

## ESSEX MASTERS (Veterans) REPORT for SEASON 2011/2012

### Essex Over 40 team

#### Inter County League

With the season ending in success it is hard not to start there, but the ICL campaign started with relatively comfortable wins against Bucks, Cambs and Beds, before what was expected to be a crunch tie v Herts at Hemel just before Christmas in a freezing cold hall at JFK. With the men at full strength all 4 matches were taken by Dave Wood & Simon Gilhooly and Andy Bailey & Trevor Rogers. The ladies took 2 of theirs, with both Amanda Austin & Lesley Pallett and Donna Tubb & super-sub Pam Dallow both winning one each. 6-2 up going into the mixed, it was a race to see who could secure the win first. That honour went to Donna & Simon, with Amanda & Trevor securing the other game in an 8-4 win. The reverse fixtures after Christmas went to plan with the exception of the trip to Bucks which our ladies didn't seem to fancy, and most unusually we lost all 4. The men only halved, so we were faced with having to win all 4 mixed for a draw. This was so nearly achieved, but Kit Yong & Felix Afum lost the final match in 3 sets as we succumbed to a 7-5 loss. Bucks did not fulfil all their fixtures, and after a relatively comfortable home win vs. an understrength Herts team, we were through to the play-off v Kent in Wimbledon.

With Dave Wood now out injured for the season and Lesley Pallett & Felix being seconded to help the 45's team, the depth of the squad was tested, but with new recruits in Karina Bryant and Ady Munro as well as Clive Palmer to call upon, there was plenty of reason for optimism.

Kent may have helped our cause as they seemed to reverse their men's pairings giving Clive & Simon a more comfortable start, and when Andy & Trevor also got off to a winning start, confidence was high. The ladies were back on form and took all 4, and despite dropping 1 men's and a mixed, 10 -2 was a healthy win.

And so to Stoke, dispensation was granted for Phil Tuffee to play, and we were set for a tough start vs. perennial finalists Glos. The first round of men's set the tone, with Phil & Trevor winning in 2, to be followed by Simon & Ian Smith putting the team through an anxious wait before winning 28-26 in their 3<sup>rd</sup> set. The ladies pairs of Tracy Hutchinson & Donna and Karina & Amanda ensured the perfect start, and all the reverse doubles were won to take an 8-0 lead into the mixed. Donna was ready by the scoreboard to put up a 12-0, only for the 'captains' to lose in 3 sets, and we settled for an 11-1 win and a place v Cheshire in the final.

Cheshire had won the event for the previous 2 years, but were worried after our semi-final success whereas they didn't have a straightforward win over Derbyshire.

There was no repeat of the clean sweep of the levels this time as Ian & Simon were edged out after a tight 1<sup>st</sup> set, but Phil & Trevor put the first point on the board. The ladies did again dominate by winning all 4, with Lesley now partnering Karina. The reverse men's were halved leaving Essex 6 -2 up and needing 1 mixed to win. Tracy & Ian were already on court as

Karina & Lesley finished their second ladies, but lost in 3 sets. Karina went on with Simon and also went down in 3 sets, leaving Amanda & Trevor to atone for their loss on Saturday by securing the decisive match. Lesley & Phil were not able to put a gloss on the score, as they also lost in 3.

### **Essex 7 Cheshire 5 - Essex O40's ICL Champions!**

#### **Inter County Championships**

The ICC proved a struggle to field a team, with Adrian Watling & Andy Lager playing on Saturday and Clive & Phil playing on the Sunday. With Herts & Bucks pulling out we were in a division of 5 playing each county twice, but each match was only best of 2. The team were kept on their toes and the opposition never knew what to expect as the team was constantly rotated. A comfortable start was made v Avon, and then a tougher tie followed v Sussex. Both levels were halved before Amanda & Trevor won, followed by a match winning half by Lesley & Adrian. The levels were won against Middlesex and Tracy & Adrian won the decisive set. After Andy & Simon secured a tough half v Oxon in the men's and the team was halfway there. The same format followed on Sunday, with newly arrived Clive & Phil making short work of all the opposing men's pairs, this time the ladies made no mistake v Sussex, but Amanda & Trevor then lost, leaving Lesley & Simon to secure a nervy half for the win. The match v Middlesex was interesting, starting with top mixed, which Amanda & Trevor again lost, the ladies then halved, a win in the men's meant all on 2<sup>nd</sup> mixed, which Donna & Simon narrowly secured over Essex old-boy Mark Bishop. The weekend was wrapped up with another win v Oxon and with 8 wins from 8 matches, it was a successful weekend in Bournemouth, the main prize being seen as back to Hatfield for next season.

