



SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Sussex Sharks vs. Surrey Vitality Blast, South Group The 1st Central County Ground, Hove. Friday 13th July 2018.

Phil Salt hit an explosive half-century – his first in T20 cricket – but Sussex Sharks were ultimately outplayed by Surrey in front of a full house at The 1st Central County Ground on Friday night.

Aaron Finch made a brilliant 131 not out, the highest T20 score by a Surrey batsman, as his side ended the Sharks' unbeaten start to the Vitality Blast with a 52-run win.

Dropped with a single to his name, the 31-year-old Australian made the most of his reprieve with a brutal assault on the Sussex attack as he struck ten fours and seven sixes from just 79 balls.

With 61 plundered off the last five overs he helped Surrey, who were put in, to 192 for 3, a total Sussex never looked like overhauling on a pitch offering seam movement and uneven bounce.

Opener Salt made 74 in the reply but the next highest scorer was Jofra Archer with 18 as Sussex were bowled out for 140 in the 18th over.

Sussex managed to restrict Surrey to less than eight an over for the first 15 overs but Ollie Pope (23 not out) sensibly made sure Finch saw as much of the strike as possible during the late assault when Finch thrashed a further six fours and four sixes as the pair plundered an unbroken 100 from 50 balls for the fourth wicket.

David Wiese had earlier foxed Rory Burns (14) with a slower ball and Danny Briggs trapped Nic Maddinson (7) lbw in his first over. Khan's brilliant pick-up and throw ran out Ben Foakes (10) as he scampered through for a second. Surrey were 92 for 3 in the 12th over but then Finch went into overdrive.

It was spectacular entertainment for a sell-out crowd of 6,200 but Sussex's chase never really got going. Sam Curran, released from the England one-day squad, set the tone by bowling back to back maidens and picking up Laurie Evans (3), the second-leading run-scorer in the Blast so far, off a mis-timed drive to mid-off.

Either side of that wicket, Luke Wright chipped Jade Dernbach to mid-wicket to leave Sussex 8 for 2 and Matt Pillans had the New Zealander Tom Bruce (10) caught at deep mid-wicket and Michael Burgess (6) held at long on in successive overs.

Salt was eventually yorked by Pillans for a career-best 74 from 47 balls with eight fours and two sixes while Pillans, who took 3 for 20, was the pick of the Surrey attack.

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Jason Gillespie gave his assessment of the match at the close: "There were a couple of missed opportunities in the field which went on to cost us which was disappointing, and I didn't think our bowlers adapted quickly enough to the wicket which did a bit for the seamers.

"Having said that it was a very good knock by Aaron Finch, he's outstanding in this format but if you drop him when he's barely got started the chances are he will punish you.

"But it's only our first defeat after three wins so we'll be fine."

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