



# SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



**Gloucestershire vs. Sussex CCC  
Specsavers County Championship - Division Two  
College Ground, Cheltenham  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

## Day One

Phil Salt, Harry Finch and Ben Brown made half-centuries and Craig Miles claimed four wickets as Gloucestershire bowled out Sussex for 286 on the opening day of the Specsavers County Championship match at Cheltenham.

An intriguing start to the annual festival at the College Ground saw fortunes sway after the visitors had won the toss. They looked well placed at 74 without loss and 210 for four, but the home bowlers stuck to their task, led by Miles, who returned four for 68 from 18 overs.

By the close Gloucestershire had reduced the deficit by 42 without losing a wicket, skipper Chris Dent making 12 not out and Cheltenham-born Miles Hammond unbeaten on 27.

Sussex had been given a brisk start by the aggressive Salt, who dominated the opening stand with Luke Wells, reaching a 45-ball fifty, with 8 fours and a six.

But when Wells, on 17, got a leading edge to Miles and was well caught by Graeme van Buuren at mid-wicket, running towards the fence, the hosts fought back hard.

Salt was yorked by a Miles inswinger and the tall seamer notched a third victim as Luke Wright was snapped up by the diving James Bracey at mid-wicket for nine.

When Michael Burgess fell lbw to Noema-Barnett for two in the 28th over Sussex had lost four wickets for 23 runs. They went in to lunch on 125 for four from 31 overs.

Finch and Brown then put Sussex back on top by adding 113 either side of the interval before Brown, whose half-century had come off 79 balls, became a maiden first class wicket for Drissell, a local product from Bedminster Cricket Club, lofting a catch to mid-off.

David Wiese fell lbw to Noema-Barnett, shouldering arms, and at tea Sussex were 219 for six, with Finch unbeaten on 65.

Drissell, maintaining a tight line and length from the College Lawn End, had Chris Jordan caught at slip for a third-ball duck and it was 236 for eight when Matt Taylor took a sharp catch one-handed off his own bowling to end Finch's impressive knock, which occupied 142 balls and featured 13 fours.

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Jofra Archer and Ollie Robinson added 35 important runs before Archer gave Miles his fourth wicket, courtesy of a straightforward Noema-Barnett slip catch.

Sussex's innings was brought to a close when David Payne pinned last man Danny Briggs lbw with the second new ball. Robinson was left unbeaten on 27.

Gloucestershire batted positively in failing light, Hammond surviving a sharp chance to Salt in the slips off Robinson when on 18.

Speaking soon after stumps, Sussex head coach Jason Gillespie said: "We are better than that with the bat and certainly left some runs out there.

"We didn't build enough partnerships and, although several players got starts, no one went on to a really significant score.

"Then when we bowled we went searching for wickets instead of keeping things simple. We looked like we were trying to bowl the magic ball and were not consistent enough.

"If you maintain a disciplined line and length there is something in the pitch for the bowlers because there is some bounce. On the other hand if batsmen apply themselves there are runs to be made."

## Day Two

Five wickets for just eight runs inside the final seven overs saw Sussex snatch the upper hand at the end of day two of their Specsavers County Championship match against Gloucestershire at Cheltenham College.

Sussex's attack had been forced to toil for much of the day as Miles Hammond scored a maiden first-class century and Gloucestershire passed their first innings total for the loss of just three wickets.

Ben Brown's men kept the scoring rate in check throughout, however, so that Gloucestershire's lead was just nine when David Wiese sparked a spectacular collapse that saw the home side slump from 295 for 3 to 303 for 8 at the close.

Wiese bowled Graham van Buuren for 11 to bring nightwatchman George Drissell to the crease, who kept out 18 deliveries before Jofra Archer knocked back his stumps in the penultimate over.

Archer had Ryan Higgins – also bowled – next ball, before getting rid of Kieran Noema-Barnett – caught behind by Brown – two deliveries later. A dot ball followed to give the Sussex seamer a triple wicket maiden.

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Ollie Robinson then trapped Craig Miles in front for four with what turned out to be the final delivery of the day.

Earlier, Hammond produced a maiden first-class century packed with courage, patience and skill.

Born and bred in Cheltenham, the 22-year-old left-hander overcame an early blow on the helmet to strike 103 off 203 balls, with 20 fours.

