



# SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



## Sussex CCC v. Gloucestershire Specsavers County Championship Division Two The 1<sup>st</sup> Central County Ground, Hove, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> – Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### Day One

Sussex openers Phil Salt and Luke Wells made an impressive start to their Specsavers County Championship game against Gloucestershire before rain swept in to ruin the first day at The 1<sup>st</sup> Central County Ground, Hove.

Twenty-one-year-old, Salt, was unbeaten on 54 and Wells had contributed 25 to a stand of 86 for the first wicket before rain arrived at 12.30pm. Umpires Martin Saggars and Russell Warren abandoned play at 4pm with no sign of an improvement in conditions after taking an early tea.

Salt, who is making only his eleventh first-class appearance, is enjoying his opening role and there was a lot to admire in his aggressive approach after Sussex had batted first following an uncontested toss.

Australian Dan Worrall troubled both batsmen during a lively nine-over burst with the new ball up the slope. Salt came down the pitch to try and smear him through the off side and was then struck on the helmet by the next delivery when he misjudged a bouncer from Craig Miles and needed to make repairs to his headgear.

But in the last over before the rain arrived, Salt drove Matt Taylor for four then pulled his next ball over the lengthy square leg boundary for six. A single off the next delivery took him to his second Championship half-century from 59 balls which has included nine boundaries. Earlier, in the tenth over, he had taken three fours off Taylor with two drives through the off side and a pull to the mid-wicket rope.

Wells, fresh from an unbeaten 102 on Monday in Sussex's last match against Leicestershire, batted with more reserve but looked solid. His innings, from 66 balls so far, has included four boundaries.

Gloucestershire, who won their opening Division Two game against Kent before losing to Glamorgan last week, used just Worrall, Taylor and Craig Miles and although Worrall in particular beat the bat on several occasions their trio of seamers could not make a breakthrough.

Speaking at the close, Salt said: "I was delighted to get to 50 and hopefully tomorrow I can push on. As a batting unit we have all got a score now and I think that is something we can be very proud of because it hasn't been easy for batsmen in the first few weeks of the season with all the bad weather around.

"I try to bat positively and fortunately today I took the right options and managed to get some runs. Hopefully I can come back tomorrow and build on it.

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"Luke Wells, my opening partner, is a very different batsman to me and he's always in my ear reminding me what I do well and I'm always reminding him what he does well and it seems to work pretty well."

## Day Two

David Wiese recorded the best figures of his Sussex career by taking 5-48 on an astounding second day of this Specsavers County Championship match in which 22 wickets fell in total.

Sussex finished the day on 51-2 in their second innings, leading Gloucestershire by 13 runs.

Resuming on 92-0 at the start of the day, Sussex were bowled out for 145, losing all 10 wickets for 59 runs in 26 overs before lunch. Gloucestershire seamer Ryan Higgins took a career-best five for 21 with Luke Wright Sussex's top scorer in the session with 13.

There was some encouragement from the lively pitch, and the overcast conditions provided the bowlers with a fair amount of swing, but a number of batsmen would probably admit that they could have played better.

Luke Wells had added two runs to his overnight 25 when he was caught behind playing forward to Higgins. In the same bowler's next over Phil Salt, 54 not out overnight was caught at long leg for 63.

The wickets continued to tumble. Stiaan van Zyl was caught in the gully off Higgins, Harry Finch was caught behind off Daniel Worrall and captain Ben Brown was lbw to Worrall to leave the home side 105-5.

Michael Burgess and Ollie Robinson were caught in the slips from successive deliveries with the score on at 116, both off Higgins, and it was 117-8 when Wiese lost his leg stump to a scintillating inswinger from Matt Taylor.

Briggs and Wright put on something of a partnership for the final wicket, but when Wright was caught at mid-off, Gloucestershire still had time to face one over before lunch.

In a similar fashion to the way Salt and Wells had done for Sussex on day one, Gloucestershire profited against the new ball.

Chris Dent dragged on a delivery from Robinson in the fifth over, but Benny Howell and Gareth Roderick scored quickly so that the visitors reached 69-1 in the 14th over.

Then the wickets began to tumble once more. A vigorous innings from Howell came to an end when he was lbw to one that moved into him from David Wiese.

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Robinson struck again when he bowled James Bracey for 15 and it was 102-4 when Robinson took his third wicket, having Gareth Roderick LBW for 23.

At tea Gloucestershire were still well placed at 104-4, but Jack Taylor, taking his eye off the ball as he attempted to hook Robinson, was caught at long leg to make it 107-5.

Higgins was next to go, bowled by Wiese. Then Graeme van Buuren was caught behind by Ben Brown to give Wiese his third wicket.

