

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX VS SURREY

Third bottom Essex welcomed bottom county Surrey to Chelmsford Social Club for what proved to be a hard fought and entertaining weekend of darts. The Mens 'B' fixture kicked off with both teams desperate to gain a foothold into the weekend and the first set produced a humdinger of a match. Essex's Darrell Claydon (27.54) on his 50th appearance produced a man of the match performance to come from behind in beating Dave Webb (29.87) with both players hitting maximums. Dave Bokenham (26.35) and Tim Franklin (25.81) both lost out to Richard McLaughlin (26.45) and Mark Budd (26.29) respectively before man of the moment Peter Barton (22.62) levelled the first set of matches with a 3-1 win over Alan Edge (20.88). The Ladies 'B' started with Julie Vickers (15.14) going down 3-1 to Surrey's newly appointed England Youth International Lauren Hitchins (15.66), however wins for Karen Breen (13.73) and Wendy Johnson (15.75) pushed Essex into the lead. With the return of the mens match it was business as usual with both teams picking up two of the four sets. Coen Wiekamp and James Jennings both had identical 24.24 averages in beating Darryl Pilgrim (20.88) and Dave Horan (19.47), but Simon Cook (26.22) and Rob Turner (23.13) couldn't find a way past Mark Harris (28.36) and Robin Hathaway (24.37). The Ladies lost out 2-1 to their Surrey counterparts in the second set of matches Lynn Kelly (13.91) and Jan Corn (14.69) missing out against Penny Lambert (14.74) and Angie Frewin (15.05) but Val Hawkins (14.18) on her Essex debut secured the draw. Essex 'B' team secured their win by reeling off three consecutive sets Kevin Edwards (26.80) on his return to the County overcame Jimmy Mann (23.80) in a dogged match before a return to winning ways for Jimmy Noone (21.87) and Andy Kateley (26.45) pushed Essex to the seven points margin. The last set saw Mark Landers (25.27) go down 3-1 to a very impressive young man in Kurtis Atkins (24.03).

Leading 10-8 overnight Essex were soon into their stride in the Mens 'A' match for despite a 3-2 defeat for Eddie Gosling (25.05) against Richie Blake (24.91) the other Essex players in the first set of four were all winners. Adrian Genery (23.13) edged home against Steve Lovett (23.16), Scott Lawrie (30.06) blasted his way past Alan Yates (24.18) and Barry Adlam (30.67) completed his 102nd victory and his 35th match award on his 200th appearance. Sheila Busby (19.92) lost out to Apylee Jones (22.77) in the first Ladies 'A' set but wins for Viv Dundon (22.68) and Lucy Ward-Geddes (20.74) pushed Essex further ahead. Gary Phipps (25.37) and Darren Peetoom (28.44) couldn't find a way past Gary Eastwood (30.63) or Aaron Turner (27.36) but Alan Collins (28.75) and Jimmy Allison (26.29) both won against Carl Ramsey (29.55) and Gary Creamer (26.36) respectively. Surrey squared the Ladies match up after Sue Waterman (20.08) had beaten Julie Austin (18.54) Carol Pinfold (20.47) and Amanda Dodd (22.15) found Lisa Munt (22.10) and Laura Turner (24.64) too hot to handle. Essex needed just one set from the last section of mens matches for the overall victory and two for a mens team win. Dave Orton (23.91) couldn't get past Neville Wright (21.72) in a nervy match before Mick Peel (28.46) who has taken to County Darts like a duck to water eased past Ronnie Goodbeer (23.93). Shaun Walsh (26.03) lost out in his match against Ian Long (27.23) before John McFall (27.55) held his nerve to overcome Paul Neate (26.02) and in doing so push Essex clear of what was impending relegation.