

Hertfordshire beat Essex 5½ - 4½ away at Thorpe Hall GC to secure the League Title.

Following three decisive victories in our first three matches against Bedfordshire, BB&O and Middlesex, the team travelled to Thorpe Hall Golf Club in Southend, to play a strong Essex team, also unbeaten in the league to date.

Whilst leading the league by two points, a heavy loss would have resulted in Essex overtaking us. So, whilst only needing to win a few matches on the day, we couldn't afford to be complacent, so the objective was to go and try to win the match.

Playing away at Thorpe Hall, (with historical (and present) connections with the likes of Michael Bonallack, Peter Dawson, Matt Southgate and Richard McEvoy) we arrived to find an oasis of lush green parkland!

At first glance, the place looked so lush and green that one wondered whether Thorpe Hall had its own monsoon-like micro-climate or invested in a job lot of industrial-strength green dye. However, the explanation was rather more impressive: a new irrigation system, apparently used with admirable commitment, had kept the course looking immaculate despite the longest drought on record.

Having procrastinated for several days over the playing order, the captain's dilemma was how to get points on the board early enough to secure the title and relieve the pressure, without risking potentially losing early matches and adding pressure and anxiety to the middle and back markers.

The decision was finally made, we'll front load to try and get the necessary points on the board early and back load the order as a contingency in case it gets tight, whilst stacking the middle order with reliable, experienced, team members who should get a few points between them.

Then, after seeing the Essex team order, with four ex-professionals and a former England Senior team player, they were coming out all guns blazing; they had to win nearly every game to overturn us, and they meant business! The captain's anxiety levels rose.

Mark Gershinson was sent out first, to stamp our authority on the match. He was followed by David Lang, who never loses, up against their most experienced former England player. Yikes! Let's hope I got it right.

Racing around the course in a buggy like Colin McRae on steroids, with deputy vice-captain, Nick Davis as co-driver, hanging on for dear life as we bounced around on the newly excavated drainage lines, the main question was, will the suspension be able to take it, or will the buggy be a right-off!

By the halfway stage, we were up in five, all square in two and down in one, so barring a major collapse, we looked like we were going to secure enough points to at least win the league, possibly even the match itself.

01 September 2026

Having caught up with a field of fourballs by the 8th, and play slowing to a snail's pace, the first two pairings decided to join each other and play as a four. It then soon became the Gersh and Langy show as they competed more with each other than their actual opponents, sparring with each other making birdies for fun. It was now a matter of who was going to win first. And it was Langy, playing imperious golf, finishing off his opponent 5&4 to secure the point which guaranteed the league title. A celebratory, enthusiastic man-hug from the captain ensued, leaving Langy short of breath when he was finally released. Then Gersh concluded his match on the 17thhaving played some impressive golf to be three under par! The plan was working.

But then the middle order started to creak as we managed just a win and a half from Gordon Stewart and Paul Nanacarrow, out of the next five matches, which all went down to the last hole. Essex was fighting back, and hard.

But there was no need to worry as Simon Kay elegantly plotted his way around the course, like Kasparov playing a chess match against a beginner, demolishing his opponent 6&4.

Finally, it was the anchorman, Doug Montgomery, who delivered the point that won us the match 5 ½ - 4 ½ to complete a league record of four wins from four matches, leaving Hertfordshire unbeaten and clear at the head of the table.

Having won the league, we now go on to play the winners of the SEG Southern Section in the final at Crews Hill on 14th October.

Following an emotional victory speech by the captain, he presented the team with a customary chocolate cake which they gorged before running to their cars to try and beat the M25 traffic.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate every member of the team who has played this season. You have all performed brilliantly to win the league and become the new "Invincibles".

Thanks also to the rest of the squad for your understanding when not selected, but for being there, when needed. Hopefully, several of you will make the team next year.

Finally, thanks to vice-captain, Dave Scammell, and deputy vice-captain, Nick Davis for their support and to all the team's supporters for spectating at various matches. It means a lot.

SEG Seniors League — Northern Section table

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Total Pts
Hertfordshire	4	4	0	0	30½	9½	8
Essex	4	1	2	1	21	19	4
BB&O	4	2	0	2	19	21	4
Middlesex	4	1	1	2	15	25	3
Bedfordshire	4	0	1	3	14½	25½	1

Essex	Points	Result	Points	Hertfordshire
Ian Moore	0	2 & 1	1	Mark Gershinson
Mark Stones	0	5 & 4	1	David Lang
Andrew Duffin	1	1 Up	0	Michael Charles
Lee Barrington	½	All Square	½	Paul Nancarrow
Paul King	0	1 Up	1	Gordon Stewart
Michael Edmunds	1	2 & 1	0	Peter York
Gary Fisher	1	1 Up	0	Phil Embleton
Peter Heany	0	5 & 4	1	Simon Kay
Steven Clement	1	1 Up	0	Paul Marshall
Tony Wan	0	4 & 2	1	Doug Montgomery

Result: Essex 4½ – 5½ Hertfordshire

01 September 2026

Team photo



From left to right:

Nick Davis, Michael Charles, Phil Embleton, Simon Kay, Peter York, David Lang, Mark Gershinson, Paul Nancarrow, Paul Marshall, Matthew Cohen, Gordon Stewart, Dog Montgomery.