

ESSEX vs NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Chelmsford Social Club welcomed back county darts, hosting the opening UKDA National League Premiership fixture of the 2021/2022 season

Essex eventually ran-out weekend winners but stated poorly, with the **Ladies 'B'** having a bit of double trouble. Braintree's Ann Farmer (13.30 average) winning the second set 3-0 was Essex's only victory. Sharon Wakeling was outclassed by Angela Burrows in the first set; Tracey Newman found doubles hard to find; followed by Kerry Rudd, Wendy Collins and Leanne Peetoom all losing out 3-2, which could have easily been the reverse.

The **Men's 'B'** lost the opening set with Michael Pinnington losing 4-3; Captain Alan Collins (25.11) came back from 3-1 down to secure a 4-3 win; Matthew Garrett (24.87) returned to the team winning 4-2, before the unlucky Lennie Holmes lost out 4-3 to Liam Fox, Northamptonshire's man of the match. Bryan Margerison (24.75) won 4-2, and Wayne Gleed (24.36) won 4-3 which included 142 checkout. Team manager Tony Osborne despite a 140-finish lost out 4-3 before his Brightlingsea team-mate Scott Lawrie (22.64) won 4-3 on his return to the team after 5 years absence. Another 4-3 score-line was in the favour of Simon Monk (24.98) which gave Essex 6-sets; Adam Howard lost out 4-2, prior to Michael Hancocks (25.26) won 4-2 and claimed the man of the match award. Kelvedon's Danny McIntyre lost the last set 4-2 giving Essex a 7-5 win, therefore, overnight Northamptonshire led 10-8.

The **Ladies 'A'** gave Essex a boost by winning 4-2 and levelling the weekend. Karen Breen (13.38) won a closely fought match 3-2; Pauline Donat started slowly but could not find that elusive double in the fifth leg losing out 3-2; Dawn Kennedy lost out 3-1 to Angela Burrows, who was Northamptonshire's Lady of the match for the second day running. Then Essex took control and won the final three sets with Lynn Kelly (14.91) winning 3-1 and both Stacey Ellis (18.79) and Donna Gleed (15.49) both winning 3-0, Donna with a 118 finish.

The **Men's 'A'** won the opening three sets with 4-1 wins for Bradley Halls (26.55), Steve Haggerty (28.44) and 4-3 win to Phil Halls (29.44). Ben Adams lost 4-3 to Northamptonshire's man of the match Josh Richardson before Paul Marsh (28.23) and Darren Peetoom (26.79) won 4-0 and 4-1 respectively. Jamie Peetoom was unfortunate to lose 4-3 before victories from Andrew Kateley (24.98) 4-3 and Craig Vickers (27.61) 4-1. Joe Russell lost another 4-3 contest, followed by a man of the match performance from Richie Howson (29.54) winning 4-1; finally, Steve Johnson could not find the mark in the final set losing 4-1

A great 23-16 victory and all players, officials and supporters showed their appreciation to everyone involved in getting county darts back.

A trip to Coventry next-up, away to Warwickshire.