Skipper Chris Dent contributed 65 to an opening stand of 182. Then James Bracey (34) and Gareth Roderick (48 not out) built on the efforts of the openers.

Despite the comparative lack of wickets, the Sussex bowling was far from toothless earlier in the day; Archer and Ollie Robinson, in particular, producing some pacey spells on a pitch still offering bounce and going past the bat on numerous occasions

Hammond and Dent had to survive a torrid first hour, which saw Hammond struck on the helmet by Robinson and Dent dropped at third slip off Robinson with his score on 14 and the total 44.

But soon the batsman with the famous Gloucestershire cricketing surname was producing a string of exquisite cover drives reminiscent of his illustrious predecessor, the late, great Wally Hammond, albeit left-handed.

That shot accounted for most of the 11 fours, which took Hammond to his half-century off 86 balls. When the stand with Dent reached 115 it was Gloucestershire's highest opening partnership of the season.

Dent went to fifty off 151 balls, with 6 fours, having dropped anchor responsibly in the face of some testing seam bowling. By lunch he and Hammond had taken the total to 137.

They were eventually parted when Dent lost concentration and helped a delivery from left-arm spinner Danny Briggs, scooping a catch to Jofra Archer and short fine-leg.

Hammond reached three figures with a square cut boundary off David Wiese, but two balls later edged a wide one from the same bowler through to wicketkeeper Ben Brown.

The young local product left the ground to a standing ovation, having marked only his fourth first class appearance, and his first since 2015, with an innings he will remember for ever.

Roderick and Bracey then added 65 either side of tea before Bracey fell to the second new ball, lbw to Chris Jordan, trapped in his crease, with the total of 259.

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Following his heroics late in the day, Jofra Archer had this to say at the close: "It was probably the weirdest day's cricket I have been involved with. For two sessions we hardly took a wicket and then five came in no time.

"We didn't think we had the best of luck with bat or ball up to the closing overs. When they sent a nightwatchman in I went up to our skipper and asked to bowl. Thankfully, things worked out from there.

"The coach kept telling us we would get our rewards as the day went on and in the end he was right."

## Day Three

Harry Finch fell two short of his second century of the season as Sussex set Gloucestershire 276 to win on the third day of the Specsavers County Championship match at Cheltenham.

Having top-scored with 76 in his side's first innings, the 23-year-old batsman faced 143 balls, hitting 16 fours and a six, to provide the backbone of a second innings score of 296 all out on a seamer-friendly pitch.

Luke Wright (48) and David Wiese (40) batted positively, while David Payne's figures of four for 69 included his 200th first class wicket.

By the close, Gloucestershire had made 30 for two, losing openers Chris Dent and Miles Hammond to Archer, and an enthralling contest will enter its final day with Sussex favourites.

The day began with the home side 303 for eight in their first innings following a collapse on the previous evening. When only three runs were added, it meant the last seven wickets had fallen for 11 in 8.5 overs.

Jofra Archer finished with four for 62 and Gloucestershire were left kicking themselves, with a lead of only 20, having been 295 for three at one stage. Gareth Roderick remained unbeaten on 50, having reached his half-century off 115 balls, with 7 fours.

The hosts hit back by reducing Sussex to 22 for two, Ryan Higgins bowling Phil Salt and Payne reaching the 200 milestone when Luke Wells edged a defensive shot through to wicketkeeper Roderick.

But Wright counter-attacked with typical panache and was unbeaten on 48 at lunch, having struck 9 fours and a six in adding 81 with Finch.

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A match of fluctuating fortunes tilted Gloucestershire's way again when Wright mistimed a drive to mid-off straight after the interval and Payne bowled Michael Burgess for five with the score 119 for four.

The Sussex lead was just 99, but skipper Ben Brown then shared a stand of 61 with Finch, who moved to his second fifty of the game off 85 balls with 10 fours.

Brown fell lbw to Matt Taylor for 20, with his side 160 in front, and when Finch fenced at a delivery from Craig Miles just short of his ton the contest looked evenly balanced with the scoreboard showing 219 for six.

Wiese was unbeaten on 35 at tea, which was taken at 240 for six, but could add only five after the interval before Miles pulled off a stunning catch at full stretch running from mid-off to mid-on to give Higgins a second wicket.

