

## Essex ICC Team Reports 2011/12

### Essex ICC 1<sup>st</sup> Team Report 2012

My report this year tells a very different story to that which I wrote last season. Although I have to write about an unsuccessful season due to our teams' relegation from top flight competition in the Badminton England Inter-County Championships, I can do so reciting the same words I used to define the team last year. Yet again all the players that represented Essex this season did so with the sportsmanship, respect and camaraderie that we have all come to expect. We must, at the same time as licking our wounds, pay the upmost of compliments to the Surrey team who managed, finally, to prevail over the championship stalwarts Yorkshire and take the title.

Thanks must go again to Eric Richardson for his support throughout the season and also the selection committee members for the constant juggling of our players in order field teams that would represent our county as best as possible. I must also thank the Essex County Badminton Association for supporting the team again this year.

It was at a new venue that the first weekend of the season took place, the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford. Our first opponents were Middlesex and the final match result was 5-5. With honors even after the singles, then being 5-3 down after the level doubles, we managed to win both mixed in three sets and tie the match. In the afternoon we took on Warwickshire and the same result was achieved. What was great about the first day of the season for Essex was that every member of the team contributed at least on win to the final day's tally of 10.

Unfortunately the tale of the tape on Sunday was not at all pleasant for Essex followers. We had the future champions on their home turf and were left bruised and battered following a 10-0 drubbing. Three of the matches went to three sets, but truth be told the opposition probably looked favorites as the games progressed. So a similar position to that of last year after the first weekend, 10 points accrued and the team in a relegation place.

Another new (but very old and full of memories for most county players) venue for the Premier A competition played host to the second weekend. Our opponents at the York Railway Institute were Nottinghamshire, Glasgow and North Strathclyde and Hertfordshire.

A quick start against Nottinghamshire put us 3-1 up in the singles with good wins from two of our youngest players Ben Barber and Helena Cable put us in a nice position. We did however only manage to pick up another two games and it was a third draw for Essex out of 4 matches so far. It would be 4 draws out of 5 after the match against the Scots was finished. The Essex ladies took both singles and the men both doubles. Both mixed games went to three sets and the spoils were split.

The second Sunday of the season saw us achieve our best result. We took on our neighbours Hertfordshire and managed our only win of the season 6-4. We got our 6 straight off the bat, taking all the singles and the two men's doubles. The experience of an Olympic silver medalist and a number of other top class players meant that they took the last 4. 16 points gained from the weekend and we had plenty of aces up our sleeves for the last weekend. So once again I left Yorkshire quietly confident of a mid table finish... little did I know!

Back to our National Centre at Milton Keynes for the final weekend and before we had even packed our lunches and flicked on our favourite driving tunes we were up against it. Unfortunately three of those aces I referred to earlier were unavailable to play, leaving us near the bottom hoping for good performances and results to go our way. To make matters worse in our first game we had to play Yorkshire who themselves were looking for big wins in order to retain the title from a marauding Surrey team. We managed to take three games, Joel took first singles and we managed the two men's doubles.

Our last two matches were relegation battles against Cheshire and Avon. After some gallant performances we managed only to muster 5 games from the two matches and that simply was not good enough. We finished with a total of 34 points and in 10th place. So Premier B beckons us once again but if we manage to field our top team there is no reason why promotion should not be our aim.

Andy Frye  
Team Manager

**Premier 'A' Final Positions**

<b>Pos</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Played</b>	<b>Won</b>	<b>Draws</b>	<b>Lost</b>
1	Surrey	71	9	9	0	0
2	Yorkshire	68	9	8	0	1
3	Hertfordshire	45	9	5	0	4
4	Warwickshire	44	9	4	3	2
5	Cheshire	40	9	2	0	7
6	Avon	38	9	3	1	5
7	Nottinghamshire	38	9	2	3	4
8	Glasgow & NS	36	9	2	2	5
9	Middlesex	36	9	1	3	5
10	Essex	34	9	1	4	4

## Essex ICC 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Report 2012

Division 1 sits below Premier B and is split into four regional sections. This year the Essex 2<sup>nd</sup> team were allocated to Section B along with Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire 1<sup>st</sup> teams and old advisories Hertfordshire 2 and Middlesex 2.

The season saw a real mixture of experienced players and fresh young blood represent their county. Debutant nominee Robert Golding showed huge potential for the future playing with ex international Ian Pearson and Basil Tallah maintained a 100% record for the matches he played. Alice King, Bethany McDonough and Tanapat Pisitpong all enjoyed some victories in their first appearances at this level of senior county badminton.

By the end of the season Essex 2 were placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the results table with 5 wins recorded v 3 losses. The team were unlucky to be defeated 7-8 in their away match against Oxfordshire and were the only squad to beat the league champions Middlesex 2. In an unfortunate twist of fate it was 3<sup>rd</sup> placed Hertfordshire 2 who ended up at the play off finals when Essex and Middlesex's first teams were demoted to Premier B preventing their 2<sup>nd</sup> team's opportunity for promotion.

Overall it was a successful season and games, as always, were played in fine spirits and with good sportsmanship. Team stalwart's Danny Plant and Ben Barber stood out as players whose percentage of wins over losses were particularly high. It will be interesting to see how the team who enjoy the 'homefield advantage' phenomenon fare if the new proposals regarding fixed venues as opposed to home and away matches goes ahead next season.

The final results tables for the 2011/12 season can be viewed below.

Lynne Swan  
Team Manager

### Division 1B Final Positions

Pos	County	Points	Played	Won	Draws	Lost
1	Middlesex 2	22	8	7	0	1
2	Essex 2	14	8	5	0	3
3	Hertfordshire 2	10	8	4	0	4
4	Oxfordshire	9	8	3	0	5
5	Cambridgeshire	5	8	1	0	7

## Essex ICC 3<sup>rd</sup> Team Report 2012

The 3rd team had a very tough season this year from being promoted 2 years in a row; so we always knew this would be hard for us. With our manager Graham Lane unfortunately being unable to support the team this season, myself & Adam Sibley took over so that the team was still together.

The 3rd team gave it their all when it came to playing and this showed throughout the season. They tried their best and I was impressed with their positive attitudes and commitment throughout the season, however it was tough to always have the same team out, so I had to ask upon others which I was very grateful for at such short notice.

The final results tables for the 2011/12 season are shown below. Unfortunately the 3<sup>rd</sup> Team are relegated to Division 4 next season.

Charlotte Lane  
Acting Team Manager

### Division 3C Final Positions

Pos	County	Points	Played	Won	Draws	Lost
1	Sussex 2	21	8	8	0	0
2	Bedfordshire	15	8	5	0	3
3	Berkshire 2	15	8	4	0	4
4	Kent 3	6	8	2	0	6
5	Essex 3	3	8	1	0	7