



Sussex Women Crowned County Champions

The Sussex Women's cricket team have been crowned County Champions after an emphatic win against Kent on Sunday at Horsham.

This is the 5th time Sussex have won the County Championship in the last 8 years, firstly in 2003, 04, 05, 08 and now in 2010.

The 2010 season has seen the County Championship title chase a bit more open than in previous years with Yorkshire and Berkshire coming through and putting pressure on the other teams, but in the final game of the season the title was between Sussex and Kent, with Sussex coming out on top.

Sussex won the toss and elected to field first. Opening bowlers, Izi Noakes and Alexia Walker started extremely well, putting the ball in the right areas and putting in an outstanding bowling performance right at the end of the season.

Noakes took the first wicket with an amazing catch from wicket keeper Sara Lord, leaving Kent 10 for 1, she then followed it up a few balls later with an LBW, Kent were 11 for 2. Enter England captain, Charlotte Edwards and England batsman Lydia Greenway; Sussex knew that these two players could change a game if they stayed in so it was vital that Sussex put pressure on them to take their wicket. With Walker and Noakes continuing to bowl tightly, Noakes took the wicket of Edwards with a diving catch from Charlotte Burton at Mid wicket to take it. Greenway followed soon after with a ball from Walker that hit the top of middle and leg.

Kent were 26 for 4 and Sussex were on top, a small partnership from Susie Rowe and Natalie Lane saw Kent on 53 before Lane was caught from an amazing catch in the air by Caroline Atkins at mid off, off the bowling of Laura Marsh. Rowe was joined by Emily Drumm and both players put on a strong partnership of 69, taking some quick singles to the Sussex fielders, but with Noakes back into the attack and carrying on from earlier, she bowled Drumm for 25.

Rowe was the pick of Kent's batters and put in a great effort with the bat, scoring 52 before being out LBW to Caroline Atkins. Wickets continued to fall and soon Kent were all out for 132. There were some outstanding catches from Sussex but also some brilliant bowling performances, such as Noakes 4 for 24, Atkins 2 for 22, Colvin 1 for 10 and Walker 1 for 26.

Sussex knew they were only 133 runs away from lifting the County Championship trophy, but there was still some work to be done with the bat. Openers Sarah Taylor and Caroline Atkins didn't fail; they pushed the ball into the gaps and scored runs regularly keeping up with the run chase. Taylor and Atkins put on a partnership of 52 before Taylor was caught for 21 off the bowling of Deveena Pithia. Atkins was joined by Rosalie Birch who continued where Taylor left off before she was caught at mid wicket for 12.

Atkins led from the front and was determined to see it through, however she lost a couple of quick wickets around her but was soon joined by Sussex captain Alexia Walker with Sussex only needing 10 more runs to seal the County Championship, and it was those two that would see Sussex home and 2010 County Champions, with Walker finishing on 15 and Atkins leading the way with 57 not out.

Sussex are back as County Champions and to win it at Horsham with a large number of supporters coming out to support the team made it even better.

Sussex player, Charlotte Burton said, "It's a great feeling winning the Championship again, it was an outstanding performance from the team, not just today but throughout the season. The standard of cricket has increased and we have been tested this year, which I think is great, but we have come back fighting and more determined this year to be County Champions. "

Sussex County Championship team in this final match of the season, Alexia Walker, Caroline Atkins, Rosalie Birch, Charlotte Burton, Holly Colvin, Chiara Green, Sara Lord, Laura Marsh, Izi Noakes, Hannah Phelps, Sophie Parnell, Sarah Taylor, Lucy Uncles