

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX VS WARWICKSHIRE

At the start of the weekend Essex were looking to maintain their lead over Yorkshire at the top of the promotion table and stay ahead of Yorkshire in the Men's B and Devon in the Ladies A tables. By the end of the weekend both Ladies teams were top; but the Men's 'B' had dropped to second, however on the same points as Yorkshire; but with Yorkshire's massive win, there has been a swing of 14-points, as Essex now find themselves 7-points behind Yorkshire.

The **Ladies 'B'** match started well with Braintree's Carol Pinfold winning 3-2 in a hard fought contest; Lynn Kelly lost out, but Rayleigh's Charlotte Halls recorded her first county win, which was quickly followed by Chelmsford's lady of the match, Wendy Reader (19.03), with a 3-0 victory. That was Essex's last win as Warwickshire took the final two sets for 3-3 draw, leaving the ladies a point ahead of Warwickshire in the table.

The momentum going into the **Men's 'B'** was all with Essex; Springfield's Kevin Edwards won the opening set, only for Warwickshire to take the next two. Rayleigh Cavaliers Liam Pender (25.72); followed by Southend's Paul Marsh (26.06) with a man of the match performance and then Riverside's Craig Vickers were victorious, putting Essex into a 4-2 lead. Riverside's debutant Sam Lepley lost out; however Saffron Walden's Wayne Bloomfield (25.64) and Cavaliers Michael McCombe (25.50) ensured Essex can't be beaten. Warwickshire however did not cave in and won all of the final three sets for a deserved 6-6.

The **Ladies 'A'** were right up for it and despite Stacey Ellis losing out in the opening set, raced to a 5-1 victory and a very big step towards holding on to their title. Rayleigh's Donna Russell (21.38) drew Essex level; the game of the match saw Clacton's Viv Dundon (23.81) beat Trina Gulliver in a superb display of ladies darts; Chelmsford's Sue Baker (19.59); Rayleigh's Sue Condon (20.56) and Braintree's Amanda Dodd (19.27) all produced great wins to almost guarantee the title.

The **Men's 'A'** team match provided the high class entertainment anticipated, with Warwickshire taking the opening two-sets against the unlucky Wayne Glead (Springfield) and Phil Halls (Basildon) both lost out in the 7th leg. Rayleigh Cavalier's James Allison (26.10) and Riverside's Barry Adlam (26.99) pulled Essex Level. Kevin Edwards lost out in the 7th leg, before Brentwood's man of the match, Steve Johnson (28.23) won four-nil with a 113 checkout. Captain Darren Peetoom (25.80) put Essex 4-3 in-front; but that was Essex's last win until Colchester's Robbie Turner (25.09) won the final set and gave Essex that vital 3-bonus points.

Final result Essex 22 Warwickshire 17