

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS PREMIER DIVISION

HAMPSHIRE vs ESSEX

The first BICC Premier fixture of the new season saw Essex visit newly promoted Hampshire.

Ladies 'B' got Essex off to a good start with a draw; Pauline Donat won the opening set with a 3-1 win, Lynn Kelly (21.72) laid claim to the match award winning 3-1 also, before debutant Lauren Bloomfield (19.61) secured the draw winning the final set 3-1 and scoring a 180. The other 3-ladies Julie Vickers, Jenny Powell and Nicky Mynard all lost out 3-2.

The **Men's 'B'** look stronger than last season and continued their 13 match unbeaten run with a 9-3 victory. Tony Osborne (Brightlingsea) won the opening set 4-1 (25.38); Paul Marsh (Southend) won 4-2 (29.38), followed by wins from Bryan Margerison (Brightlingsea), Liam Pender (Tilbury) and Eddie Gosling (Colchester). Southend Ekco's Michael McCombe (31.31) won 4-0 to take the man of the match award and Mick Peel (Rayleigh Rascals) won the 7th set 4-1 (25.82). Andrew Kateley (Chelmsford) was unlucky to lose out in the 8th set 4-3; Ritchie Edhouse (Southend) took the next set 4-1 (28.56). Phillip Brewster (Springfield) won 4-1 (27.51) to give Essex their ninth point; as both Robbie Turner (Springfield) and Barry Lynn (Southend) had a little double trouble to lose out.

Going into Sunday, the team's was full of confidence and the **Ladies 'A'** didn't disappoint against a very strong Hampshire Ladies team. Donna Gleed lost out 3-1 in the opening set despite scoring heavily including a 180 against Wendy Renistadtler, Hampshire's lady of the match; Steph Hewson also lost out 3-1 before Sue Waterman, scoring two maximum's won 3-1 (23.95) and with it the lady of the match. Wendy Reader lost out 3-1, but both Sue Baker (21.82) and Stacey Ellis (18.60) triumphed 3-1 to give Essex a deserved draw.

The **Men's 'A'** had a mixed afternoon coming out 7-5 victor's in a hard fought match. Craig Vickers (Springfield) wasn't his normal self and lost out 4-1; team-mate and captain Darren Peetoom (27.08) won 4-0, with Riverside's Rhys Hayden (29.73) giving Essex the lead. Brightlingsea's Scott Lawrie (25.83) ensured the weekend draw winning 4-1; Steve Johnson (Brentwood) had double trouble as he unusually lost-out 4-3; Barry Adlam (25.72) won 4-1, won the weekend and celebrated his 250th appearance for Essex, a fantastic achievement. Southend's Paul Barham (25.49) won 4-3; followed by Southend's Stephen Hardy (30.36) who won 4-0 and the man of the match. Darren O'Neill (Brightlingsea) 1-4, Phil Halls (Basildon) 3-4 and Wayne Gleed (Springfield) lost the next 3-sets, before Brightlingsea's Alan Collins (25.16) won the final set 4-3 to secure the 7-5 victory.

Essex won the match 25-14 which places us 5th in the first table... Devon visit Chelmsford in the next match which is to be played over the weekend of 26th / 27th September.