

MINOR COUNTIES KNOCKOUT TROPHY

BERKSHIRE BROUGHT DOWN TO EARTH

Berkshire's progress in the group stage of the Minor Counties Knock Out Cup was dented by a 29 run defeat to Cornwall at Camborne CC on Sunday.

In a rain affected match reduced to 40 overs a side Cornwall, having been put in to bat, mustered a competitive 207-6 thanks to a good opening partnership and some lusty hitting at the tail end of the innings.

Steve Naylor enjoyed the remarkable figures of 5.2 overs - 4 maidens, 2 runs and 4 wickets - before incurring an injury to an intercostal muscle which had a dramatic effect on his further participation. At the other end of the spectrum, professional Richard Johnson proved expensive leaking 62 runs off his allotted eight overs. Spinners Carl Crowe (2-35) and James Morris kept things tight but a total of 207 runs was probably 30 runs too many on a slow wicket and a damp but drying outfield.

In reply, Berkshire soon lost Jon Trower (12) and ex Hampshire man Jono McLean (5). Opener David Barnes was run out for 22 and the middle order of Morris (16), Captain Bjorn Mordt (18), Paul Carter (12) and Craig Crowe (17) all made good starts only to fall to a well disciplined attack which continued to take the pace off the ball on a wicket getting ever lower and slower. Despite some aggressive hitting from the injured Naylor, who was eventually last out for 33 off 18 balls, the innings finally closed on 178 leaving the Royal County 30 runs short of victory.

"This was a disappointing result" stated Manager David Morris. "A long journey of well over 250 miles for a one day game is far from ideal preparation, particularly when many of the side has played for their clubs on the previous day. The injury to Steve Naylor was also a major factor - he was bowling really well when the damage occurred. Perhaps he should still have batted higher up the order as when he eventually went to the crease it was all over bar the shouting. With the benefit of hindsight, I believe that we are a better side batting first rather than chasing."

All is not lost however - with Berkshire, Cornwall, Wiltshire and Devon all having won one game, there is still all to play for.

Berkshire's final two games in the group stage are against Devon at Falkland CC this Sunday, followed by Wiltshire away at Trowbridge on Sunday 18th May and two wins would guarantee a quarter final place. One win out of two may also be enough although the decision could then be based on net run rate.

With the decision on the fitness of Steve Naylor still awaited, Mitchell Stokes and seam bowler Chris Guest are added to the squad for this Sunday's game against Devon at Falkland CC which starts at 11.00 a.m.

The final selection will be made today (Wed).

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