

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS FIRST DIVISION

DORSET vs ESSEX

Another away game saw Essex travel to Poole and not a great weekend for our Ladies.

The **Ladies 'B'**, who'd over the past few matches had shown some improvement, didn't have any luck, they were only a point behind their opponents prior to the fixture, but only won one-set. Steph Hewson was unlucky to suffer her first 'B' team loss as she was unlucky to lose the opening set 3-2; Chelmsford's Pauline Donat (18.41) won the second and only set.

The **Men's 'B'** was up against it and started well with Andrew Kateley securing his second match award winning 3-0 with a 27.33 average; Eddie Gosling lost out 3-2 before Southend's Paul Barham (22.59) won 3-1 on his return to the team, which was also his 50th appearance. After losing the 4th set, Springfield's Joe Russell (26.44) and Chelmsford's Matt Garrett (22.77) took the next two sets. Essex lost the 7th set, Tilbury's Matt Barnard (26.01) won the next, and Springfield's Robbie Turner (26.84) won the next on his return to the team. Essex lost the 10th set; however, wrapped up an 8-4 victory with wins from Southend's John Costigan (26.79) and Tilbury's Michael McCombe (24.99); all-level going into Sunday.

Not a great start for the **Ladies 'A'** as Leanne Peetoom and previously unbeaten Stacey Ellis both lost out 3-1. Clacton's Karen Breen (20.58) produced her best ever performance in an Essex shirt winning 3-1; but Lynn Kelly lost out in straight sets. A lady of the match performance from Chelmsford's Sue Baker (22.77) kept Essex alive; however, Donna Gleed couldn't find that winning double and lost the 6th set 3-2.

The **Men's 'A'** needed to win to avoid a weekend defeat, but it wasn't to be; Steve Johnson lost the opening set 4-2, Brightlingsea's Alan Collins (21.95) and Southend's Wayne Bloomfield (28.04) won the next two sets; but Dorset took the next 3-set as Phil Brewster Wayne Gleed and Paul Marsh all suffered losses. Brightlingsea's Tony Osborne (25.52) pulled one back and Springfield's Jamie Peetoom, promoted to the 'A' team, was unlucky to lose out 4-3. This meant Essex had to win the final 4-sets to earn a draw and very nearly pulled it off; Southend's Daniel Day (28.58) won 4-2 and the man of the match award; Springfield's Darren Peetoom (27.17) won 4-1 and Springfield's Craig Vickers (24.10) won 4-2. Canvey Starr's Phil Halls came up against Scott Mitchell in the final set and lost out 4-2 in a great match.

Essex lost the weekend 22-17 to dent hopes to return to the Premier at the first attempt; however, they are only 3-point behind Cornwall and Gwent who are Essex's last two fixtures.

Up next is a home match against relegation threatened Surrey at Chelmsford over the weekend of 3rd & 4th March.