

Essex ICC Team Reports 2010/11

Essex ICC 1st Team Report 2011

From the first game of Men's singles played back in October to the last Mixed doubles in April I am proud to say all of the players represented the county to the best of their ability and did so with the sportsmanship, respect and camaraderie that I have experienced in all the Essex teams I have been lucky enough to be a part of. After the final shuttle of the season was struck the performances of our players had earned us a very respectable sixth place finish (in fact tied on points with 5th) in the Badminton England Inter-County Championships Premier 'A' Division. Our congratulations must go out to Yorkshire for the winning the title once again and commiserations to Leicestershire and Lanarkshire for putting up a brave fight but in the end being found wanting in the top flight of English badminton.

I would like to say thank you to a number of people from all of the first team players for a lot of hard work and support. Eric and Nikki Richardson for guiding me through this first season as captain, your help was constant and very much appreciated. Karina Bryant as past captain for helping me with team selections and also organising the logistics of the three weekends, for those that do not know our group of players, that job is certainly not one to be taken for granted! Eric Brown and second team captain Lynne Swan for team selection advice and of course the Essex County Badminton Association for supporting the team. All of this help makes it easier for the players to concentrate on winning badminton matches and certainly does not go unrecognised. Thank you.

Before I tell you a little about the badminton I want to expand a little on the 'logistics' comment from earlier. There was a running theme to our team this year, one of late arrivals. Thankfully none of which impacted on the results of any matches but I feel are worthy of a mention. It was the men who got the tardy ball rolling with Joel forgetting his house keys and having to turn back for home 30 minutes in to his, and Eddy's, journey to Milton Keynes!

The first weekend saw us playing three very tough teams in Glasgow and Strathclyde, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. With only four ladies in the team they knew they had their work cut out and would be playing two games in each match, well done girls. It was Caroline Westley who struck up the first win in the 2010-2011 season at first ladies singles, followed by wins from James Anderson and Peter Jeffery and Karina Bryant and Lynne Swan in the doubles against the Scots. Against the champions we snuck away with three wins taking top Men's singles and both the Men's doubles.

Our team meal Saturday night and a sample of the Milton Keynes night life left us set-up to play Nottinghamshire on the Sunday. A good start in the singles with wins from Eddy Chow, Caroline Westley and Emma Skingsley put us in a great position early on, but our opponents gritted their teeth and took five of the remaining games to hold us to a draw.

A 100% record for the weekend from James Anderson should not go unmentioned, well done Sir. All three of our opponents were boasting players with international honours and after some gutsy performances we left Milton Keynes with only 11 points out of 30 and were in relegation position.

At the second weekend it was the turn of our 100% man to be running a little late, however directions from the staff at the Nottingham University Sports Centre saw our superstar arrive just in the nick of time to play and win his first game of the day. We started with a much more encouraging result, a 7-3 win against our neighbours Hertfordshire. A close first Men's singles win from Joel got us off to a good start and was the first of six wins from six for Joel over the weekend... what can you say about the man, awesome!

Our second match was an unexpected loss to Leicestershire, I have learnt over the last few years that these matches are not won or lost on the team sheet and individual performances on the day are what counts. Our singles players all put in great performances with Joel winning in straight sets and Eddy narrowly losing out 18-21 in the third end. Our ladies singles girls, debutant Mina Clarke and Nicola Waller were both involved in fantastic three set games, losing out 21-23 and 17-21 respectively in the final games. A few points the other way and we could have easily walked away with another 7-3 victory.

After a small incident in the hotel lift with a number of players from Essex, our opponents of the day Surrey and the fine men and women of the Nottinghamshire Fire Service, we were unfortunately taught a lesson in badminton on Sunday managing only 2 games in our heaviest defeat of the season. Joel won his singles and Andy Brunning took his Men's doubles with Joel (of course).

Respect must be paid to Caroline Westley who only a week after seriously damaging her knee making her unavailable to play, managed to hobble, with the support of crutches, up to Nottingham to support us. We had clawed our way out of relegation position but were still in need of a good last weekend.

Thankfully (for us men) it was the girls this time who were so engrossed in a car karaoke session that they missed the turn off for the M1!! Yes you read it correctly... the M1, one of our nation's largest motorways; The Only Way is Essex! I was quietly confident going into this weekend, as we had two of our nominated ladies available for the first time in Sarah Walker and Tracy Dineen, we also had an ace up our sleeve by the name of Daniel Plant. My confidence proved not to be unjust, all three of these Essex badminton 'Superstars' managed 100% records in their games... just what we needed.

Our best win of the season was recorded in the first match against Lanarkshire, 8-2 with the Scottish National Champion Men's doubles pair being sent back up north with their tails between their legs by Peter Jeffery and the skipper. A tight win 21-18 in the second ladies doubles by Lynne Swan and Viv Gillard, plus two Mixed doubles wins finished off a very pleasing start to the weekend.

The team selection against Warwickshire has been branded both thoughtful and desperate, I would like clear it up... we were in a desperate position, so with a lot of thought and the "team first" attitude a captain loves to see, we managed to put a side out that battled to a hard earned draw. At the same time the title deciding match finished in a relentless 9-1 victory for Yorkshire over Surrey... title race over!

The Saturday night of the final weekend was once again packed with excitement, a curtain malfunction (Viv pulling it off the wall) saw the captain requiring to put on his red cape and fly to the rescue. Then the restaurant was not ready for us at the time we booked, but swiftly made up for it with some complimentary wine and some very tasty food.

