



SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Sussex CCC vs. Warwickshire Specsavers County Championship - Division Two The 1st Central County Ground, Hove Tuesday 18th – Friday 21st September 2018

Day One

Ian Bell and Jonathan Trott made Sussex's bowlers toil and put second division leaders Warwickshire in a strong position on day one of their Specsavers County Championship match at The 1st Central County Ground.

Bell scored his fifth Championship hundred against the county and Trott is in sight of his sixth against Sussex in his final away game before retirement. Together they helped Warwickshire reach 308 for 2 at stumps. Bell will resume on 108 and Trott 86 after they shared 206 in 68 overs for the third wicket.

A draw would seal an immediate return to the top flight with a game to spare for Warwickshire and Bell and Trott made sure they didn't waste the advantage of winning the toss and batting first on a slow pitch expected to turn later on.

Dom Sibley and Will Rhodes laid solid foundations with a stand of 96 for the first wicket and although both fell just before lunch that proved to be the most productive part of the day for Sussex's attack who were blunted by a combination of the pitch and Bell and Trott's enduring excellence.

They came together after Sibley and Rhodes had departed in the space of 15 balls. Sibley (44) was rightly furious with himself when he squandered a good start by picking out mid-wicket after coming down the pitch to drive left-arm spinner Danny Briggs - making the 100th appearance of his first-class career - only to get a thick inside edge straight to Michael Burgess at mid-wicket.

Rhodes played on to David Wiese and lost his leg bail shortly after reaching his seventh half-century of the season but that was the final wicket of the day for Sussex, who used seven bowlers trying to part Bell and Trott including medium-pacer Tom Haines, who was struck for six by Bell before limping off with an ankle injury.

Leg-spinner Luke Wells, one of seven bowlers used, got a couple of deliveries to turn and Sussex took the new ball immediately it became available but Bell and Trott rarely played a false shot, never mind offering a chance, on a placid surface.

Bell reached his fifth Championship century of the season by driving Chris Jordan to the cover boundary for his 11th boundary and by the close he had batted for just over four hours and faced 235 balls.

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SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



It was his 57th first-class hundred and he became only the second batsman this season after Surrey's Rory Burns to reach 1,000 Championship runs when he reached 106.

Trott has so far hit ten fours from 183 balls faces in a shade under four hours at the crease.

Briggs and Wells sent down 31 overs of spin between them but it was a tough day for Sussex, who need to win this game and beat Northamptonshire next week to have any chance of sneaking into the top two.

At the close, Sussex's head coach, Jason Gillespie said: "The wicket hasn't got as much bounce and carry as we'd like, but you have to give credit to Warwickshire, Bell and Trott batted really well.

"There were spells when we bowled well but we didn't do it consistently enough. The bowlers put in a shift but it was hard work at times.

"Tom Haines has gone for a scan on his injured ankle, but we don't expect him to play any further part in the game."

Day Two

Ben Brown and David Wiese led a fightback for Sussex on day two of their Specsavers County Championship match against Warwickshire at The 1st Central County Ground.

By the close, the pair had added 137 runs for the sixth wicket to help Sussex to 224 for 5 in reply to Warwickshire's 440 all out.

Wiese made a 62-ball half-century – passing 5,000 first-class runs in the process - and Brown scored his eighth fifty of the season in 67 deliveries with both hitting seven fours.

Sussex had been in significant difficulty earlier in their innings. Keith Barker's three-wicket burst with the new ball left Sussex, a batsman down because of opener Tom Haines' ankle injury, reeling on 14 for 3.

Danny Briggs was promoted from No.11 to open but he, Phil Salt and Harry Finch all fell victim to Barker's left-arm seam.

Luke Wells and Michael Burgess effected a recovery of sorts, adding 72 before Olly Stone, whose first over had cost 12 runs, hit back with wickets in successive overs.

