

BRITISH INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

PREMIER DIVISION

CHESHIRE VS ESSEX

Essex made the trip north over the weekend looking for a vast improvement on the previous fixture against champions elect Yorkshire. Awaiting Essex were a Cheshire team who included two players in the previous weekends World Championship Semi Finals.

The match started on the Saturday with both 'B' teams in action and with confidence at an all time low Essex were well below par. However in times of adversity there can normally be found a light at the end of the tunnel and even though that light is a very long way away at the moment two performances from new players into the squad shone brightly. Essex ladies 'B' have failed to register a single set win in their previous three matches but on only her second appearance Braintree's Lucy Ward-Geddes picked up a 3-1 win which in itself earned her a call up for the 'A' team the next day. In the mens it was debutant Peter Barton of Harwich. His performance was outstanding given that at the time he was on last and Essex had lost the previous eleven sets. Overall Essex trailed on day one by 16-2.

Despite Saturday's poor performance Essex were looking for a major improvement from their 'A' team. For the opening exchanges Essex butted heads with a formidable Cheshire outfit as Robbie Turner (82.44) battled hard against the previous weekends World Championship Semi Finalist Darrell Fitton (92.43) but lost out 3-1, Harwich's Adrian Genery put Essex on the map with a hard earned 3-2 win before Barry Adlam had the misfortune to run into World Championship Runner Up Tony O'Shea, the early exchanges were compounded as Riverside's in form Alan Collins walked into man of the match Kevin Simm whose 98.11 average topped the Premier Division for the weekend. Dave Orton (82.32) hit a maximum and checked out on 144 on the way to a 3-1 win over Steve Coote (76.37).

From this point on it was all Cheshire with only John McFall and Jamie Robinson posing any major resistance. The Ladies 'A' team produced by far and away the best performance of the weekend for Essex. It started with the Clacton pair of Roz Ambrose and the previously unbeaten Sheila Busby both missing out in the deciding leg, however this was the forerunner for the best performance of the weekend nationwide as Clacton's Viv Dundon hit a 177 and a maximum whilst producing an 83.49 average in overcoming Jane Stubbs who herself had a respectable 69.87. Lucy Ward-Geddes celebrated her 'A' team call up with a 3-1 win before her Braintree colleague Amanda Dodd lost out 3-1 to namesake Sherrie Dodd. This left Witham's Sue Waterman to keep Essex in touch with the top of the Ladies 'A' league as she overcame Gill O'Shea 3-2 and in doing so gaining the ladies a hard earned draw but leaving Essex 29-7 adrift over the weekend.