

Sloggers hold sway in Glamorgan defeat



HOOK SHOT

Surrey reporter
Marcus Hook gives
his county view

I wouldn't mind betting that Surrey were secretly kicking themselves after Tuesday night's loss to Glamorgan, especially as the Welshmen were not only missing

star man Colin Ingram, but also second overseas batsman Joe Burns. On a night when it seemed to be raining sixes, the visitors' tally of 13 to Surrey's nine was the difference.

When I discovered that Glamorgan have never lost at the Oval in T20 - when I was compiling the Over Of Stats for this week's Tuesday edition - I had a nasty feeling that if Aaron Finch and Jason Roy didn't come off with the bat the Welshmen might cause what many would consider an upset.

I can only assume Morne Morkel,

who was named in the hosts' 14-man squad, picked up a last-minute niggles.

Talking of fast bowlers, with Liam Plunkett on his way out of Yorkshire and heading to the Oval at the end of the season - with Mat Pillans quite possibly going in the opposite direction - it underlines how Surrey are planning to dominate county cricket over the next few years.

In the short-term, Plunkett will have an important part to play in England challenging for next sum-

mer's World Cup, but thereafter I can easily see him taking over from Rikki Clarke as Surrey's experienced all-rounder. Many seem to forget Plunkett averages 25 with the bat in first-class cricket.

Alec Stewart has always said that if a player becomes available who is better than Surrey have already got, he is keen to bring them in.

While that's debatable at the moment, we can't be too far away from the day when both of the Currans are regulars for England in all three forms of the game.

WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH BAD BREAKS

Surrey skipper: Don't dwell on loss to Welshmen

BY MARCUS HOOK

Jade Dernbach has cautioned against getting too carried away when victory follows victory in Vitality Blast.

And likewise, he has warned his players against dwelling on a defeat when it comes along, as it did against Glamorgan on Tuesday.

Surrey's T20 captain said: "Because there are so many games in this competition, they come thick and fast, so you can't get too high or too low. You've got to try and stay as level as possible.

"We've got another big game here on Friday night, against Middlesex, which will be a chance to dust ourselves down and put in a big performance."

The Oval outfit appeared on top after posting 194-4 in their 20 overs, as Nic Maddinson led the way with 70. But with Glamorgan's Craig Meschede blasting 43, including three successive sixes off Gareth Batty, and Kiran Carlson and Graham Wagg also selecting sixth gear, the Welshmen eased home with an over to spare.

"At the halfway stage we were pretty happy," said Dernbach. "We got stuck at one point, but Nic Maddinson came in and played a beautiful innings that accelerated our score to what I thought was definitely a defendable one.

"I think we just misjudged conditions, with the ball skidding on a little bit under the lights. It didn't quite stick in the pitch like it did when we batted, which made it difficult for our spinners. But hats off to Glamorgan. We saw some serious striking there.

"From the first innings to the second the conditions did change, but Gareth Batty is a great performer for us and I just think we saw a couple of boys strike the ball so beautifully.

"It was hard to contain. Once they got going, they made it look pretty easy at times. But Gaz comes out on top more often than not and although [leg-spinner] Scott Borthwick hasn't bowled a lot it's nice to have his experience out there.

"Glamorgan seem to enjoy playing at the Oval, and they produce good



Surrey's Jade Dernbach

Picture: PA

games. People want to see fours and sixes and excitement and that's exactly what they got. That's what Twenty20 is all about."

Jonathan Batty, who kept wicket for Surrey during their successful run of three County Championship titles in four years under Adam Holoake, is thrilled that the Oval outfit are in with a chance of taking the title this year.

"It's brilliant as an ex-player to see how well the side have done under Rory Burns's leadership,"

said Batty. "He really has led from the front and put himself right in the frame for an England call-up.

"But it's also great to see so many Surrey youngsters playing, and there's a lovely balance with the likes of Rikki Clarke coming back. It obviously makes us proud as ex-players to see how they're going and if they keep playing the way they're playing it's up to the other teams to catch them.