Three balls later from Wiese and Danny Briggs pulled off a heroic catch at mid-wicket to get rid of Craig Miles.

Sussex's South African seamer bagged the eighth first-class five-wicket haul of his career and his first with six martlets on his chest Dan Worrall was well-caught by a diving Harry Finch at second slip. That left Gloucestershire nine down and just five runs ahead.

Some firm blows from Kieran Noema-Barnett (31), however, gave the boys from Bristol a lead of 38 when the innings was ended by Danny Briggs' first delivery of the season.

That left 16 overs for Sussex to face. Salt was bowled for nought in the second over, before Wells also had his stumps disturbed with what turned out to be the final ball of the day from Noema-Barnett. Stiaan van Zyl finished unbeaten on 23.

Speaking at the close, which didn't come until almost 7.30pm, Wiese gave his assessment of a frenetic day: "I've not been in a side that's been bowled out in a session before. We certainly weren't expecting that. It's a one innings game now.

"The ball did more the older it got and the ball nibbled around a bit. As a batsman you feel in until one suddenly gets you. It was a strange day. We bowled better after tea. For them, Ryan Higgins put in a decent spell."

## Day Three

Four wickets in 17 balls boosted Sussex's chances of claiming their first Championship win of the season against Gloucestershire at The 1st Central County Ground.

Chasing 167 to win, Gloucestershire looked in control when they reached 69-1. The introduction of Stiaan van Zyl changed things dramatically, however.

The South African picked up two wickets in successive balls during his second over and then bagged a third in the over after that.

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In between van Zyl's second and third, Ollie Robinson claimed the key wicket of opener Benny Howell for 45 as Gloucestershire slumped to 72-5.

As the light deteriorated, Sussex were forced to bring on left-arm spinner Danny Briggs who removed Graeme van Buuren after he had added 23 with Ryan Higgins.

Conditions worsened, however, and when play was abandoned Gloucestershire were 108- 6, 59 runs from victory with Sussex requiring four more wickets.

A dire forecast for Monday suggests the game might end in a draw which would be a pity.

Both sides had periods of control on an absorbing third day. Although the odd ball misbehaved the pitch played pretty well but overhead conditions were poor throughout with the lights on from the start.

Sussex resumed on 51-2 and lost wickets at regular intervals. Opener Harry Finch batted through the morning session and for a while he and van Zyl looked to be putting Sussex in a decent position.

They then lost van Zyl, who nicked Dan Worrall to slip, and Luke Wright, lbw to Higgins, in successive overs and before lunch Ben Brown (16) and Michael Burgess (17) had also departed.

Finch played the anchor role to perfection, coming out his shell to pull Jack Taylor for six, before losing his middle stump to Worrall for 48 after lunch.

The Australian ended the innings when he had Ishant Sharma lbw to finish with 4-45 while Higgins' three wickets gave him a match haul of 8-86.

Gloucestershire lost skipper Chris Dent (13) when Robinson beat him with late movement but Howell and Roderick appeared to be putting their side in a strong position with a stand of 45 in 13 overs.

Then van Zyl nipped one away and Roderick was caught behind to give Ben Brown his 300th first-class catch and Jack Bracey lost his off stump to the next ball.

Howells' patient innings was ended by another good ball from Robinson before van Zyl picked up Taylor.

Gloucestershire regrouped through Higgins and van Burren, but Briggs deceived van Burren (9) with his arm ball to make Sussex favourites again shortly before conditions got too bad.

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Speaking at the close, with figures of 3-16 from his eleven overs so far, van Zyl said: "I don't think I have played when it's been so cold. There must be a law when it gets below 10 degrees you have to come off!

"Seriously, it's okay when you're bowling but standing in the field is not much fun. I had four layers on all day and was still freezing.

"I hope the weather doesn't decide things tomorrow because it's been a really good game. It's a weird wicket - sometimes it plays nicely then the odd ball can go sideways.

"We probably feel we are one or two wickets away from winning and Gloucestershire will definitely feel they have a chance. I was pleased with how I bowled especially as those three wickets have got us back in the game."

## Day Four

Sussex and Gloucestershire had to settle for a draw after rain ruined a potentially exciting finish to their Specsavers County Championship match at The 1st Central County Ground.

The hosts needed four wickets and Gloucestershire 64 runs to win an absorbing Division Two game but the final day's play was abandoned at 1.45pm.

Rain had fallen steadily since early morning and with no prospect of an improvement in time to get the ground fit, umpires Russell Warren and Martin Saggars made their inevitable decision. Both sides take eight points each.

Sussex - who have started the season with three draws - start their next match on Friday when Middlesex are the visitors to Hove.

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