

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX vs LANCASHIRE

Essex entertained Lancashire in their latest Inter County fixture looking for a vast improvement on the previous three matches. Mens team manager Don Vickers wielded the axe on seven players from the previous debacle against Cheshire and with it came immediate results.

Orsett's debutant Wayne Gleed (75.15) started the ball rolling, in the mens 'B', with a 120 checkout on the way to an impressive 3-0 win against Tony Burrows and with it returned the confidence Essex has lacked over the past few matches. Mark Landers and Mick Harris both earned recalls and both had identical 77.73 averages in their 3-0 wins. Intermingled amongst the mens matches were their ladies counterparts and wins for Clacton's Karen Breen and Witham's Carol Pinfold ensured Essex were maintaining a realistic chance of a lead going into the Sunday.

The men were in a rampant mood as Harlow's former England Youth International James Jennings (78.72) illustrated with a 116 checkout on the way to another 3-0 win.

Southend's Mick Peel (81.99) had a man of the match performance before last month's only 'B' team victor Harwich's Peter Barton (75.73) held his nerve to win a deciding leg encounter. Hockley's Jimmy Allison (78.72) continued his quest for an 'A' team position with an emphatic victory and with it pushing Essex into a 7-1 lead. However Lancashire sit in second place in the Premier Division because they have strength in depth and despite all their efforts Essex couldn't manage another point leaving the overnight score all square at nine apiece.

The Sunday started much the same as the Saturday had with the mens 'A' team storming into a 3-1 lead. Mick Peel (70.65) promoted from yesterday's 'B' team started the ball rolling with a 3-1 win and this was swiftly followed with wins for Colchester's Eddie Gosling (72.18) and Hockley's man of the match Gary Phipps (87.93). Essex ladies 'A' have been holding their own all season but this time succumbed to a strong Lancashire outfit. Wins for the Clacton pair of Sheila Busby and England International Viv Dundon means that Essex still have an outside chance of claiming the divisional title.

With Riverside's Alan Collins (81.99) and Springfield's Darren Peetoom (77.07) winning for Essex in the middle section of the mens match the overall scoreline was all square moving into the final four sets of the weekend. Harwich's Adrian Genery (73.14) checked out from 167 to take his first leg but the experience of Douggie Smith (78.33) gave Lancashire the set win. This left Essex needing all three remaining sets for an overall victory, Genery's Harwich team mate Scott Lawrie (63.54) scraped home in the deciding leg as did Hockley's Shaun Walsh (74.73).

This left the match finely poised with Essex having secured victory in the mens 'A' match but needing the last set for victory. Up stepped Barry Adlam (82.68) who put to one side his poor form thus far this season edging home 3-1 against a disappointed Gary Vincent (82.83). **Essex 22 Lancashire 17**