



SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



Sussex CCC vs Northamptonshire Specsavers County Championship – Division Two The County Ground, Northampton Monday 20th – Thursday 24th May 2019

Day One

Ben Brown and Chris Jordan produced a remarkable recovery for Sussex on the opening day against Northamptonshire at Wantage Road with a pair of fluent centuries to transform a dire position at 68 for 6 to close, incredibly, on 370 for 6.

Jordan joined Brown as wickets tumbled in the morning session with scrambling together a score of any note the primary task. But 302 unbeaten runs later and Sussex had transformed the match with Jordan 158 and Brown 153 by the close.

They shared the second-highest seventh wicket stand in Sussex history and the highest for the wicket ever conceded by Northants.

After winning the toss and choosing to bowl, Northants were almost through the visitors but Jordan edged his first delivery between the wicketkeeper and first slip and the extraordinary partnership was born.

Brown, the Sussex captain with three ducks in four Championship innings so far this summer, arrived at 35 for 4 and led the progress with a secure defence. He very cleverly nudged his singles and ran between the wickets with great intent to steal every run in seaming conditions.

He survived a top-edged pull that fell short of deep square but deserved a stroke of luck as he drove, cut and played a forearm-jab pull to build his score. He crashed his 15th boundary through cover point to raise a century in 161 balls - his 16th first-class hundred - and he closed the day having passed 150 for the third time in the County Championship.

Jordan's century was the more eye-catching of the two. His timing was impeccable and he feasted upon any width outside the off stump - plenty was offered throughout the afternoon - to strike 16 fours in going to just a third first-class hundred in 131 balls.

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Five overs from the close, three of the sweetest on-drives off Procter sent him past a career-best and raised a fourth batting bonus point. It was some return to action having played only a T20 for England since April 24th.

The partnership was a dashing affair and 151 were added in 35 overs between lunch and tea to turn the pressure back on the bowlers. A further 142 were more compiled in the evening session.

It was a truly outstanding turnaround after a morning session when Northants' decision to send Sussex in looked a good one. Sanderson took the first three wickets as Phil Salt drove and lost his off stump, Tom Haines got a leading edge to point and Stiaan van Zyl drove to mid-off.

Nathan Buck then struck in his first over with a ball that nipped back to break in half the middle stump of Harry Finch shouldering arms, before Procter moved one away to glance the edge of Luke Wells.

Jamie Overton then returned for a blast just before lunch and removed David Wiese's off stump with a spearing yorker - a similar delivery next ball almost removed Jordan and the day turned from there.

Speaking at the close, Jordan had this to say about his remarkable partnership with the Sussex captain: "I just tried to keep a free mind and tried not to look too far ahead and get the partnership going. I've been doing quite a bit of work away with England and felt good and me and Brownie complimented each other well.

"We're two different types of players who hit in different areas so they were always having to change their lengths against us. I worked so hard all day for chance to play those on-drives at the end of the day and I'm very grateful to get a personal best."

Day Two

Sussex produced a run of wickets either side of tea to take control of the match at Northamptonshire. The home side were cruising at 143 for 1 replying to 422 but slipped to 186 for 5 before closing the second day 242 for 6.

The visitors resumed 370 for 6 and claimed maximum batting points before taking 4 for 43 mid-afternoon to raise hopes of a healthy first-innings lead.

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Initially, Northants were comfortable in reply to a total built by a mammoth 309-run seventh-wicket partnership. Josh Cobb and Ricardo Vasconcelos shared 136 for the second wicket to provide a confident response.

Vasconcelos, dropped before lunch on 7, went past fifty for the fifth time this summer in 82 balls but having struck Danny Briggs' left-arm spin for two boundaries in the final over before tea, went to sweep the last ball of the session and was lbw for 83. It was a criminal error and opened an end as Northants' strong position slipped alarmingly.

Cobb, having entered the game as a concussion replacement for Alex Wakely, cut Briggs past point for his ninth four to raise fifty in 83 balls - just his 11th first-class fifty for his second county - but hooked Abi Sakande to Mir Hamza at long leg, departing for 62.

Temba Bavuma edged a ball that left him from Hamza and was taken at first slip before Adam Rossington nicked Chris Jordan to second slip to leave Northants 186 for 5, with 273 needed to save the follow-on.

Rob Keogh, who made 41, and Luke Procter shared a stand of 52 that appeared to be taking Northants to the close with some momentum but three overs from the close, Keogh edged Luke Well's leg-spin to slip. The wicket ensured Sussex's grip on the match and Northants suffered another blow when Luke Wood was forced off in the final over after being struck on the side of the head by Jordan.

For the first two sessions of the day, it was a smart comeback by Northants in sunny but breezy conditions. They ended the marathon seventh-wicket stand in just the third over of the day as Brown was trapped lbw by a Wood inswinger for 156. It ended the alliance at 309 - the 13th highest partnership for the seventh wicket in first-class history.

Jordan, dropped third ball of the day at point, could only add eight more before he edged Jamie Overton to the wicketkeeper for a career-best 166. The same bowler then wrapped up the innings having Hamza caught at first slip after Nathan Buck had Sakande held at second.