### **Essex O40s ICC Div. 1B Champions!**

Well done and a big thank you to my team - the season has been a real pleasure! 😊

Trevor Rogers

Captain Over 40's Team

### **Vets over 45 team.**

#### **Inter County League**

We managed to win all of our 8 games this season in our respective league, including a fine home win against Herts, our closest rivals in the south. We had a couple of good reserves in due to our normal players being away, but still managed to win 7-5. The long awaited away leg against them was unfortunately conceded as they had 6 regulars injured. So convincing wins over Suffolk, Norfolk and Bucks took us through to the play offs, where we faced a strong Hampshire team. Again we had two regulars on holiday, so ended with using very good substitutes from the 40's team. The first men's was a close affair with our men winning 21-18 in the third, our second ladies pair beat their first ladies 25-23 in the third and our second men's beat their first men's 22-20 in the third. All very close games that went our way and if they hadn't then we could have

had a completely different story. We ended up winning 11-1, so now go to Stoke full of confidence. Competing the finals against Lancs, Notts and Wiltshire.

The finals weekend was played at Stoke on the 5th and 6th May. Essex had been drawn to play Wiltshire in the semi finals, having never played this team before, it was a bit of unknown. They had some good players but we were overall too strong and managed to win the tie 8-4.

Unfortunately during the Saturday it was apparent one of our men was injured and would be unable to play on Sunday. We had a traveling reserve from the over 55 team, John Stretch had come up with Andi and had put his kit in the car.

Our Sunday opponents were again to be Lancashire; they had defeated us the previous year in a very close match. This proved to be the same. We lost three of the matches in close three setters and going in to the mixed we were 5-3 down. We won the top two mixed, but unfortunately lost the last two to lose the tie 7-5, again very close.

### **Inter County Championships.**

We went to these championships with the ambition of trying to remain in the top flight. After five good wins against Derby 4-0, Somerset 4-0, Lancs 3-1, Surrey 3-1 and Yorks 3-1 it was between us and Herts as to who would take the crown. They had also gained 2 points from each of their matches, but marginally in a couple. We lost the ladies in 2 and lost the men's in 3. We needed to win both mixed in 2 to take it. Unfortunately we did win both mixed but one in 3 meant that it went on points and we lost out by 20 points. A crushing way to finish second after all the good efforts of the team over the weekend.

In all the season has been good, coming runners up in both the ICC and ICL, with a team that most of whom will be moving to the older age group next year.

Peter Moseley.  
Over 45 team Captain

### **Vets Over 50 Team**

### **Inter County League**

This season started off with the loss of three established players. Two ladies decided to call it a day on playing competitively and a pre-season injury to one of our main men. However we managed to find two exceptionally good players of either gender, who throughout the season rose to the rigours of playing Veterans.

It was nice to start of the season with a win against Bucks, especially with makeshift Ladies pairings. Cambridgeshire who joined our division this season, were the unknown team having replaced Berkshire, but were easily beaten, again with a makeshift Ladies pairing winning 11-1. The next team Herts, who we consider our closest rivals in this division, as also beaten convincingly.

However after the ICC in January, having easy wins against Bucks and Cambs, we lost heavily to Suffolk 9-3 away, with almost a full team. We lost again away to Herts 7-5. This was a 'good loss' as it was a makeshift team with two key players missing, including myself. These losses meant the divisional winners couldn't be decided until the very last game of the season. This was against Suffolk, who had to beat Essex by at least seven games, or Herts would be crowned Eastern Champions.

Unfortunately they hadn't reckoned on our home record, which is exceptionally good. It was worked out that for Essex to win the division (again), Essex would have to beat Suffolk 9-3. Going into the mix section Essex led 6 -2, with the men winning all four rubbers. Normally it's the Ladies, who prop up the team, but Suffolk had a very strong Ladies pair. Essex managed to win the first three rubbers, which sealed the necessary margin of victory.

Once again Essex has to face Surrey, in the end- of- season Play-off, and once again Essex came off second best. Surrey, were just too strong on all fronts, beating Essex 10-2.

#### **Inter County Championships:**

Unfortunately we couldn't replicate our pre-Christmas success throughout the ICC weekend in January. We started off with 'blinder' of a victory over Surrey, winning 3 -1, but couldn't maintain the momentum either losing to or drawing with Avon , Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire. To stay in the premier division, we had to beat Gloucestershire, our final match. Unfortunately we could only manage a draw, resulting in the relegation of Essex along with Gloucestershire.

Special thanks to all the players who represented the Over50's this season:

#### **Ladies:**

Andi Stretch, Mair Dew, Lorene Roberts, Janice Flowers, Nicola Vandean, Barbara Childs, Linda Scrace, Jane Nuremberg

#### **Men:**

Peter Ostrowsky, John Kindred, Ross Ranson, Barry Coleman, Peter Moseley, Peter Emptage

George Joseph  
Over 50 Captain

## Report of Essex O 55's Team

### Inter County League:

This season the leagues for the O55's in the South East were restructured into an 'A' & 'B'. This resulted in the two leagues consisting of Counties on the East & West of the River Thames. And the winners of each league having a play off to go forward to the National Finals in Stoke on Trent.

The team had excellent results in the league and won all their matches the worst result being 9-3, in which we had to concede 2 due to an injury. In many of the matches the results do not reflect the games as there were a number that could have gone either way. Congratulations must go to the ladies, apart from the 2 we had to concede they did not lose a playing match. Also special mention should be made of Barbara Childs is that in the league she played 18 matches and won 18 matches.

