



# SUSSEX CRICKET MATCH REPORT



## Sussex CCC vs Northamptonshire CCC Specsavers County Championship – Division Two The 1st Central County Ground, Hove Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019

### Day One

It is little wonder that Sussex seamer Ollie Robinson has been hoping for a call-up for the England Lions this summer. While the sensational Jofra Archer, his Sussex team-mate, has been capturing headlines across the globe, Robinson has been slowly building a reputation as one of the most consistent opening bowlers on the county circuit.

When he took his fifth wicket on the opening day of the Specsavers County Championship Division Two match against Northants, he had reached 200 first-class wickets in only his 50th match. He has now taken 110 championship wickets since the beginning of last season. Last year he took 74 wickets at 18.66, and this summer he already has 36 at 18.77 as he spearheads his side's bid for promotion.

Robinson was not fully fit for last week's disappointing defeat at home to Durham. But he was back to his best here, achieving nasty bounce and movement in both directions.

He finished with figures of 6-63 as Northants were bowled out for 273 in 87 overs. But the away side were still happy with their score after winning the toss and sliding to 99 for six, and then 205 for nine.

Northants have replaced Durham at the foot of the table and are still looking for their first championship win of the season. Their hopes of making an impact were encouraged by the number of Sussex absentees. They were already without Archer and the injured Mir Hamza. And before this match all-rounder Chris Jordan (tonsillitis) and Stiaan van Zyl (tennis elbow) pulled out.

Sussex were more in need of Robinson than ever before, and he didn't disappoint. He broke through with the last ball of the opening over, when he had Ricardo Vasconcelos lbw for two.

It was 29-2 when Rob Newton edged Robinson to keeper Ben Brown. Aaron Thomason replaced Abi Sakande at 58-2 and against his first delivery, down the leg-

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side-side, Temba Bavuma got an inside edge to Brown. At 76, Alex Wakely, on 36, was beaten by David Wiese and Laurie Evans took the catch at second slip.

There didn't look much chance of a recovery when Rob Keogh was lbw to Robinson with just one run added to the lunch score. And in Robinson's next over Luke Procter edged and Luke Wells took an outstanding catch at third slip, moving his long arms very quickly to his left to take the chance two-handed.

Northants were 99 for six. But then captain Adam Rossington and Saif Zaib put on 51 for the seventh wicket and there was a last wicket stand of 68 between Nathan Buck and Ben Sanderson before Robinson and Abi Sakande finished off the innings.

Northants soon made an impact with the ball. Varun Chopra, signed on loan from Essex to stiffen their top order batting, made just five and the returning Phil Salt a single as the home side limped to 7 for 2 at the close.

Speaking at the close of play, Robinson said: "I thought everyone bowled well this morning. But in thought the first few overs I bowled I thought the pitch was a bit slow. It wasn't really nipping. But then the shine came off the ball and it got a bit nipier. We ran out of steam a little bit. We missed Chris Jordan today. On another day we might have bowled them out for 160.

"When I went to Australia a few winters ago it improved my game. I learned to be patient. The ball out there doesn't do as much as ours. And my fitness has improved, allowing me to bowl more overs in a day, and longer spells. My main goal is to get Sussex promoted this year."

## Day Two

Northamptonshire are on course to claim their first Specsavers County Championship win of the season after bowling out Sussex for their lowest total for 12 years.

Bottom of the second division going into the fixture, Northamptonshire ended day two at The 1st Central County Ground with an overall lead of 379 on 212 for 4 in their second innings after Sussex had earlier been dismissed for 106, their lowest score since May 2007 when they made 102 against Kent at Canterbury – a season when they went on to become county champions.

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They had no answer to the unrelenting accuracy of Northamptonshire’s four seamers led by Ben Sanderson who finished with 6 for 37, his best figures of the season. They found the right length throughout and a pitch offering some seam movement and swing.

Northants did not enforce the follow-on and when they batted again Ricardo Vasconcelos (88) and Rob Newton (54) added 108 for the first wicket. Abi Sakande picked up two wickets but Sussex had long since been consigned to damage limitation. Their only hope now is to at least show a bit more resolve when they bat again.

Sussex had resumed on 7 for 2 and they soon lost overnight batsmen Luke Wells and Aaron Thomason in successive overs. Brett Hutton (5) picked up Wells and Sanderson claimed his first wicket of the day when Thomason (4) edged an away-swinging ball to third slip, just as Wells had done.

It set the tone for a dispiriting morning for Sussex who were 26 for 5 as Sanderson struck again to remove Laurie Evans (5), who was also beaten by late movement and edged to first slip. Ben Brown and Delray Rawlins staged a mini recovery to take the score to 49 before Luke Procter straightened one nicely and Brown (10) edged behind.

Rawlins rode his luck at times but briefly broke the shackles to take successive boundaries off Hutton before Sanderson returned to have him taken a second slip for 31. While Sanderson, Hutton and Procter shared the spoils they were backed up by Nathan Buck, whose six overs contained four maidens.