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SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Burgess, who had hit nine fours in his 46, was beaten for pace and lost his off stump then Wells (26) was strangled down the leg side. That wicket may have been a tad fortunate but in a five-over spell there were glimpses of the raw pace that have attracted the England selectors.

Stone's burst left Sussex 87 for 5 and a long way off the follow-on target of 291 but skipper Brown (58*) and Wiese (66*) counter-attacked impressively thereafter.

Warwickshire's first innings was ended by an afternoon collapse that saw them lose six wickets for 19 runs, four of them to Jofra Archer who ripped through the tail by taking the last four wickets in 11 balls.

The visitors lost Ian Bell and Jonathan Trott before lunch, but not before both had improved on their outstanding individual records against Sussex.

Bell's 112 took his aggregate against the county to 1518 runs at an average of 65. The pair extended their third wicket stand to 230 – a new Warwickshire record against Sussex at Hove – before Bell, who had faced 260 balls and hit one six and 11 fours, was leg before sweeping Danny Briggs.

Trott will retire next week with 1879 runs against Sussex, nearly 700 runs more than he has made against any other county, after scoring 124, his seventh hundred against them with power to add if he has to bat again here.

Trott eventually clipped a ball from Wiese to mid-wicket and after Sam Hain (53) shouldered arms to lose his off stump to Ollie Robinson the innings went into a tailspin.

Tim Ambrose (14) was also leg before sweeping Briggs before Archer returned to the attack and, with a strong wind behind him, swept away the tail.

Barker (6) lost his off stump, Stone fell in similar fashion for a fifth-ball duck and in his next over Chris Wright (10) was bowled and Ryan Sidebottom leg before two balls later. After Bell's dismissal Warwickshire had lost eight wickets for 108.

Speaking at the close, Wiese said: "It's a pitch where the odd ball is keeping low or misbehaving so I felt it was important to get forward and be positive and try and take the game back to Warwickshire a bit.

"Hopefully we can build on the stand we've got going in the morning. Ben and I always try to bat positively and we have scored quickly which has taken the game forward.

"We've got to win really to stay in the promotion race but there is still a lot of hard work for us to do against a quality Warwickshire side but we've given ourselves a bit of a chance."

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SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Day Three

Warwickshire are on the brink of joining Kent in winning promotion from the second division of the Specsavers County Championship after consolidating their position on the third day of their match against Sussex at Hove.

Needing only a draw to confirm their elevation they will enter the last day on 141 for no wicket, an advantage of 238 runs. Sussex, meanwhile, saw their own promotion aspirations become increasingly far-fetched as the day progressed.

First, their inability reach 400 in their first innings confirmed Kent's upgrade and then their failure to take quick Warwickshire wickets left their position looking forlorn at the end of play.

Sussex resumed on 224 for five and achieved their first target, which was to get within 100 runs of Warwickshire's 440. Ben Brown and David Wiese continued to frustrate the Warwickshire bowlers in the morning and carried their sixth wicket stand to 196 in 38 overs. Wiese, who scored a century at Edgbaston early in the season, managed 93 here before he was bowled by a delivery from Chris Wright that came into the batsman and kept a little low.

Sussex avoided the danger of being asked to follow on when Brown square-drove Ryan Sidebottom for four to take his side to 291. At lunch Sussex were 311 for six and Brown had taken his score to 98.

But he fell one run short of his 16th first-class century. He pushed forward to a delivery from Jeetan Patel which went straight on and Ian Trott took a sharp catch, low down at slip.

A studious Chris Jordan scored 15 from 66 balls. He was out when he attempted to sweep Patel and was caught at backward square-leg. With Tom Haines unable to bat because of injury, Sussex lost their ninth and final wicket when Jofra Archer was caught at slip for 16. They finished 97 runs behind.

Warwickshire were under no pressure to score quick pre-declaration runs. But, to their credit, Will Rhodes and Dom Sibley made a positive start to the second innings and brought up the hundred in the 28th over.

