

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

FIRST DIVISION

GWENT vs ESSEX

Essex travelled to Hafodyrynys Rugby Club for a B.I-C.C. fixture against promotion rivals Gwent and came away with a great victory.

The **Ladies 'B'** soon found themselves 3-sets down with Dawn Kennedy and Zara Rose losing out 3-1; Canvey's Steph Hewson lost out 3-2, she missed many chances at doubles to win, before Eastwood's Sharon Wakeling won a tight 4th set 3-2; Wendy Reader (Chelmsford) lost out 3-2 in a game she probably should have won; and Lynn Kelly (15.67) picked up the 6th set 3-2 and the lady of the match award.

The **Men's 'B'** reeled off the first 3-sets with wins from Springfield's Robbie Turner (22.64), and Southend's John Costigan (26.21), scoring a 177, and Steve Haggerty (25.47). Brightlingsea's Mike Hancocks and Chelmsford's Matt Garrett lost sets 4 & 5, then Essex won the next 5-sets to give them the win. A man of the match performance from Colchester Town's Eddie Gosling (28.36) including a 180, followed by a 3-0 win from Tilbury's Michael McCombe (24.64); Rayleigh Rascals Micky Peel (27.07) won 3-2 and scored two maximum's on his return to the team; Chelmsford's Andrew Kateley (25.47) won his 7th game of the season and Springfield's Joe Russell (25.05) won the 10th set 3-0. Paul Barham and Matt Barnard both lost out 3-2 despite scoring maximum's.

Essex took a 10-8 lead into Sunday's 'A' games and Canvey's Donna Gleed (19.88) got the **Ladies 'A'** off to a superb start with a 3-1 triumph; team-mate Leanne Peetoom lost out 3-0, the Braintree's Stacey Ellis (20.25) laid claim to the lady of the match award with a 3-2 win. Clacton's Karen Breen and Chelmsford's Pauline Donat both lost out 3-1, before Chelmsford's Sue Baker (18.77) won the 6th-set 3-2 to secure the draw.

The **Men's 'A'** had a disastrous start, losing the opening 4-sets; Southend's Tommy Wilson despite a maximum lost out 4-2; Brightlingsea's Tony Osborne lost 4-1 and Alan Collins lost 4-2, and Southend's Wayne Bloomfield losing 4-0. Essex then took control winning 7 of the last 8 sets starting with Springfield's Craig Vickers (28.43) scoring two 180's; Southend's Paul Marsh (26.76); Springfield's Jamie Peetoom (25.34) scoring double 180's and Tilbury's Wayne Gleed (27.78) winning 4-1 also scoring two maximums. Canvey Starr's Phil Halls lost out 4-2 and scored a 180 on his 75th appearance for the county. Essex won the last 3-sets with wins from skipper Darren Peetoom (26.74); Brentwood's Steve Johnson (27.70) plus two 180's and finally a 4-0 victory from Southend & England's Daniel Day (31.81) who also took the man of the match award and cash.

This result leaves Essex 3rd in the promotion table with two fixtures remaining, and our next game is against 2nd placed Cornwall who have a 3-point advantage; then our last game is the rearranged fixture against Surrey on the 19th May; both fixtures at Chelmsford Social Club.