

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX vs GLAMORGAN

The first BICC Premier fixture of the new season saw Glamorgan visit Chelmsford; and took an early lead winning the **Ladies 'B'** match 4-2. Essex's Pauline Donat (15.57) won the opening set with a 3-2 victory, which was her first home win and laid claim the lady of the match award; Lynn Kelly winning the sixth set 3-1 was our only victors.

The **Men's 'B'** will be trying to hold-on to the title they so deservedly won last season, which will be a challenge. Essex started well taking the opening 3-sets with wins from Brightlingsea's Tony Osborne (27.08), Laindon's Shaun Walsh (27.38) and Southend's Steve Haggerty (23.03); Brightlingsea's Bryan Margerison & Darren O'Neill both lost out before Chelmsford's Andrew Kateley (26.31) gave Essex a 4-2 lead at the halfway stage. Glamorgan drew level winning the next two-set, with Rayleigh Rascal's Lennie Holmes losing out 4-3 and Laindon's Michael McCombe 4-1; Southend's John Costigan (26.00) won 4-1 on his return to the team, before both Colchester's Eddie Gosling lost 4-2 and Springfield's Phil Brewster, 4-3. Southend's Daniel Day (27.40) won the final set of the day to give Essex a hard fought 6-6 draw which keeps their unbeaten record to 22 matches (19 wins & 3 draws) .

Going into Sunday two-sets down, the **Ladies 'A'** didn't disappoint against a very strong Glamorgan team racing into a 4-0 lead, with Chelmsford's Wendy Reader (18.56), Canvey's Donna Gleed (18.79) and Lady of the Match Stacey Ellis (21.47) all recording 3-0 victories; Canvey's Steph Hewson (17.99) winning 3-2. Chelmsford's Sue Baker lost out 4-1 to Rhian Edwards (26.63) who also took the Premier & BDO highest average prize money over the weekend; and double trouble for Nicky Bewick in the final set gave Essex a 4-2 win and an overall all square. During the interval, Craig Vickers (Springfield) handed over a cheque for £1,000 to the Heart of Darts Chairman, Ian Waller; back in April Craig and dad Don run the London Marathon and rose over £3,000 and split this between a few charities. Later in the day, Craig received the Golden Pin for those who raise £1,000 plus for the Heart of Darts.

The **Men's 'A'** had a mixed afternoon in a hard fought match which started so well, winning all the opening 4-sets. Brentwood's Steve Johnson (27.83) won 4-0; Clacton's Wayne Bloomfield (26.63) won 4-2; Southend's Barry Lynn (28.23) won 4-0 and the man of the match award, and Southend's Paul Barham (25.72) won 4-1. Southend's Paul Marsh lost out 4-3, which must have been disappointing after winning all 9 last season, and Daniel Day, promoted to the 'A' after Saturday's 'B' performance, losing out 4-3, but could have won all 7-legs, scoring four maximum's and with a 30.69 average. Essex then lost the next three sets, Springfield's Craig Vickers losing 4-2; Canvey's Phil Halls 4-3 and Brightlingsea's Alan Collins 4-2. Springfield's Robbie Turner stopped the rot with a 4-0 victory; but team mate Wayne Gleed lost another game 4-3 to Glamorgan's man of the match Wayne Davies (28.36); Southend's Stephen Hardy (26.37) won 4-0 to ensure of a 6-6 Men's 'A' draw.

Overall weekend draw 19-19 which places them 4th in the first table, and Essex travel to Exeter this month to face Devon, before hosting Nottinghamshire for their first ever meeting between the counties.