Facing 20 minutes before lunch, Ben Curran drove a full ball to third slip where Phil Salt claimed a very sharp catch. The morning could have got even better for Sussex

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had Vasconcelos been caught two balls later. The miss cost 76 runs but Vasconcelos couldn't take full advantage as Sussex ended the day on top.

Hamza - the pick of the Sussex seamers - finished the day with figures of 2 for 31 from 15 overs and at the close said: "We made a good score so the plan with the ball was not to panic and just try to hit the stumps as much as possible. There was something in the pitch, a bit of seam movement, and some carry too to bring the slips into play.

"I've been trying to get back into the four-day rhythm after the One Day Cup and thankfully for the team I found it."

Day Three

Phil Salt's bristling century set Sussex up for a final day victory push at Northamptonshire. Salt slammed 122 in 104 balls between lunch and tea to help Sussex close 292 for 4, leading by 346.

With a first-innings lead of only 54 after Northants recovered from 267 for 8 to make 368, Sussex were in need of a brisk second innings to leave enough time to take another 10 wickets. The situation was ready-made for Salt, who was called up the England T20 squad two weeks ago, and he delivered with a third first-class century in 90 balls.

He set off in typical positive fashion and drove Ben Sanderson attractively through extra-cover on his way to 58-ball fifty. The introduction of Rob Keogh's off spin sent Salt on the charge - two fours over extra-cover and over the bowler's head preceded six over midwicket and another maximum slammed flat over long-on to take him into the 90s before a drive, on the up past mid-off, raised a thrilling hundred in just another 32 deliveries.

Despite approaching tea, there was no halting Salt and he slog-swept Keogh for a third six - a mighty strike out of the ground over midwicket - and swung Jamie Overton over mid-on and then mid-off before top-edging another heave to be caught at point. At that stage he had made 122 of the 170 total.

Inevitably, the scoring rate fell after tea as Luke Wells drove to extra-cover and Harry Finch pulled to deep square and any hopes of a declaration before the close

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disappeared. Stiaan van Zyl struck three successive fours to pass fifty in 93 balls and played out the day with Ben Brown, who made a 52-ball half-century, to leave an overnight declaration possible.

At the start of the third day, it looked like Sussex would be picking their moment to declare after tea as Northants, resuming 242 for 6, lost Jamie Overton lbw to Wells for 19 and Brett Hutton well caught in the slips by Harry Finch off Chris Jordan for 2 and were still behind the follow-on mark. Hutton was quickly recalled from a second XI match as a second concussion substitute for Luke Wood, who was hit on the head by Jordan in the final over of day three.

In danger of conceding a huge first-innings lead, Northants produced a fightback led by No. 10 Nathan Buck, who struck just his second first-class fifty. He hit nine boundaries in passing fifty in 68 balls in a ninth-wicket stand of 90 of which Luke Procter made only 9.

Procter slashed Chris Jordan to the cover fence as Northants brought up a fourth batting bonus point and was unbeaten on 49 when No. 11 Ben Sanderson lost his middle stump to Danny Briggs.

Speaking at the end of the day's play, centurion Salt said: "We had to put our foot down and I thought if I got a few more we'd be in a really strong position. We didn't look too far ahead but we all knew a ball-park figure of where we wanted to be at the close.

"Hopefully we can get a few more in the morning then look to bowl them out. It's a good surface to bat on now and I think we'll have to bowl really well to win but we've got that in us."

Day Four

Acting Northamptonshire captain Adam Rossington made a battling half-century to secure his side a draw with Sussex at Wantage Road. Set 394 in 90 overs, Northants were struggling at 162 for 5 with more than fifty overs remaining but Rossington helped share two fifty partnerships to save the game.

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Rossington's 69 from 168 balls earned Northants 11 points from a third draw of the season ahead of a week off. Sussex were denied a second victory and were forced to settle for 13 points as they head home to play Glamorgan on Monday.

But mid-afternoon, Sussex were moving swiftly towards victory as Northants lost 4 for 50 but the middle order resisted.

After Ricardo Vasconcelos was held at third slip in the third over of the fourth innings, Josh Cobb and Ben Curran moved Northants comfortably to 112 for 1 with a stand of 99. But, as on the second afternoon, a loose shot paved the way for a collapse.

Curran wafted lazily outside off and was caught behind for 36 before Cobb shouldered arms and lost his off stump for 68 - both wickets to Hamza. Cobb's innings was his second half-century in the game but again fell short of a match-changing contribution.

Rob Keogh was then pinned on the crease by Chris Jordan and given out lbw, and that was followed by the calamitous run out of Temba Bavuma. Bavuma, lightning between the wickets, pressed down the ground for a single that Rossington refused, and running back from half-way down, Bavuma was short when David Wiese swooped from mid-on and threw down the striker's stumps.

Rossington and Luke Procter managed to steady the situation and calmly played out 17 overs in a stand of 52. 187 were needed in 37 overs after tea - an equation that became an irrelevance when, seventh ball into the final session, Hamza moved one away to take Procter's outside edge. The Pakistani finished with four for 51 from 19 overs.

But Hutton, who only entered the game on day three as Northants' second concussion substitute, stubbornly knocked back 104 deliveries for an unbeaten 25 to help secure a draw with his acting captain.

At the start of the day, Ben Brown (60*) and Stiaan van Zyl (80*) added 47 in four overs before Sussex's declaration came with their score on 339 for four.

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