A good team performance considering that in no match did I have my first 8 players and it gave me an opportunity to try other people.

Having won the East, beating Suffolk, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire both home and away we had to play the winners of the West. This was to be Surrey who also won their league with ease. Before we travelled we knew it would be an extremely difficult match with a full team and it proved to be more difficult when Peter Emptage had to withdraw late with an injury. Difficult to find a replacement as all our teams qualified for play offs. Fortunately at the eleventh hour I found sub in Geoff Gutteridge, did I tell him the strength of the opposition European champions, National champions - no!

As for the match we did not fare well lost all our men's and won 1 ladies going into the mixed 7-1 down. a mention has to be made to Barbara Childs and Chris Pennock who took the European Champions of Chris Crossley & Jenny Cox to a deciding game. We managed to draw the mixed with Surrey 2 each with yes you guessed Barbara Childs /Jjohn Stretch and Jane Noremberg /Gary Webb winning their matches.

I would like to thank all who played this year Pam Dallow, Jane Nuremburg, Barbara Childs, Chris Pennock, Penny Hackett, Peter Emptage, Kevin Martin, John Stretch, John Kindred, George Joseph, Geoff Gutteridge and me.

I would like to say it has been a privilege in captaining this team and thank everyone for their support. Thanks to Roy Lord for organising all the fixtures, halls ,shuttles etc.

### **Inter County Championship**

The Championships is a county team competition played over a single weekend and teams are grouped in divisions by standard.

This event was held over the weekend of 7/8 January 2012. The O55's played in the Premier event at Hatfield, quite local for us. Unfortunately I was unable to field our strongest team but we came a commendable 4<sup>th</sup>. The standard of badminton was extremely high.

It was great weekend of badminton and on the Saturday evening partying. A number of Essex players including a couple of O55's, John Stretch & Gary Webb stayed up till the early hours of the morning with the young 45ers. We showed them how to party!! The rest of the team took the weekend more seriously and were tucked up in bed by 11.30.

Gary Webb

Essex O55's Captain

### **Essex Over 60**

#### **Inter County League.**

This season our Inter County League was to be a different area so we played teams from Oxford, Middlesex and Buckingham. This meant less matches than last season and we started off at Oxford with an uncharacteristic wobble losing three of the men's doubles and we finally lost the match 7 rubbers to 5. Our matches against Middlesex were comfortable wins both 11-1 at home and away and against Bucks 11-1 away. Bucks unfortunately declined to come and play us at home so conceded to us, so it was all on our return match against Oxford. This time we won all four men's doubles but due to a weakened squad we lost all four ladies doubles so needed to win three of the mixed. This was accomplished with special thanks to our scratch pair of John Whalebone and Rahma Saibon winning the final mixed of the day 22-20 21-13 so we won the match 7-5. Our overall games average was better than Oxford so we went through to the play-off against Surrey.

Like many of our teams we found ourselves having to play very strong Surrey teams and like the over 50 and Over 55 teams we were unable to overcome the strength and depth of their squad. Our match was close fought and we went into the mixed double at a level score of 4-4. Unfortunately we could only win one of the 4 mixed so we lost the match 7-5. It was a close match and 5 of our rubbers were played to the best of three but we could only win one of those. Had two of the other four been in our favour then the match score would have been very different. Surrey over 60 went on to the Finals at Stoke and were crowned eventual winners so we can take some credit that we gave them a close fought match in the play-off round. I would like to thank our players Linda Scrace, Joan Harrison, Teresa Baker, Hazel Keeble and Rahma Saibon for the ladies and Graham Goodale, John Gardner, John Scott (who played with injured ankle) Richard Seabright (who gave up his golf) and John Whalebone ( from our over 65 team) who all played so well this season.

#### **Inter County Championships.**

Our ICC (Inter County Championships) in January were played at Milton Keynes and most unusually it was a struggle to get our team together for one reason or another. However we managed to win 5 of our 6 matches with the last match against Leicester we needed to win as

they had a better games average than we had in all our other matches. Unfortunately we could only manage a draw and they won promotion to the premiership for next season. Like all the other age groups we enjoy the ICC weekend both the Badminton and the Evening Dinner so long may it continue.

Roy Lord.

Over 60 Team Captain and Essex Vets Coordinator.

Essex Over 65 Team.

Inter County League;

The Over 65 league seems to have been a problem this season with several of the counties, including Essex struggling to get teams together consequently some matches were postponed or conceded.

Inter County Championships;

Once again the team played well on Saturday and looked strong for the title only to falter at the last hurdle on Sunday

Essex Over 70.

We did not enter a over 70 team in either the League or Championships since there is a shortage of ladies in this age group willing to travel and play in matches. We did try to organise some friendly matches but it appears this is also difficult without ladies to make up a full squad. If any ladies over 70 or getting near to that age who would like to play then please contact Roy Lord.