



SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Warwickshire vs. Sussex Specsavers County Championship Division Two Edgbaston, Friday 13th – Monday 16th April 2018

Day One

The start of Sussex's 2018 season was put on hold as rain washed out the opening day of their Specsavers County Championship Division Two match against Warwickshire at Edgbaston.

Edgbaston has not had a dry day this week so the arrival of further steady rain through Thursday night into Friday morning left the ground in a saturated state.

At a 3pm inspection, umpires Steve O'Shaughnessy and Paul Pollard decided that the outfield would remain too wet for there to be any cricket today.

Day Two

David Wiese bagged four-wickets for the third time in Championship cricket as Sussex's 2018 campaign finally got underway against Warwickshire at Edgbaston on Saturday.

Having been reduced to 147-6 and then 222-9, a stubborn tenth-wicket partnership between former Sussex 'keeper, Tim Ambrose (76*) and Chris Wright (17*) allowed the home side to reach the close on 284-9.

When the match finally started after the loss of the first four sessions to the weather, Ben Brown exercised his right to field and allowed his bowlers to get stuck in.

On his Championship debut, Sussex's Indian overseas signing Ishant Sharma took just 18 balls to open his account when Will Rhodes, making his Warwickshire Championship debut, edged to Phil Salt in the slips.

Five balls later, Dom Sibley tickled a rising ball from Ollie Robinson to Brown behind the stumps and Warwickshire were 20-2.

Ian Bell and Jonathan Trott added 60 in 17 overs before the latter edged an excellent delivery from Wiese to Robinson at first slip.

Sharma then trapped Adam Hose leg before with a late inswinger, before Sam Hain was also trapped in front playing no shot to Wiese.

Bell, fresh from a century against Durham MCCU, was in fine touch, however, advancing to 50 from 66 balls with ten fours.

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On 56 at tea, he resumed with three gorgeous off-side boundaries in quick succession to pass his career-average against Sussex (62.76). It was a surprise to all when his next attempt to pierce the offside field sent a catch to Stiaan van Zyl at backward point and gave Wiese his third scalp of the day.

Ambrose and Keith Barker dug in to add 52 in 16 overs before Stuart Whittingham induced edges from Barker and Patel in quick succession.

Wiese returned to remove Olly Stone courtesy of a brilliant catch at second slip by Harry Finch - a diving, one-handed effort low-down to his right - to give the South African his second four-wicket haul in three Championship innings.

That was 220 for nine but Sussex were frustrated by last pair Ambrose and Chris Wright who added an unbroken 62 in 19 overs as the shadows lengthened in glorious evening sunshine.

Speaking at the close, Wiese said: "It was nice for me to get back out there again and in red-ball cricket too as I've played a lot of white-ball lately. It was good to get some wickets. It was coming out decently to start with though it turned out to be a bit of a long day in the end.

"It's a good cricket wicket. There is something in it for the bowlers with a bit of nibble if you put it in the right place, but it's a good pitch and the batsmen will get value for their shots when the outfield dries out. The outfield probably cost Warwickshire 20 or 30 runs today."

Day Three

A 78-run partnership between Ben Brown and Michael Burgess on Sunday helped Sussex recover from 88-5 to finish another weather-interrupted day at Edgbaston on 194-6.

After a positive start from Phil Salt (29 from 35 balls), an inspired spell from Warwickshire quick, Olly Stone – who finished day three with all six of the Sussex wickets to his name - blew the top order away.

Burgess was clearly not affected by what had gone before him, playing some sublime shots on his way to 48 off just 45 balls.

Cut shots and cover drives were his most potent weapons as he struck nine boundaries before becoming Stone's sixth victim (and the fourth Sussex batsman to be caught behind by Tim Ambrose) with the score on 166.

Brown was more circumspect, and his caution ensured that he made it to the close unbeaten on 43 from 89 balls.

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After a lengthy delay for bad light and rain brought an early tea, the Sussex skipper and Ollie Robinson (12*) did well to survive the eight overs remaining in the day following a 6.10pm resumption.

Earlier, Warwickshire had resumed on the third morning on 284-9. Ambrose (81) and Chris Wright (27*) took their tenth-wicket stand to 77 in 22 overs before the former nicked a superb leg-cutter from Ishant Sharma. Sharma, making his Sussex debut, ended with three for 53 and David Wiese four for 56.

In reply, Sussex advanced to 30 without loss, before Stone came on and dismissed Salt with his second ball.

Then came a sensational burst of 4-11 in 13 balls from the former Northamptonshire player.

Stiaan van Zyl, Luke Wells and Luke Wright edged behind and Harry Finch top-edged a pull straight upwards and watched it land in the hands of short-leg Sam Hain.

It was then down to Burgess, Brown and Robinson to get Sussex to within six runs of a first batting bonus point and – with 150 overs lost so far in the – make a draw the most likely result on the final day.

Speaking at the close, Burgess said: "I was pleased to score some runs, though disappointed to get out when I did, just as rain was starting to fall.

"Olly Stone bowled quite quickly and well and they just had one of those spells where we seemed to keep nicking them and they seemed to keep catching them.

"I went in at an interesting time when a few wickets had gone down and said to Ben [Brown] let's just see it through to lunch and then go again and we managed to do that.

"I like to be positive and if a ball is there to hit, I'll hit it, and a couple came along early on which I managed to put away. I like batting with Ben because he is strong and confident and always talking to you."

Day Four

David Wiese cracked a thrilling century against Warwickshire on Monday as Sussex drew their opening Specsavers County Championship match of the season. Sussex take 12 points away from Edgbaston, with the home side settling for ten.

South African all-rounder Wiese's 106 came off just 105 balls and was the first Championship ton of the season. Seventy-four of those runs came from boundaries, with the 32-year-old hitting 14 fours and three sixes.

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Wiese batted forcefully from the off, hitting cleanly on his way to three figures in 91 balls - his century before lunch all the more creditable when compared to the batting travails of most counties in the opening round of matches around the country.

Ben Brown will also take plenty from the game. His first Championship innings as permanent club captain brought an assured 91 that was vital in rescuing Sussex from a precarious 88-5 on Sunday morning.

After Sussex resumed on the final morning on 194 for six, Ollie Robinson soon edged Keith Barker behind but Brown and Wiese helped themselves to important early-season time at the crease in a partnership of 155 in 30 overs.

For the game as a contest, however, there was no way out of the cul-de-sac up which it was forced by the loss of 150 overs, including the entire first day, to the weather.

Warwickshire closed on 87-3 in their second innings, but not before Ollie Robinson and Ishant Sharma caused a few butterflies in the home dressing room.

Robinson bowled Will Rhodes, before Sharma knocked over Ian Bell and Jonathan Trott in quick succession with two fine deliveries to leave Warwickshire 55-3 and still 20 runs behind Sussex's first innings total of 374 all out.

Dominic Sibley stilled any Warwickshire nerves, though, with a steady unbeaten 42 to see the game out.

Speaking at the close, Ben Brown said: "Overall I am really proud of our performance. There are areas where we can improve and we have spoken about that in the dressing-room, but to start off the season against a very good side like Warwickshire and not just go toe-to-toe but turn the game in our favour and end up pushing for an unlikely win is something we can take a huge amount from.

"David Wiese's innings was superb. I was just about ready to tell the lads how hard it was to score out there and how turgid I was finding it and he just came out and timed the ball from the off.

"He batted with so much power and picked his shots really well and I think to score his first 100 in the championship in England will be a huge moment for him. Conditions over here are very different and that will be a monkey off his back."

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