

## 2011 Essex Ladies League Challenge Cup @ Club Kingswood Basildon

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2011

### “Epping ladies are inaugural winners”

Club Kingswood Basildon was the venue for the first ever Essex Ladies Squash League Challenge play-offs, featuring the top two Essex ladies squash teams from the West Essex League (Redbridge and Epping) and the Essex and Suffolk Border League (Lexden A + Lexden B)

The semi-finals saw Epping pitched against Lexden B, and Redbridge playing Lexden A. It's fair to say that both matches were very evenly and keenly contested with a good few games extending to five sets. First on court were the number threes, Elaine Buss (Epping) against Louise Hunt (Lexden B) and Karin Bacon (Lexden A) against Jan McCall (Redbridge). Buss's match with Hunt was a thrilling five-setter, both ladies gave literally everything they had to the cause, (the fourth game went to 21/19 to Hunt!!) with the deciding game eventually going to a very tired Buss 15/12.

Next up were the number ones, with Lexden's Fiona Gosling beating Redbridge's Elaine Chubb 3/1, and Nikki Taylor from Lexden only just managing to beat a very determined Tracy Brown from Epping in five high quality and hard fought games, 15/11 in the fifth.

Last on court were the number two's - Lexden A were already 2-0 up against Redbridge so the match featuring Lexden's Jenny Wright and Redbridge's Michelle Higgins in effect had no significance although neither player wanted to lose! – Higgins on this occasion however managing to subdue the hard hitting Wright in four (3-1) to give Redbridge a consolation win. The other match (Lexden B vs Epping) was neatly poised at 1-all with everything to play for. Lexden B's Sarah Clarke opened the match against Epping's Katie Hancock with a convincing 15/10 win, the second however saw a reversal 9/15 to Hancock. Clarke was then unable to fight back in the third going down 4/15, but recovered her composure to take the fourth by the same score 15/4 – the fifth, of an epic game, went to Hancock and Epping were through to the final against Lexden A, by a 2-1 winning margin.

The final saw Epping win at one and two courtesy of 3-1 wins for Tracy Brown against Fiona Gosling and Katie Hancock against Jenny Wright respectively. Karin Bacon at three for Lexden A however reversed the trend by the same score 3-1 against Epping's (by now very tired Elaine Buss) – giving a deserved victory to the Epping ladies team. The winners trophy was kindly donated and also presented, by Essex SRA Chairman Dave Neller to Epping's captain for the day Katie Hancock.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> place play-off Redbridge gained a consolation win against Lexden B, 2-1 with wins for Michelle Higgins over Sarah Clarke and Jan McCall against Louise Hunt. Nikki Taylor defeated Redbridge's Elaine Chubb 3-0 in the battle of the number ones.

Final placings were 1. Epping 2. Lexden A 3. Redbridge 4. Lexden B

Chris Vine – England Squash and Racketball Development Coach (Essex)

Pic – Dave Neller and victorious Epping team!