Archer was bowled around his legs by Payne, but Chris Jordan's 31 before being caught behind off Miles and a handy 19 from Robinson ensured that Gloucestershire would face a stiff task.

They were given a boost with their total on 23 when Hammond was dropped by Wiese at cover off Archer. But the same bowler quickly sent back Dent, caught behind down the leg side, and then induced a nick from Hammond, who departed for 11.

Gloucestershire responded by sending in two nightwatchmen. George Drissell and Taylor were not made to play often enough and survived to the close, with their side needing a further 246.

Speaking at the close, Finch said: "I was more disappointed for the team than for myself when I got out because I felt if David Wiese and myself were still together at tea we would have been in a very strong position.

"But I am happy with my contribution to the match. The pitch hasn't turned, but there is still enough in it for the pace bowlers if they pitch around off stump and aim to hit the knee roll.

"The ball was nipping around in the morning session and I needed a bit of luck early on, but that was always going to be the case on that sort of wicket."

## Day Four

Sussex claimed a a thrilling 28-run win inside the final session of their Specsavers County Championship match against Gloucestershire at Cheltenham.

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The hosts were dismissed for 247, chasing a victory target of 276, with Jofra Archer taking four for 29 and Ollie Robinson four for 49. James Bracey was last man out for 87 when a memorable contest was finally decided.

Gareth Roderick contributed 66 to a fifth-wicket stand of 138 with 21-year-old Bracey, who faced 174 balls, hitting 10 fours.

But in the end the pace bowling of Archer - who reached 100 first class wickets with his eighth and final wicket of the match - and Robinson proved decisive in a match where the outcome was still in doubt at tea on the final day.

Sussex took 21 points to keep their promotion hopes alive, while the home side, who went into the game bottom of the Second Division, had to settle for six.

The day began with Gloucestershire 30 for two and a pair of nightwatchmen at the crease in Matt Taylor and George Drissell. They both fell early to Robinson and Archer respectively and Sussex had their tails up with the hosts 38 for four, Brown having been involved in every dismissal.

A fascinating see-saw contest turned again when Bracey and Roderick settled in to bat with few alarms in bright sunshine, taking the score to 125 for four at lunch, with a further 151 required.

Left-hander Bracey was first to his half-century off 90 balls, with 7 fours. And when Roderick followed him to fifty from 97 deliveries, with eight boundaries, Gloucestershire began to look favourites.

Roderick pulled a six off Davis Wiese as the stand reached 138 before fortunes swung again when he was bowled leg stump looking to sweep left-arm spinner Danny Briggs.

It was 176 for five, with exactly 100 still needed, and Sussex sensed their chance. With 21 added, Graeme van Buuren fell to a slip catch off Chris Jordan for 14 and when Ryan Higgins was caught down the leg-side by Brown off Archer the scoreboard read 215 for seven.

Bracey was looking unflappable and it seemed the hosts might reach tea without further loss. But Robinson had other ideas and Kieran Noema-Barnett became the fourth Gloucestershire player caught down the leg side, Brown taking his sixth catch to equal the Sussex record for wicketkeeping dismissals in a first-class innings.

With a new ball due soon after interval and 34 runs still needed, Sussex looked marginally the more likely winners.

That became more certain when Craig Miles was pinned lbw by Robinson with only two added in the final session.

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The new ball was taken at 246 for nine, with 30 needed, and it quickly accounted for Bracey, well caught diving forward at deep square by Briggs to give Robinson his fourth wicket.

Brown was quick to offer a consoling handshake to Bracey, who left the field with head bowed after enhancing his growing reputation.

Sussex's victorious skipper had this to say at the conclusion of the match: "I'm delighted for Ollie Robinson that he took the final wicket because he was our stand-out bowler in the match, going past the outside edge relentlessly.

"It was an emotionally draining game to play in, but we have had a really enjoyable time playing at Cheltenham on a lovely ground and a good pitch.

"Records are always nice from a personal point of view and I'm pleased to have taken six catches, but the huge high of the win is mostly on my radar at the moment. It keeps us on the coat-tails of Kent and Warwickshire.

"James Bracey did not deserve to be on the losing side. He played a brilliant innings, lining up the ball well and showing a great temperament in a day four run chase."

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