephen Hardy won a 4-3 tussle; and man of the match, Walton's Scott Lawrie (30.83), won Essex the match; however Devon's John Imrie (29.91) won the 11th set; which left Paul Marsh (25.04) to wrap-up a great season for Essex with a 8-4 victory; but not quite good enough to take the title, losing out to Yorkshire on the count back rule.

The **Ladies 'A'** knew that three points would win them the title, but the girls were up for a tough match. Chelmsford's Sue Baker (20.31) got Essex off to a flying start; and lady of the match, Clacton's Viv Dundon (21.97) had superb tussle with Devon's Michelle Andrews. In-fact after the second set they knew they'd retained the title knowing results elsewhere. Essex lost the next two-sets; Stacey Ellis coming up against a brilliant performance from Devon's Maria O'Brien (25.47). Rayleigh's Sue Condon (20.37) ensured Essex won the title and drew the match.

The **Men's 'A'** team started off on fire, as Brentwood's Steve Johnson (29.68); Riverside's Barry Adlam (27.92) and man of the match, Springfield and Essex Captain marvellous, Darren Peetoom (30.78) put Essex 3-0 up. Devon responded well and pulled back level at the halfway stage. However, Essex were in no mood to roll over, and with four of the final six sets going the distance gave Essex a well-deserved 9-3 victory; the victorious winners being Colchester's Robbie Turner, Basildon's Phil Halls (26.21), Springfield's Phil Brewster (25.44), Southend's Mick Peel (26.01); Rayleigh Cavaliers Liam Pender (26.80) on his 'A' team debut; and finally Rayleigh Cavaliers James Allison (29.04).

Final result Devon 13 Essex 26