

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS PREMIER DIVISION

LANCASHIRE Vs ESSEX

St. Thomas Sports & Social Club, Wigan played host to a famous weekend for Essex. This was our 16th visit to Lancashire, and Essex had never come away with a win, until now.

The **Ladies 'B'** played well to earn a draw, coming back from 3-1 down; Nicky Mynard (17.70) got Essex off to a winning start, but it was left to Pauline Donat (16.80) and lady of the match Carol Pinfold (17.73) to get the draw by winning the final two-sets.

The **Men's 'B'** was a tightly fought contest; Essex raced into a 4-0 set lead with wins from Barry Lynn (27.04), Wayne Bloomfield (27.57), man of the match Paul Barham (33.40), which also earned him £700 for the highest average in the Premier; and Barry Adlam (29.47). There was a small revival from Lancashire which included a win by ex-Essex player, Steve Maish, on his Lancashire debut. However, Andrew Kateley (28.23) and Darren O'Neill (26.02) restored Essex's advantage to 3-legs, before Michael McCombe (25.83) got Essex the 7-5 win that keeps Essex B top of their section by 2-points from Yorkshire.

Essex led 10-8 going into Sunday's fixture, and a fantastic performance from the **Ladies 'A'** set the scene for probably Essex's great triumph in recent years. Lauren Bloomfield (21.98) gave Essex the opening set and earned her the lady of the match award; Donna Gleed came up against Lisa Ashton (27.33) and lost out 3-0 as did Nicky Mynard who was promoted due to absence. However, Steph Hewson (17.28), Stacey Ellis (19.27) and Sue Baker (19.71) all won to give the ladies a 4-2 victory and Essex a 14-10 advantage going into the Men's game.

The **Men's 'A'** match didn't disappoint as all 24 players on show put on a show! Stephen Hardy (25.63) gave Essex the opening set 4-3; Craig Vickers (29.27) lost to Lancashire's man of the match, Lee Shewan (29.57); Barry Lynn (28.14) promoted to the 'A' won 4-3; Steve Johnson (26.74) won 4-2 and Paul Marsh (27.02) won 4-3 which meant Essex couldn't lose the weekend. Eddie Gosling (27.73) lost out 4-3 to England International Mark McGeeney (28.58) in a classic tussle; Basildon's Phil Halls (29.91) secured the bonus points with a 4-0 win; however Lancashire pulled the match back to 5-apiece before Alan Collins (25.04) and man of the match, Darren Peetoom (30.19) secured a 7-5 win for the 'A' and a 24-15 historic weekend win for Essex.