



SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Middlesex vs. Sussex
Specsavers County Championship - Division Two
Lord's, London
Wednesday 29th – Friday 31st August 2018

Day One

Sussex dismissed Middlesex for 169, but then struggled themselves with the bat on the first day of this Specsavers County Championship contest at Lord's.

At stumps Sussex were 120 for 6 in reply, hoping that their strong lower-order will help them towards a first innings lead tomorrow.

There was heavy cloud cover for much of the day and the floodlights were on and off. Both attacks exploited the conditions well, although batsmen on both sides were guilty of some loose shots as well.

Sussex's four-man seam attack dovetailed effectively and the wickets were shared around but the most impressive bowling came from Jordan, who took 3 for 17 in his second spell after lunch including Eoin Morgan, who was caught at slip after battling for 90 minutes and facing 77 balls for his six runs. At one stage England's one-day captain went 35 balls without scoring.

Jofra Archer finished with 3 for 34, ending the innings when he uprooted Steve Finn's leg stump the delivery after Holden reached a battling 104-ball half-century off 155 minutes with five fours.

Middlesex never recovered after losing four top-order wickets in the morning session for 30 runs. Ollie Robinson straightened one down the slope to pin Sam Robson (8) and in the next over Steve Eskinzi was beaten for pace by Jofra Archer for a duck.

David Wiese struck with his third ball when Gubbins chased a ball he could have ignored and edged to second slip for 29. The South African then nipped one back off the seam to trap Malan in front for six.

Sussex began their reply positively and openers Luke Wells and Phil Salt had 45 on the board in 7.5 overs. But when Wells (24) was caught by Ethan Barber at mid-off it sparked a collapse which saw five wickets fall for 63 runs.

After a good start that brought him 32 runs in 34 balls Salt was well caught by Dawid Malan running back from cover. Tom Haines (15) edged to second slip, Harry Finch (17) was bowled by one that kept low and Luke Wright was adjudged leg before to James Harris for a fourth-ball duck.

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David Wiese became the sixteenth wicket of the day when he was also lbw to Harris for six to leave Sussex 108 for 5.

Chris Jordan and Ben Brown then saw out the remainder of the day which ended six overs early because of bad light.

Speaking at the close, Jordan said: "It did a lot all day and in the morning when we took four wickets we could have taken even more.

"It swung, there was some seam movement as well and I thought our bowlers exploited the conditions really well.

"We were pleased with the score we restricted them to but we knew it would be tough for us as well, even though it was a shorter session after tea to bat.

"But we bat all the way down to 11 and we're going to need every run. If we can get a lead we can set the game up but there is a lot of hard work ahead in the morning."

Day Two

A patient Sussex bowling attack chipped away at Middlesex's top-order on day two of their Specsavers County Championship fixture at Lord's.

Sussex's seamers bowled tirelessly and with very few bad balls as the home side edged up to 210-5 in the 75 overs of their second innings so far.

That gives them a lead of 208, after Sussex had secured a marginal first innings advantage in the morning session.

Middlesex skipper, Dawid Malan recently discarded by England, produced a timely return to form, hitting 69 not out.

His innings – containing just five boundaries - was a study in defiance and concentration against a Sussex attack that asked questions throughout.

This was proper old-fashioned, hard-nosed county cricket, every run and wicket earned.

Sussex began the day on 120-6, 49 runs behind with Ben Brown and Chris Jordan the not out batsmen.

Jordan had been dropped at slip by Sam Robson late on the first evening, but James Harris (4-61) made sure the life given him didn't prove too costly, bowling the former England all-rounder with a huge in-swing in the third over of the day.

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SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Harris, the country's leading wicket taker struck again in his fourth over, pinning the in-form Ben Brown LBW for 24 and with Steven Finn and Ethan Bamber picking up a wicket apiece Sussex were all out for 171 after 77 minutes play – a lead of two.

Nick Gubbins and Robson looked to have negotiated a testing period before lunch only for Jofra Archer to bowl the former – beaten for pace - for eight with what proved the last ball before lunch.

Resuming just 17 ahead, Middlesex soon lost Robson LBW to Ollie Robinson to one which kept low and were in trouble at 29-2.

