

RILEYS BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX VS CHESHIRE

Essex welcomed Cheshire to Chelmsford Social Club for their latest Rileys British Inter County Championship fixture. With both teams firmly placed in the top half of the table a high quality encounter was expected.

It was the 'B' teams who got the weekend underway on the Saturday with the Ladies first in action. The first four sets went with the throw as the Chelmsford duo of Lady of the match Wendy Johnson and Sally Grainger both securing 3-1 wins for Essex. However two solid Cheshire performances in the final two sets saw them leapfrog Essex and go to the top of the table.

Cheshire mens 'B' team have had a torrid season to date and despite picking up the first set Essex started putting them to the sword. Riverside's Martin Compton (62.64) levelled proceedings before the after burners were put on. Hockley's Shaun Walsh (79.53) Galleywood's Andy Kateley (77.22) and Jamie Robinson (77.94) (Colchester) started the acceleration. Colchester's Paul Walker (80.52) then produced a man of the match performance and when Springfield's Wayne Gleed (73.59) took Essex into a 6-1 lead there only looked one likely outcome. However a determined fight back from the visitors winning four sets on the bounce meant that the final set determined the outcome of the match. Harwich's Kevin Edwards (73.92) held his nerve to give Essex a 7-5 win and leave the overnight score at nine sets apiece.

The Sunday saw by far the best performance from the Essex 'A' teams this season. Sheila Busby missed out in the first set of the Ladies before Southend's Danna Russell levelled proceedings. Clacton's Viv Dundon (69.72) hit a maximum but picked up just the one leg in suffering a rare defeat, Sherrie Yeomans (78.09) checking out on 126 to take the match. From this point Essex reeled off three consecutive sets Braintree's Amanda Dodd won a 5 leg thriller before Southend's Nicky Bradley (66.00), aided by a 105 checkout, overcame the in form Lorraine Farlam (68.28) and when Braintree's Sue Waterman (79.11) produced a polished performance in the final set and in doing so take another Lady of the match Essex had moved to the top of the Ladies 'A' team table.

The Essex mens 'A' team have spluttered along all season but produced a team performance which belied their lowly position. Cheshire before this match had conceded just ten sets from a possible forty eight. Essex tested their mettle throughout the match picking up half of the twelve sets to gain not only a shock draw but also gain an overall 19 – 17 win. Harwich's Simon Cook (76.47) started the ball rolling with a deciding leg win over Stuart Kellett (80.94). Alan Collins (88.05) picked up the first leg but was undone by Tony O'Shea (79.44), Basildon's Dave Orton (77.64) also missed out against Steve Coote (83.49) before Colchester's pie man Eddie Gosling (83.17) overcame former England Youth International David Pallett (84.45) again in the deciding leg. Riverside's Barry Adlam (73.83) lost out to Stephen Bunting (80.52) but Harwich's Scott Lawrie (86.70) picked up the man of the match with a 3-0 win against Peter Boughey (78.00). Cheshire edged in front again as Robbie Green (85.08) overcame Gary Phipps (76.89). Last month against Yorkshire Essex lost out in the pivotal sets, this time they won them as Southend's Mick Peel (77.73) and Hockley's Mark Landers (65.04) overcame Gary Robson (81.33) and Ian White (72.78) in two tense matches. Andy Burmby (78.84) did pick up a leg against the maximum hitting Darrell Fitton (92.76) but his team mate of Springfield and Essex Captain Darren Peetoom (82.71) won the crucial nineteenth set with against Welsh International Gareth Holt (77.78). The final set secured Cheshire the 'A' team draw as Mark Cairney (84.24) overcame Coen Wieceamp (81.06).