



# SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



## Worcestershire CCC vs Sussex CCC Specsavers County Championship – Division Two Kidderminster Cricket Club Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019

### Day One

Sussex captain Ben Brown continued his rich vein of form with the bat as he and Chris Jordan led a recovery after a four wicket burst from Worcestershire all-rounder Wayne Parnell in the Specsavers County Championship match at Kidderminster.

Brown became only the second Division Two player to pass 500 Championship runs for the campaign and his unbeaten 64 followed on from 156 not out, 60 not out, 131, 107 and 33 in his previous five knocks.

He was given excellent support by Jordan during an unbroken partnership of 83 after the pair came together early in the afternoon session with Sussex struggling on 102-6 following another impressive performance from Parnell.

When rain brought a premature end to play shortly after 3pm, the visitors had recovered to 185-6 off 51.5 overs with Jordan 44 not out.

Parnell, who had a spell at Hove during the 2011 season, has been a model of consistency since starting a three year contract with Worcestershire as a Kolpak player this summer.

He again showed his potency with the ball in dismissing Luke Wells, Harry Finch and Laurie Evans during an initial spell of 3-22 from six overs from the Pavilion End and then returned after lunch to account for David Wiese.

Adam Finch's maiden first class wicket - plus a scalp for club captain Joe Leach – helped to put Sussex on the ropes after they had been put into bat on the pitch used by Kidderminster for Saturday's Birmingham League fixture before the heavens opened.

But then Brown and Jordan joined forces and opted for an aggressive counter-attacking approach in adding an unbroken 83 in 18 overs for the seventh wicket.

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The same pair had come together at 68-6 in the recent match at Northamptonshire – and put on 309.

A sizeable crowd greeted the first Championship fixture at Chester Road since 2008 after floods had engulfed Blackfinch New Road and prompted the change of venue.

Adam Finch took the new ball in tandem with Leach and the England Under-19 pacesman made the first breakthrough to remove makeshift opener Will Beer who has replaced the injured Phil Salt.

Beer hit 97 in the role against Gloucestershire at Arundel last week but today made only three before he pushed forward and edged Finch through to keeper Ben Cox.

It was the introduction of Parnell to the attack that sent the wickets tumbling. Harry Finch (0) drove hard at the 29-year-old and was pounced by Josh Dell at backward point. Then two wickets went in the same over from Parnell to leave Sussex on 55-4.

Wells (29) flicked Parnell off his legs to Barnard at mid wicket and then Laurie Evans (2) lost his off stump.

The last ball before lunch accounted for Stiaan van Zyl (28) who pushed forward to Leach and was bowled.

Parnell broke through again in his second over of the afternoon as he trapped David Wiese (5) lbw.

Jordan survived a difficult chance before he had scored from a Parnell delivery with Barnard at backward point unable to grasp onto the one-handed opportunity.

He profited from this let-off in cover driving and cutting Parnell for four before lofting spinner Brett D'Oliveira for six over deep mid wicket.

Brown went to his half century from 85 balls with 10 fours before the rain intervened and prevented no play after an early tea.

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## Day Two

Sussex began the day on 185-6 and added a further 70 runs for their final four wickets – including captain and keeper Ben Brown who was last out for 80.

He had resumed on 64 not out but today added just one more boundary – his 12th – before giving Ed Barnard the charge and being bowled to bring an end to his 160 ball knock.

Worcestershire paceman Adam Finch had claimed his maiden first class wicket yesterday and made the first breakthrough of the day by dismissing Chris Jordan to end a partnership of 92 in 20 overs with Brown.

Jordan (52) had brought up his half century off 59 balls with a boundary off Finch but in the same over drove loosely and was caught at cover by Dell.

Ollie Robinson dominated an eighth wicket stand of 56 in 16 overs with Brown but the last three wickets tumbled for five runs.

Robinson (38) nicked Barnard through to keeper Ben Cox and Sussex debutant Aaron Thomason (4) – signed from Warwickshire - went lbw to Ross Whiteley before Brown's dismissal.

Wayne Parnell did not add to his wicket tally today but finished with 4-92 and there were two wickets apiece for Finch (18-6-41-2) and Barnard (14.1-3-52-2).

Worcestershire began their reply half an hour before lunch and Robinson had made his presence felt with the new ball by removing the openers.

