



SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Sussex Sharks vs. Worcestershire Rapids Vitality Blast, Final Edgbaston, Birmingham. Saturday 15th September 2018.

Sussex Newspaper's Mark Dunford reports on the Vitality Blast semi-final at Edgbaston...

It was all set up for a tight finish. But in the penultimate over of the Vitality Blast final, it all went wrong for Sussex.

With 17 needed from the final two overs, the Rapids picked up a single off the first ball, but then Jofra Archer bowled an over-waist-high no ball, which went for four byes. The free hit was then dispatched for six. That left four to win and it was Ben Cox who smashed the winning runs off the next ball.

It was such a shame as the game was all set up for a thrilling finish with the game ebbing and flowing throughout.

Worcestershire reached the final by beating Lancashire while Sussex comfortably beat Somerset to set up the first ever clash between these sides in a T20 match.

Luke Wright won the toss and elected to bat, a formula which worked in the semi-final.

Salt and Wright again opened the batting and it was the former who again got off to a flyer, hitting Wayne Parnell for two sixes in the second over, before being run out.

It looked like an easy single, and Salt looked home, but Brett D'Oliveira's direct hit caught him off guard. Salt had passed the crease but had grounded nothing when the ball hit the stumps.

Evans joined Wright and the pair looked at ease, picking up singles and the odd boundary. Evans took a liking to Parnell in the fifth over, hitting a six and a four in consecutive balls. Sussex were 43-1 at the end of the powerplay.

Evans then deposited Moeen Ali before Wright enjoyed two fours and a six from an Ed Barnard over. But just after the halfway stage, Wright was bowled for 33 from 25 balls.

That brought Delray Rawlins to the crease and again he caught the eye with consecutive sixes off D'Oliveira. The Sharks brought up the hundred in the 12th over.

Rawlins had 21 before he picked out Pat Brown in the deep off Moeen. Wiese came in but soon went, bowled by Moeen, who took 3-30 from his four overs.

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Evans was still going about his business and brought up his 50 in the 16th over. He looked as calm and composed as he has done all season for Sussex. But the Sharks needed to kick on of they were to post a competitive total.

But just as it looked like Evans was about to get going, he was bowled by a full toss, which looked like it may have been above waist height.

Michael Burgess was then also bowled a full toss, but he managed to hit it for six thanks to D'Oliveira standing on the boundary rope.

Burgess and Archer struggled to get the ball away in the final overs as Worcestershire bowled superbly at the death. Archer fell on the final ball. Sussex finished on 157-6.

Sussex needed to be on it from the start but a couple of misfields allowed Worcestershire easy runs. Danny Briggs however stopped a certain four with a stunning stop at backward point.

It was a watchful start from the Rapids openers against the rapid Sussex openers. Ali did put a rare bad ball from Archer away for four in the third over before Clarke pulled Mills away for four at the start of the fourth.

Chris Jordan came on to bowl the fifth over and Moeen Ali hit three boundaries, including a sublime lofted drive over extra cover, to take the Rapids to 53-0 from the powerplay.

Danny Briggs came on to bowl the seventh over and was soon dispatched over mid wicket for six, but three balls later Briggs had Clarke caught behind to give Sussex a much-needed boost. And it worked as Will Beer struck with his second ball in the next over, Tom Fell caught by Luke Wright.

Ali and D'Oliveira then picked up a boundary each in Beer's second over to leave them 79 runs to score off the final 10 overs. But the second half of the innings could not have started any worse for the Rapids, with D'Oliveira stumped by Burgess off the bowling of the brilliant Briggs.

Then in the 12th over, Sussex got their man. Moeen looked to pump Beer down the ground but he found Salt, who pulled off a great catch at mid on.

The game kept ebbing and flowing and Ben Cox played a lovely reverse sweep for four off Briggs to take Worcestershire to 96-4 with seven overs to go. The 100 came up in the 14th over but it was still hard to call which way this match was going to go.

Jordan, Archer and Mills returned to bowl the last overs with a mixture of bouncers and yorkers. Archer suffered at the hands of Cox, who hit consecutive boundaries in the 17th over, including an audacious reverse sweep, before he got the wicket of Ross Whiteley, caught by Jordan off a full toss.

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That left the Rapids needing 31 from the final three overs, then 17 of off the final two. And, sadly, the rest is history.

Sussex supporters can be mighty proud of this young side. They took the club to their first final since 2009 and played their part in a thrilling final.

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