

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS FIRST DIVISION

ESSEX vs COUNTY DURHAM

Chelmsford Social Club played host to Durham, for first meeting since November 1997, and a superb performance all round.

The **Ladies 'B'** got the weekend off to a perfect start with Chelmsford's Pauline Donat (20.59) laying claim to the match award with a 3-0 victory, followed by Eastwood's Zara Rose winning her first game; Kelvedon's Nicky Bewick was an unlucky loser on her return; both Canvey's Steph Hewson (17.68) and Chelmsford's Wendy Reader (16.89) won 3-0 giving the team a well-deserved win, Braintree's Ann Farmer lost out 3-1 in the final set

The **Men's 'B'** were terrific as they raced into a 7-0 lead with 3-2 wins from Chelmsford's Matt Garrett and Mark Chapman; Springfield's Joe Russell won 3-1; Southend's Tommy Wilson (29.43) was man of the match; Brightlingsea's Mike Hancocks (24.80) and Bryan Margerison (26.16) both winning 3-1; and Colchester Town's Eddie Gosling won 3-2 on his 199th appearance. Matt Barnard (Tilbury) missed doubles to continue the run; before Essex returned to winning ways taking the last 4-sets; Southend's John Costigan 3-1; Tilbury's Mick McCombe (25.47) 3-0; Springfield's Jamie Peetoom (23.42) 3-2 and Chelmsford's Andrew Kateley (25.47) 3-0 for a 11-1 victory.

Going into Sunday's 'A' fixture Essex had a 15-3 lead and the **Ladies 'A'** won the opening two-sets with Chelmsford's Sue Baker (21.17) recording her first win of the season on her 100th appearance for the county, and Canvey's Donna Gleed (22.43) taking the lady of the match award with 3-0 triumphs. Canvey's Leanne Peetoom missing vital doubles losing out 3-2; before Kelvedon's Stacey Ellis (21.75) won 3-1 to secure a draw, as Essex lost the last two-sets; with Kelvedon's Lynn Kelly losing 3-1 and Clacton's Karen Breen unlucky to lose out 3-2.

The **Men's 'A'** only needed one-set to secure a weekend victory; Canvey Starr's Phil Halls lost the opener 4-2; however Brightlingsea's Tony Osborne came back from 3-1 down to win 4-3 and the weekend's bonus points. Essex won the next 5-sets with wins from Tilbury's Wayne Gleed (28.67) 4-2; Brentwood's Steve Johnson (26.07) 4-2; Springfield's Darren Peetoom (27.75) 4-1; Tilbury's Richie Howson (27.21) 4-2 and Southend's Paul Marsh (25.11) 4-2. Springfield's Phil Brewster lost out 4-2 before Essex rattled off the next 3-sets from Springfield's Craig Vickers (26.78); Southend's Wayne Bloomfield (27.45) 4-0, and the man of the match, Southend's Daniel Day (30.06) winning 4-1. Brightlingsea's Alan Collin's lost out in the final set meaning that Essex recorded a 30-9 victory.

We all wish Daniel Day all the best in the Lakeside World Finals later this month; and Essex have two away games to start 2018 off; London this month and Dorset in February. In the promotion table Essex move up 4-place to 3rd only a single point behind Oxfordshire and 9-point adrift of table toppers Cornwall. Essex are 2nd in both 'A' tables and top of the Men's 'B', however lying 8th in the Ladies 'B' 7-points behind the leaders.