Daryl Mitchell (0) fell to a fine low catch at second slip by Laurie Evans and then Josh Dell (8) was trapped lbw in the next over.

The third wicket pair of Wessels and Ferguson led a counter-attack during the afternoon session.

Wessels completed a 56 ball half century with 10 boundaries as he and Ferguson added 93 in 25 overs.

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Jordan broke the stand when Wessels (55) edged to Robinson who held onto a low sharp chance at first slip.

Ferguson went onto register his own fifty off 111 balls with seven boundaries but the game took another twist with Jordan striking twice in one over.

Ross Whiteley (21) went for an upper cut and top edged a simple catch to mid off and then Ferguson (56) drove straight to cover at 152-5.

Cox and Barnard came together and shepherded Worcestershire past the 200 mark with a partnership of 74 in 23 overs. Luke Wells ended the partnership when Barnard (29) was lbw.

But Cox, the County’s leading run-scorer in the Championship this season, continued to score freely and reached a 78 ball fifty with six fours.

By the close he had moved onto 53 and D’Oliveira 20 not out.

Following the close of play, Sussex Head Coach Jason Gillespie said: “I thought we had a good morning session. From where we were (102-6) to get over 250 and then to reduce Worcestershire to 14-2 by lunch-time was a really good effort.

“I was pretty disappointed with how we started in the afternoon and we gave two experienced players in Callum Ferguson and Riki Wessels the momentum and the impetus.

“But Chris Jordan came in after tea, got us a couple of wickets and we just had to keep chipping away.

“We spoke after tea about starting well, setting the tone and being ruthless with our line and length and make the batsmen play good shots.”

## Day Three

Laurie Evans hit his maiden Specsavers County Championship century for Sussex – and first in four years – to lead a final session fightback against Worcestershire at Kidderminster.

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Evans came to the crease with Sussex in deep trouble but he and in-form captain Ben Brown rescued their side from 34-4 with a partnership of 157 in 37 overs.

Brown eventually departed for 64 – his sixth fifty plus in the last seven innings – but Evans was not to be denied his first hundred in the competition since moving from Warwickshire at the end of the 2016 season.

Often regarded as a white ball specialist, Evans demonstrated his capabilities in the longer format of the game as he completed the sixth first class century of his career.

He went to three figures off 140 balls with a cover drive off Worcestershire club captain Joe Leach for his 16th four in addition to hitting a six off Ross Whiteley over fine leg.

It could not have been better timed after Sussex's early woes when faced with a first innings deficit of 128.

By the close they had recovered sufficiently to reach 236-5 – a lead of 108.

It initially went to plan for Worcestershire as Leach, Adam Finch, Ed Barnard and Parnell all picked up one wicket in reducing the visitors to 34-4.

Luke Wells (0) was lbw to the fifth ball of the innings from Leach whose new ball partner Finch forced Harry Finch (4) to chop onto his stumps.

Barnard added to Sussex's woes when his first delivery forced a leading edge out of Will Beer (9) who lobbed up a return catch.

Stiaan van Zyl (18) then fell to a superb catch by Josh Dell at cover off Parnell.

But Parnell left the field clutching his left hamstring shortly afterwards and did not bowl again today.

Leach also had a spell on the side-lines with a spasm in his right buttock before returning to deliver a second spell deep into the final session.

Brown and Evans prospered and scored freely in reaching their half centuries in successive overs off 81 and 84 balls respectively.

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Barnard broke through when Brown (64) top edged a catch to fine leg but Evans remained unbeaten on 106 at the close.

Worcestershire's strength in depth with their batting line-up had been highlighted as they extended their overnight score from 262-6 to 383 all out during the morning session despite Ollie Robinson completing a five wicket haul.

Sussex were able to take the second new ball immediately after the resumption and Robinson made the first breakthrough of the day when Cox (61) pushed forward and nicked through to keeper Ben Brown. His 105 ball knock contained seven fours.

Robinson struck again when D'Oliveira (31) was lbw with the total 296-8 but then Parnell followed up his first innings haul of four wickets by stretching the lead in partnership with Leach to sizeable proportions.

The ninth wicket pair added 68 in 15 overs before Parnell was bowled by Luke Wells for 43.

Leach (54 not out) reached a half century with a six over long on from Robinson in addition to eight fours.

But he was left unbeaten on 54 as Robinson completed a five wicket haul by bowling Finch (0) and ended with figures of 29.5-4-84-5.

