

BICC PREMIER DIVISION

WARWICKSHIRE VS ESSEX

Essex made the trip to the Midlands in good spirits following last month's victory over Hampshire; however they were aware that Warwickshire at their own venue is always a competitive fixture.

The Ladies 'B' match started the weekend and it finished as it started all square at 3-3. The Essex wins all came from Chelmsford players with Wendy Reader, Lady of the Match Nicky Mynard and the double maximum hitting Sue Baker taking the honours.

The Mens 'B' match was similarly tight as Essex took an early lead which was then reversed by Warwickshire, Essex then recovered before Warwickshire came back and edged the match by seven sets to five. It was Springfield's Wayne Gleed (23.11) and Southend's Mick Peel (25.47) who pushed Essex into an early lead. Riverside's Dave Solly (24.64) and Man of the match Andy Kateley (25.90) kept Essex in the hunt but only Walton's Alan Currivan (24.54) could manage an Essex win in the last three sets.

With Essex 10-8 adrift overnight they were looking to their Ladies 'A' team to pull them back into the match, and they duly responded in style. Braintree's Stacey Ellis (19.52) continued her impressive start to Inter County darts with a maximum on the way to a 3-0 victory. Rayleigh's Donna Russell (20.98) just missed out in the deciding leg before Essex moved into overdrive. Clacton's Viv Dundon (23.60) picked up the Lady of the match and this was followed by the Braintree pair of Amanda Dodd (20.22) and Carol Pinfold (20.98) who picked up the scalp of rarely beaten Trina Gulliver (22.60). The match was concluded with Rayleigh's Sue Condon (19.52) whose 3-0 victory gave Essex a 5-1 win and leaves them needing just one set in their final match to take the title.

In the Mens 'A' match the scoreline again reached 3-3, however the wheels then came off the Essex wagon as Warwickshire outscored and out finished their opponents to take the final six sets. Brentwood's Steve Johnson (24.70) got Essex off to the best possible start and wins for Colchester's England International Jamie Robinson (26.08) and Walton's Man of the Match Scott Lawrie (27.08) meant Essex went into the final six sets as favourites to win the match. However Warwickshire had other ideas as they not only won the match but also pushed themselves above their visitors in the overall table. Final score Warwickshire 20 Essex 16.