His dismissal was the prelude to a riveting afternoon's cricket. Stevie Eskinazi, who'd come in on a pair and the out of form Malan slowly attempted a rebuild against an exacting visiting seam attack who defended resolutely in the face of the host's fight-back.

Eskinazi, was scratchy at first until a sumptuous off-drive changed his mood. Eight further boundaries flowed from his bat as he battled to a fourth half-century of the campaign from 93 balls.

At the other end, Malan, while clearly not in touch, doggedly resisted, surviving a huge appeal for caught behind off Jofra Archer.

The pair added 87, but just as they threatened to turn the game Middlesex's way the excellent Robinson produced a brute of a ball which lifted and took the edge – wicketkeeper Brown did the rest.

Eoin Morgan's wretched run of low scores continued when Jordan bowled him off the inside edge immediately after tea, leaving Middlesex 125-4.

And, Max Holden, looking surprisingly fretful given his unbeaten half-century in the first innings, gave the visitors another breakthrough when hooking Archer into the hands of Haines who took an excellent diving catch at deep square.

Malan though continued to resist, reaching 50 in eight minutes short of three hours and he found an ally in Harris, the pair sharing a half-century stand with power to add in the morning.

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Ollie Robinson gave his assessment of the day: "I think yesterday it moved around a lot where today it seems to have got a bit slower with less movement. Hopefully tomorrow it might be the best time to bat.

"So, if we can get early wickets in the morning it could go a long way towards winning the game.

"Dawid Malan applied himself very well for them. He's played Test cricket for England, so we were expecting that.

"Hopefully our batters have been watching that and can emulate it when we come to bat."

"Sometimes you get the rub of the green where you don't bowl as well and you get more wickets.

"We have got to hold on, be patient and hopefully the wickets do come."

Day Three

Sussex fell short of five consecutive wins in the Specsavers County Championship after losing to Middlesex by 55 runs at Lord's.

Sussex, set 231 to victory, were optimistic about their chances but a lively bowling display earned Middlesex victory before tea on the third day. Sussex were bowled out for 175 in 44.5 overs.

Middlesex had resumed on 210 for five – 208 ahead - and lost their remaining five wickets for just 22 runs in 10.4 overs and 50 minutes. At that stage all the momentum was with Sussex.

At the start of play Sussex were looking forward to the new ball, which was due five overs into the morning session. But they made a double breakthrough before that.

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Malan had added just a single to his overnight 69 when he edged Ollie Robinson to keeper Ben Brown in the second over. And in the next over James Fuller edged Jofra Archer into the safe hands of Chris Jordan at slip for a duck.

Sussex took the new ball and claimed the remaining three wickets in the space of 12 deliveries. James Harris was lbw to Archer for 26, Ethan Bamber was immediately bowled by Ollie Robinson and Archer wrapped up the innings with this fifth wicket when he had Steven Finn, pulling, caught at short midwicket by Tom Haines.

Sussex suffered an early blow in their chase when Luke Wells lost his off stump to a full length delivery from Bamber for three. But Phil Salt and Haines had put their side in a good position when, just before lunch, Salt was caught behind off a fine delivery from Fuller.

Sussex needed a couple of decent partnerships to get their target under control but they struggled against a vigorous Middlesex pace attack.

Middlesex appeared to miss an important catch when Harry Finch, on six, was dropped by Ollie Rayner at second slip – something of a collector's item from one of the safest pairs of hands in county cricket.

Middlesex, however, bounced back to take two wicket in three balls. Fuller had Haines caught in the gully and then Finn pitched one up to bowl Luke Wright for a duck.

Finch, unable to make the most of his reprieve, was lbw to Harris for 20. Sussex still had a chance while their captain and most dependable batsman, Ben Brown, was at the wicket. But once he was sixth out, caught behind at 111, it looked all over for them. And it was, despite a stubborn last wicket stand between David Wiese and Danny Briggs.

Chris Jordan fell to a fine catch behind the wicket, Archer was bowled by a wicked delivery from Bamber, Robinson was run out by Malan and finally Briggs was caught behind.

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