

BERKSHIRE SWAMPED IN WALES

Berkshire's hopes of winning the Western Division of the Minor Counties Championship took a knock following defeat by Wales in a seriously rain-affected game at Pontarddulais on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

"All is far from lost however", said Manager, David Morris. "We have home games to come against Herefordshire and Wiltshire and an away game versus Oxfordshire. Victory in these three games, or possibly only two, would still see us challenging for the top honour. It very much depends upon how other results go".

Due to heavy overnight rain on Saturday, only 72 overs play was possible on day one during which Berkshire struggled to 182-8 with major contributions coming from two controlled and uncharacteristic innings from David Barnes (52) and Steve Naylor (35). These two apart, the only other batsman to reach double figures was James Morris (16).

With day two a complete washout, the only way to manufacture a result was by declaration bowling by Wales on day three when once again no play was possible until 2.00 p.m. A further four overs from Wales saw Berkshire declare on 249-9 with the Brothers Crowe helping themselves to some easy runs - Craig (52) and Carl (41 not out).

With Wales forfeiting their first innings and Berkshire their second innings, Wales were left needing 250 to win off a maximum of 55 overs. Berkshire's declaration proved too generous and although there was an interesting debate over the umpires' computation of overs, Wales achieved their target for the loss of only one wicket with four overs to spare. Tom Lambert was the sole wicket taker and the Glamorgan contracted players Richard Grant and Ben Wright both batted superbly to finish on 119 not out and 106 not out respectively.

"This was a disappointing result" stated Captain, Bjorn Mordt. "But you have to run the risk of losing if you give yourself a chance of winning. Their two guys batted like the professionals they are and I thought we bowled and fielded well under the circumstances. In a contrived run-chase, the side batting second is always favourite".

Morale remains high and thoughts now turn to the Minor Counties Knock-out semi-final against near neighbours Oxfordshire at Banbury on Sunday (11.00 a.m.). Thoughts cannot help but turn to the possibility of a Lord's final for the first time since 2004 but concentration must be focussed on the matter in hand on Sunday. "Oxfordshire are a side to be respected", said Morris.

"They have strength in depth with batters like Jamie Hewitt, Craig Haupt, Charlie Knightley and Rob Williams and the perennial Keith Arnold and young slow left arm bowler Luke Ryan are both wily campaigners with the ball. We are hoping for a good game with plenty of support and the side that wins will have performed better on the day. We have selected a highly competitive side for this vitally important game with Paul Carter replacing Jon Trower who

is extremely unlucky to miss out".

The full side is -

B H D Mordt - Captain/Wicketkeeper

D E Barnes

P R Carter

Carl Crowe

Craig Crowe

R L Johnson

T L Lambert

J J McLean

J C Morris

S P Naylor

M S T Stokes

J Trower - 12th man

David Morris - Manager

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