After lunch, Will Beer – batting at No.9 having opened in his last three games – was lbw to Hutton for one before Sanderson finished things off. David Wiese (28), who helped Rawlins add 34 for the seventh wicket, was caught behind and Sakande edged to third slip in the next over.

Northants batted again with a lead of 163 and by tea had extended that to 275. Vasconcelos and Rob Newton reached half-centuries off successive balls with Newton hitting Beer for six to get there.

Sussex made a breakthrough with the first ball after the resumption when Newton (54) edged to slip to give Ollie Robinson his seventh wicket of the match and there was double success for Sakande who had Alex Wakely (19) caught behind off an

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inside edge before pinning Vasconcelos for 88 after the South African had struck 13 fours. Temba Bavuma (25) smashed a waist-high full toss from Rawlins to deep mid-wicket just before the close but it was a chastening day for Sussex and a very good one for Northants.

To give away a lead of over 160 runs just wasn't good enough. The lads know that and they are disappointed with their performance. They certainly bowled well and I thought Ben Sanderson were very good down the hill but it's not a 106 all out wicket, it's a good surface. We know we are better players than that.

We didn't quite get it right with our bowling either when they batted again and they were able to play with quite a lot of freedom but we allowed that. We were both sides of the wicket and our lengths were out, and those are the things we need to iron out. We have been pretty poor and the lads have been left in no uncertain terms that they have to improve in the next two days.

Sussex head coach gave a frank assessment of the day: "To give away a lead of over 160 runs just wasn't good enough. The lads know that and they are disappointed with their performance.

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## Day Three

Northamptonshire claimed their first Specsavers County Championship win of the season after Sussex's batsmen capitulated for the second time in the match to lose by a record 393 runs at The 1st Central County Ground.

Having been bowled out for 106 in their first innings, Sussex were dismissed for 105 in their second. They seemed to be making a better fist of things when Varun Chopra

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and Luke Wells took the score to 35 for 1 but Sussex then lost nine wickets for 70 runs with Ben Sanderson and Brett Hutton again wreaking havoc.

Sanderson's 4 for 18 in two spells included the 200th first-class wicket of his career. He finished with match figures of 10 for 50 while Hutton improved on his 3 for 47 in the first innings by taking 4 for 32 in the second to finish with a match haul of 7 for 79.

Northamptonshire's attack once again found a consistent length and enough seam movement and swing to take nine wickets in 19 overs during the afternoon session.

Sussex began their notional pursuit of a target of 499 25 minutes before lunch but they didn't get to the interval unscathed with Phil Salt pinned in Hutton's second over for one of three ducks in the innings.

The experienced Chopra, who is on loan from Essex, and Wells, negotiated 12 overs either side of lunch but when Wells (11) nibbled fatally at Hutton's away-swing the innings went into a dramatic tail spin.

Laurie Evans (3) became Hutton's third victim and with the score still on 41 Chopra (22) was caught behind off Nathan Buck, who then had Delray Rawlins (8) taken mid-off off a mis-timed pull.

Skipper Ben Brown decided to go down fighting, hitting five fours and two sixes – both in the only over bowled by off-spinner Rob Keogh – as he dominated a sixth-wicket stand of 28 with David Wiese.

But when Sanderson returned to the attack Sussex's last five wickets disappeared for 13 runs with Sanderson removing Wiese and Will Beer in the space of three balls before Keogh clung on to a good catch in the gully to remove Brown for 46 in the pacesman's next over.

Sanderson finished things off by bowling Aaron Thomason, Hutton having picked up his fourth wicket when wicketkeeper Adam Rossington held his fourth catch of the innings to remove Ollie Robinson.

Earlier, Buck hit a 59-ball half-century as Northants added a further 119 runs during the morning session before being bowled out for 331.

Resuming on 212 for 4, they lost their first three wickets to Robinson, who finished with match figures of 10 for 132. His performance was the lone positive for Sussex.

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Buck was dismissed two balls after reaching his half-century when he top-edged a pull at Abi Sakande before left-arm spinner Rawlins picked up two wickets to finish with 3 for 34.

Sussex head coach Jason Gillespie said: "That was an unacceptable performance and there has to be a lot of self reflection as individuals on areas where we have to improve. We didn't score enough runs and the lads have to work out what they can do better to get the job done.

"We haven't batted well enough obviously but yesterday afternoon I thought our body language and our bowling was very disappointing and we allowed Northants to take the game away from us. I can't take anything away from them - Ben Sanderson and Brett Hutton bowled really, really well - but we were blown away again today. We need to be better all round.

"There was a great opportunity today for someone to put a big score on the board and we weren't able to do that. We need more lads to put their hands up than guys like Ollie Robinson and Ben Brown. We've had a couple of tough games but we need to be better."

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