"They're probably a year or two ahead of schedule. We've seen the

youngsters coming through in the last couple of years and at twenty years old the likes of Sam Curran have got huge potential.

"The question is - have they reached anywhere near their potential yet? Three or four years' time is when we will know, where they can get to. As long as they keep working hard, you've got to say the future is incredibly bright for Surrey."

Batty is Surrey Stars' assistant head coach, and said there is still a great atmosphere in the women's camp despite sitting fourth out of six in the Kia Super League after four matches.

He added: "We're now two weeks in, but it's flown by. The girls are brilliant. Some of them are superb cricketers and there's a really good atmosphere around the group.

"With a franchise team you're in a position to bring in players from outside the normal Surrey set-up. That means some players are going to be unlucky and miss out, but the challenge for them is to make sure their names are further up the pecking order next year."

Batty added: "It's interesting to see how the girls learn from the international and more experienced players in the group. They're like sponges, accumulating all that knowledge and all that information, from how the international girls train and go about their work. It's been a little bit disappointing that hasn't reflected in our results so far.

"The girls were outstanding last week at Cheltenham, against Western Storm. We've played okay, but I thought Southern Vipers and Lancashire Thunder played fantastically well, and all credit to them, but we weren't quite at one hundred per cent in those games.

"But against Western Storm we came out and delivered an outstanding performance. The thing with franchise cricket is that every team is strong. There are no weak teams in the competition, so as long as we're playing at the top of our game we'll be in with a chance of beating anybody."

SURREY v MIDDLESEX

(probable line-ups)

Surrey:

Roy, Finch, Maddinson, Foakes (wk), Clarke, Pope, Pillans, T.Curran, Morkel, Batty and Dernbach (capt).

Middlesex:

Holden, Stirling, Gubbins, Morgan (capt), Eskinazi, Simpson (wk), Fuller, Agar, Helm, Finn and Barber.

FORM GUIDE

With Gloucestershire, Kent and Sussex beginning to pull away from the rest of the pack in the South Division, and only the top four going forward to the quarter-finals, the challenge now for the likes of Glamorgan, Somerset and Surrey is to finish the group phase on a high. Middlesex, Surrey's opponents tonight are not only at a crossroads in the competition - they recently had the dubious distinction of becoming the first team to register 100 defeats in Twenty20 cricket.

STAT

In head-to-head terms, Middlesex have won four of their last six T20 clashes with Surrey. But it would seem they don't travel well - certainly not over the four and half miles between St John's Wood and Kennington. During that run the North Londoners have only triumphed at Lord's, while Surrey have won both of the games at the Oval.



KEY PLAYERS

Gareth Batty (Surrey) - The veteran off-spinner, above, remains one of the most economical bowlers in T20 cricket. At 7.94 runs per over, only Sam Curran (who is currently on England duty) has proved more frugal for Surrey in this year's Blast.

Paul Stirling (Middlesex) - The North Londoners have won just twice in the Vitality Blast (at Lord's, against Surrey and Hampshire). On both occasions Stirling made 60-plus. Since 2012, Middlesex have only been defeated once when the Irishman has scored 60 or more. When he has been dismissed for 10 or less, their record is 22 losses out of 27.

STAR MAN

Nic Maddinson - No longer are fans asking: "Nic who?" when the subject of Surrey's second overseas player comes up. The 26-year-old Australian's 70 off 45 balls against Glamorgan had everything from power to finesse. He rode his luck at times, but Maddo looks a gem.

BEST MOMENT

When that young lad caught the ball in the crowd to win £1,000 and hugged his mum in celebration, nothing seemed to matter; especially as, at that stage, Glamorgan seemed to be facing an uphill task.

FIXTURES

3 August: Surrey v Middlesex at the Kia Oval (Vitality T20 Blast)

5 August: Essex v Surrey at Chelmsford (Vitality T20 Blast)

9 August: Surrey v Sussex at the Kia Oval (Vitality T20 Blast).