The in-form Rhodes, who was released by Yorkshire and recommended to Warwickshire by Sussex coach Jason Gillespie, has been outscored only by the prolific Ian Bell and Jonathan Trott in the Warwickshire team this season and he dominated the opening partnership against one of the best pace attacks in the country.

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SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



At the close of play – 13 overs early because of bad light – he was 76 not out from 131 deliveries, with nine fours and a six, a slog-sweep off Danny Briggs, while the slightly more circumspect Sibley was unbeaten on 43.

Sussex captain Ben Brown, who scored 99: “It’s a crazy game we play for a living. I played really well and fell flat at the end, which was frustrating. I was happy with the way I played and then I got a good ball from Jeetan Patel, so I feel a bit flat.

“David Wiese has been excellent with bat and ball. He’s adapted to English conditions with the bat this year – by his own admission he struggled a bit last season. He’s great to bat with.

“I’m proud of the team’s efforts. The pitch hasn’t really played as we would have liked. It’s not doing an awful lot. We knew we had to win this game so we’ve got some hard work to do tomorrow. I don’t think Warwickshire will do us any favours. They might set us 400 in the last session. We’ve played good cricket all year, but promotion has probably slipped away from us now.”

Day Four

Warwickshire won promotion from the Specsavers County Championship Division Two with our draw in the penultimate match of the season at Hove. Next week they play Kent in the title decider at Edgbaston – Kent confirmed their elevation to Division One on Thursday. The two counties are level on points at the top of the table.

There was an end of term atmosphere on a gusty autumn afternoon. Sussex, appearing in front of their supporters for the last time this season, tried nine bowlers and three wicketkeepers.

Phil Salt and Michael Burgess trundled in for their first overs in first-class cricket while fast bowler Ollie Robinson put in a stint as an off-spinner. Behind the stumps, Harry Finch replaced Michael Burgess, who had taken over from Ben Brown.

Warwickshire, though, refused to be distracted by the frivolity and Sibley and Sam Hain closed out the match with a third wicket stand worth 168.

Just a short while ago Sussex thought they might be celebrating. They were in with a good chance of promotion themselves, before they were beaten by Durham in the previous round of matches, and they were defeated by Worcestershire in the final of the Vitality Blast T20 last Saturday.

Their one moment of jubilation on the last day of this match came when Salt had Hain caught behind for 90 and the whooping players surrounded the bowler to congratulate him on his first wicket.

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SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



The only worry Warwickshire had all day was when Ian Bell retired hurt after being struck on the right thumb by a rearing delivery from Robinson – in his more rapid mode - when he had made five. An X-ray revealed bad bruising but no break.

Warwickshire had resumed on 141 for no wicket, 238 runs ahead. Will Rhodes had added 12 to his overnight 76 when, in the sixth over of the morning, he was lbw to Robinson. After Bell's retirement, at 168, Warwickshire soon lost another important batsman when Jonathan Trott fell to Chris Jordan's third ball of the day, clipping a ball off his legs to Finch at midwicket for eight.

Warwickshire looked safe once they had reached lunch on 249 for two and in the afternoon session Sibley confirmed that his side would be playing in the upper tier next season. He reached his hundred from 220 deliveries, with nine fours, and at the end of the match he was unbeaten on 144.

Sussex head coach Jason Gillespie: "We're moving in the right direction. We've had a couple of losses in the past month but we feel some progress has been made. I wanted to give some young guys the opportunity to show what they can do and they've done that. Now I've got to find the balance between giving lads games of cricket and earning the right to play first-class cricket. We've got to find the right balance between potential and performances. It's a difficult balancing act but we'll get there. And we've made some strides. The lads have played the game the right way, been positive and looked to win games. I think we could have done better in the 50-over game.

"We had a bit of fun out there today. I thought Ben Brown handled it very well. It was a slow pitch. It didn't provide the bounce and carry that I'd hoped for."

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