

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX vs LANCASHIRE

I think you can honestly state that Essex are in trouble, as they sit 10th in the Premier BICC with only three fixtures to play to save their status. Rewind 12-months and Essex darts were looking strong; Essex had just won on Lancashire soil for the first time; Essex were sitting 2nd behind Yorkshire and the Men's 'B' were still on their unbeaten run of 20 plus matches and going on to take the title. However, it's all change and hitting those winning doubles has become elusive.

The **Ladies 'B'** got off to the best of starts with Nicky Bradley (16.43) winning the opening set 3-1; but Lancashire took out their doubles as four of the Essex Girls lost 3-2, all having chances and could have easily been 5-1 to Essex.

The **Men's 'B'** also won the opening set, with Richie Howson (25.31) winning 4-2 on his return to the team; but Essex lost the next four-sets before Michael McCombe (25.99) won 4-1. Essex took three-sets from the six played in the second half; wins for Matt Garrett (23.51), Bryan Margerison (24.22) and debutant, Brentwood's Tommy Wilson (28.24) taking the match award; the 'B' losing out 5-7.

Needing a good start Sunday morning, the **Ladies 'A'** came up a strong and determined Lancashire team, with Chelmsford's Wendy Reader (19.14) the only success; Rebecca Farmer was unlucky, as was Leanne Peetoom, both missing doubles.

The **Men's 'A'** drew their match with Clacton's Wayne Bloomfield (25.80) winning the opening set; Captain Darren Peetoom (30.36) laid claim to the match award in the second-set; Canvey Starr's Phil Hall (25.84) won a classic 4-3 with a 144 checkout; Southend's Paul Marsh (27.67) came out 4-2 victor over ex-Essex star Steve Maish; Dan Day (28.76) won another tough battle against Paul Whitworth, and Steve Johnson (26.38) won the final-set 4-2.

Final result Essex 13 Lancashire 26.