Speaking at the close of play, Sussex century-maker Laurie Evans said: "It (my first Championship hundred for Sussex) has been a long time coming and a long time overdue.

*Q. It's your first Championship hundred for four years? "I thought someone might bring that up! I've only played about seven (Championship) games in that whole period.*

*"My first class career leaves so much for debate. I don't really know what happened to it. But it was great to get out there and get a hundred.*

*"The red ball game is lot tougher than the white ball game and more mentally challenging, tests your technique and everything, but also probably the most rewarding.*

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“I’m a white ball cricketer plying my trade around the world but the most valuable runs are always first class runs and down the years that is what you are judged on.

“I’m overjoyed with the hard work I put in and just really happy and now a big day tomorrow for the boys. The job is not done just yet.

“I was just trying to get myself in, get myself moving, get used to the surface. I’ve not spent a lot of time in the middle recently and I certainly don’t feel like I’m at full flow from ball one.

“Browny (Ben Brown) is good company to be with in the middle because he’s making it look extremely easy and that shows how much hard work he has put in to get into that position.

“It was a tough situation (34-4) when we came together but we tried to have a little counter-attack and run well and be positive and it came off.

“The pitch is still doing a bit. The surface is very dry and there is always something happening. You don’t feel in danger for a long time and then all of a sudden the ball does something.”

## Day Four

Sussex newcomer Aaron Thomason scored a superb 90 on his first class debut to frustrate Worcestershire’s last day push for victory in the drawn Specsavers County Championship match at Kidderminster.

Thomason, signed earlier this month from Warwickshire, came to the wicket with Sussex on 314-8 20 minutes before lunch – a lead of 186 and still nearly 70 overs remaining.

But he batted with great authority and shepherded last man Abidine Sakande in adding 82 for the final wicket to take the game away from the home side.

It was a record 10th wicket partnership for Sussex in matches against Worcestershire.

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Thomason, who played only white ball cricket during his spell at Edgbaston, was eventually last out – bowled by Brett D’Oliveira – after hitting four sixes and 11 fours in his 115 ball knock.

He kept the strike so effectively that Sakande, who ended on five not out, faced just 26 balls during a stand spanning 18.5 overs.

The outcome might have been so different had Worcestershire keeper Ben Cox been able to hold onto a difficult chance away to his left offered by Thomason when on two off Ed Barnard.

Worcestershire were left a target of 297 in 40 overs and lost the wickets of Josh Dell (15) and Callum Ferguson (13) in reaching 82-2 before the two sides shook hands with Daryl Mitchell unbeaten on 34.

Sussex had resumed on 236-5 and Worcestershire made encouraging early progress.

Laurie Evans added only seven more runs to his overnight 106 after Sussex resumed on 236-5 before he edged Ross Whiteley through to keeper Ben Cox.

It ended a partnership of 61 with David Weise.

The second new ball became due after 13 overs and brought two further breakthroughs.

Worcestershire club captain Joe Leach struck in his second over when Wiese (47) was trapped lbw.

The 300 came up in the 97th over before Chris Jordan (8) also became an lbw victim to Ed Barnard at 314-8.

At that juncture it all pointed towards a potential Worcestershire victory and a further scalp came just after the resumption when Ollie Robinson (23) cut a short ball from Whiteley to backward point.

But Thomason had other ideas and, with the support of Sakande, ensured that an early finish was the likely outcome.

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Following the conclusion of the match, Head Coach Jason Gillespie said: “Coming into today’s play, it was important we stuck to our task and didn’t look too far ahead because you can lose your focus on the job in hand.

“It was about securing the game and we had a number of very good partnerships and we were able to do that.

“The surface won out in the end. There wasn’t enough in it for the bowlers. If you were willing to dig in as a batter, it was very difficult and you had to play a long time and we didn’t have enough time in the game to force a result.

“With Aaron Thomason, the way he went about things was excellent. He and Abi Sakande batted together for the best part of 20 overs and Abi faced less than 30 balls.

“I thought for a young man playing his first game, his management of that situation was fantastic and it was a very mature knock. He knew when to attack and when to rotate the strike.

“We are leaving a lot of work to do for our numbers six, seven and eight who are doing the bulk of the work.

“We’ve spoken about it and there have been a couple of games where the top four or five had done their jobs but this game they haven’t done that and it’s something we need to work and improve on.”

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