

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS
PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX vs NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Chelmsford Social Club played host to the first fixture of 2019 which witnessed Essex recording their first win of the season.

The **Ladies 'B'** lost the opening set, before Leanne Peetoom (17.92) lay claim to the lady of the match winning 3-2; Nicky Bewick (14.96) won the next set 3-1. Essex lost set 4 & 5; however, Sharon Wakeling won the final set 3-1 to give Essex a deserved 3-all draw.

The **Men's 'B'** continue to struggle and found themselves 5-0 down before putting a point on the board, that was man of the match Bryan Margerison (28.33) winning 4-1. Tony Osborne (27.49) won 4-2 and Danny McIntyre (24.27) won 4-3 to pull Essex back to 5-3; but Essex only won two more sets from Lennie Holmes (22.67) winning 4-2 on his return to the team and debutant Allan Mathieson (23.50) also winning 4-2, therefore Essex found themselves 10-8 down going into Sunday's 'A' team games.

The **Ladies 'A'** got Essex in-front for the first time since the 3rd set Saturday morning, with Stacey Ellis (24.86) winning 3-1, and taking the ladies prize money & match award in the opening set; this was following by 3-2 victories by Donna Gleed (19.73), Karen Breen (14.31) and Pauline Donat (19.18); Sue Baker (18.33) won the final set to give the ladies a 5-1 win.

This gave the **Men's 'A'** a great platform to win their first game of the season and they took full advantage winning the opening three sets all 4-3; Phil Halls (27.365), Steve Johnson (26.70) and Phil Brewster (28.13) on his 100th appearance for the county. Essex won only one of the next four sets, but it was a memorable tussle between Wayne Bloomfield (31.10) and Northamptonshire's Ricky Evans (31.09) which saw Wayne triumphant 4-2 and claiming the £150 prize money and match award. Both Southend stars John Costigan (23.86) and Paul Marsh (25.76) won 4-0 and 4-3 respectively; and Essex won the final two sets with victories from Andrew Kateley (28.73) winning 4-3 and Darren Peetoom (26.46) winning 4-1.

Result was Essex 24 Northamptonshire 15 which lifted Essex off the bottom of the premier table and on the same points as West Midland's, who lay in 8th place.