

BRITISH INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

PREMIER DIVISION

ESSEX vs WARWICKSHIRE

Chelmsford Social Club hosted Essex vs Warwickshire in a must win match; and it wasn't to be as the squad tried their absolute hardest to get a result to save Essex's 27 year stint in the Premier.

The **Ladies 'B'** gave it their all but vital doubles meant a 4-2 loss, with Pauline Donat, Dawn Kennedy and Lynn Kelly suffering 3-2 defeats and Nicky Bradley a 3-1 loss. Steph Hewson (19.25) won the 5th set 3-1 and Clacton's Karen Breen (19.78) won 3-0 on her 25th appearance.

The **Men's 'B'** won 7-5; Michael McCombe lost the opening set 4-3 before Essex took control taking the next 4-sets with victories from Craig Vickers on his 75th appearance; Richie Howson (28.91) taking the match award on his 25th appearance; Matt Garrett (27.63) and Lennie Holmes both winning 4-1. Basildon's Malcolm Clark and Colchester's Eddie Gosling lost out in closely fought battles. John Costigan (26.04) and Andrew Kateley (25.41) won sets 8 & 9 respectively to give Essex 6-sets; both Tommy Wilson and Bryan Margerison were unlucky not to extended Essex's lead before Shaun Walsh gave the 'B' a well-deserved win in the final set of the day.

Going into Sunday's match knowing that they had lost ground on Devon; the **Ladies 'A'** put in their best performance of the season to earn a 3-all draw; Stacey Ellis (25.57) not only came from 2-nil down against the golden girl, Trina Gulliver, but also took the highest Premier average and the money; Rebecca Farmer had chances but missed doubles; Wendy Reader lost out 3-1; Chelmsford's Sue Baker won 3-0; Leanne Peetoom lost out 3-0 with Donna Gleed (22.43) winning the 6-set to earn the draw.

The **Men's 'A'** needed to win to give Essex the all-important bonus points and keep hopes alive; and they started well with Daniel Day (28.49) winning the opening set 4-1 including a 160 checkout; Robbie Turner lost out 4-0 on his final home appearance; Skipper Darren Peetoom (28.55) made hard work of his 4-3 victory, sailing into a 3-0 lead; Steve Johnson (27.03) won 4-2, scoring three 180's; Paul Marsh lost out 4-0 to Warwickshire's man of the match, Jamie Hughes (29.91). Phil Halls lost out 4-2 before Wayne Bloomfield (32.05) put in a man of the match winning performance and the Premiers highest average, winning £700. However Essex then lost the next four sets, with Barry Lynn losing 4-3; Tony Osborne and Alan Collins losing 4-1 and Paul Barham 4-0. Springfield's Wayne Gleed (27.08) won the final set 4-0, meaning the 'A' team lost 7-5 and Essex the match 22-17.

All though not impossible, it's unlikely that Essex will rescue themselves from relegation, as they travel to Gainsborough to face Lincolnshire for the final match of the season.