

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX VS CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Essex was at home against Cambridgeshire in the final BICC fixture of the season. Traditionally this fixture has produced one team or the other striving for a divisional title, however Essex had already secured the Ladies 'A' team championship and with Cambridgeshire almost certainly relegated the match itself had little riding on it.

The Ladies 'B' started in that sort of vein as the first four sets were shared with Chelmsford's Julie Vickers and Braintree's Lynn Kelly picking up the wins for Essex, however an injection of scoring power and some steadier finishing saw the Chelmsford pair of Lady of the Match Nicky Mynard (20.83) and Sue Baker (16.34) pick off the final two sets giving Essex a 4 – 2 victory.

The mens 'B' fixture saw Cambridgeshire settle quicker as only Saffron Walden's Wayne Bloomfield (24.68) winning for Essex in the first four sets. However five set wins in the next six saw the home county as favourites to win this match as well. Riverside's Man of the Match Dave Solly (27.83) got the ball rolling before the Walton pair of Alan Currihan (26.71), who hit two maximums and Nick Groves (22.97) as well as the Springfield pair of Wayne Gleed (27.28) and Mark Landers (24.79), maintained the momentum. Cambridgeshire responded by taking the final two sets on the deciding leg to leave honours even.

With Essex Ladies 'A' already crowned as champions it would have been easy to have been slightly lethargic in their approach. However a reminder from team manager Maureen Smeeth that Cambridgeshire were their nearest rivals in the division ensured a professional approach was adapted. Braintree's Stacey Ellis (21.80) celebrated her 18th birthday with a 3-1 victory that ensured she finished her first full season unbeaten. Carol Pinfold (23.86) probably didn't want the season to end as a Lady of the Match performance encapsulated what has been her best season for many years. Rayleigh's Donna Russell (21.68) ensured Essex couldn't lose, but Cambridgeshire fought back winning the next two sets before Braintree's Amanda Dodd (18.80) edged the final set.

In the Mens 'A' match it was honours even for much of the match, at the half way point Springfield's Phil Brewster (21.01) and the Colchester pair of Robbie Turner (26.45) and Man of the Match Jamie Robinson (30.80) picking up the Essex wins and when Walton's Scott Lawrie (25.27) and Colchester's Eddie Gosling (27.87) put Essex 5-4 ahead it looked like they were going to cruise home. Cambridgeshire composed themselves and held their nerve to win the final three sets and with it take the Mens 'A' match, however Essex had done just enough to pick up the overall victory 19-17 leaving them in fifth place overall.