Starting the final game of the season 4-0 down after the singles did make the team a little twitchy. I must take this opportunity to thank both Ben Barber and Mina Clark for making the trip up from Southend to Milton Keynes to play for us on the Sunday. Ben putting in a good performance in his singles game and alongside Joel taking the second doubles game 21-19 in the third end.

Our team then showed fantastic spirit led by Tracy taking a fighting three set win in her ladies doubles with Lynne and a comfortable win at top mixed with Peter. We won five of the six doubles games to bring the match score back to 5-5 and it was with those eighteen final weekend points that we sailed out of the relegation battle and safely into mid table.

So in conclusion to my first year as skipper I want to thank all the players who turned out for us this season Joel Gayle, Eddy Chow, Daniel Plant, Ben Barber, James Anderson, Peter Jeffery, Andy Brunning, Caroline Westley, Emma Skingsley, Nicola Waller, Sarah Walker, Lynne Swan, Viv Gillard, Karina Bryant, Tracy Dineen and of course our first timer Mina Clark. You made my job very easy, we survived another season at the top of the game and we had a lot of fun along the way.

Andy Frye
Team Manager

	Premier 'A'	Ties For	Drawn	Ties Against	Matches For	Matches Against	Section Points
1	Yorkshire 1	9	0	0	71	19	71
2	Surrey 1	8	0	1	59	31	59
3	Nottinghamshire 1	6.5	1	2.5	48	42	48
4	Middlesex 1	4	2	5	45	45	45
5	Warwickshire 1	4	2	5	42	48	42
6	Essex 1	3.5	3	5.5	42	48	42
7	Hertfordshire 1	3.5	3	5.5	42	48	42
8	Glasgow & NS 1	3.5	3	5.5	40	50	40
9	Leicestershire 1	2	2	7	34	56	34
10	Lanarkshire 1	1	2	8	27	63	27

Essex ICC 2nd Team Report 2011

Division 1 sits below Premier B and is split into four regional sections. This year the Essex 2nd team were allocated to Section B, along with Norfolk 1st team and 2nd teams from Hertfordshire, Middlesex and Leicestershire. Matches were played both home and away on various Sundays from October through to March.

Essex 2s was again this season fortunate enough to have players full of experience, with ex-regular 1st teamers Ian Pearson, Danny Plant and Lynne Swan being nominated alongside youngsters such as Emma Skingsley and Mina Clark. Ben Barber was back on form and fully focussed on his game and the committee were delighted to find that Allison Pearson was available for home team matches (if there were enough babysitters to hand!).

It turned out to be a story of home field advantage for 2010-11. Matches played at Rayleigh Leisure Centre saw victories over Norfolk 9-6, Herts 9-6, Middlesex 11-4 and Leicestershire 13-2. Unfortunately the team was not always able to perform to the best of their ability when travelling away and suffered 3 defeats out of 4.

That said, the first game of the season ended in an unlucky 7-8 loss away to Herts 2. Essex went into the doubles 3-1 up following fantastic singles performances from Ben, Danny and Nicola Waller. Herts hit back in the level doubles winning 5 out of the 8 available rubbers, ex full time players Liza Smith and Jo Goode proving to be formidable opposition in the ladies. Ian and Viv Gillard did their bit to pull it back in the mixed but our 2nd and 3rd pairs couldn't quite find their form and lost in 3 ends and 22-24 respectively to give Hertfordshire the win.

More away losses followed against Middlesex 6-9 and Norfolk 4-11 although many of the games could have gone either way. Toby Moon won at second singles in Ben's absence at Easton College and all of the team who travelled in the snow to this particular match should be commended just for making it there in one piece!

By February Lynne had become committed to the first team. Special thanks must go to Paula Anderson, Viv Gillard and Sue Crompton for playing (and winning most of their games) in the last three matches of the season. Other **super** subs (with super underlined and bold for a reason) were Peter Jeffrey and James Anderson who were able to stand in when needed. The opposition were unsure if they were in the right venue on these occasions! Peter, in particular, found playing with his team mates from over 25 years ago relaxing and enjoyable away from his England Coaching commitments.

Essex finished on a high beating Leicestershire 8-7 away. Overall, it was a successful season and games were played in fine spirits and good sportsmanship. Ian, Ben, Danny Plant and Allison stood out as players whose percentage of wins over losses were particularly high.

The final table for the 2010/11 season can be viewed below:

	Division 1B	Ties For	Ties Against	Matches For	Matches Against	Section Points
1	Norfolk 1	6	2	74	46	19
2	Essex 2	5	3	67	53	14
3	Middlesex 2	5	3	64	56	14
4	Hertfordshire 2	4	4	61	59	11
5	Leicestershire 2	0	8	34	86	2

Essex ICC 3rd Team Report 2011

Essex 3rd's achieved promotion for the second year running and continue to be unbeaten. We are looking forward to next season when I am sure that we are going to have some tough matches, but we have a winning mentality and that will carry us onto maybe a third promotion.

I would like to thank the regular players Adam, Dave, Toby, Oscar, Emma, Alice, Beth and Charlotte. Also the players who played often at short notice Becky, Catherine, Joe and Phil. Basil and Kaleem played the first two matches, so once again thank you all for playing with passion and determination for your county. Hope to see you next season.

Graham Lane
Team Manager

	Division 4B	Ties For	Ties Against	Matches For	Matches Against	Section Points
1	Essex 3	8	0	88	32	21
2	Hertfordshire 4	5	3	74	46	16
3	Buckinghamshire 3	2	6	53	67	9
4	Suffolk 2	3	5	47	73	8
5	Lincolnshire 1	2	6	38	82	6