

AMBITION BURNS BRIGHT



Rory Burns at the Oval PA IMAGES

Captain Rory hopes for county title as Surrey top table

SURREY CCC

BY MARCUS HOOK

Rory Burns is proud to be skipping the Specsavers County Championship leaders at the halfway stage.

Since being handed the reins by Gareth Batty, Burns has only overseen five wins from seven four-day starts.

But he is also the leading run-maker in the competition, with 722 runs at an average of 65.53.

Surrey, who are yet to taste defeat in red-ball cricket this season, completed a double over Yorkshire – their first since last winning the County Championship in 2002 – following up an innings and 17-run victory with a seven-wicket win at Scarborough last week.

“To get the win having been 75 runs behind at the halfway stage is very pleasing,” said Burns.

But an incredible bowling effort – led by Morne Morkel, who bagged his first five-wicket haul for Surrey – skittled Yorkshire for 152 in their second dig.

“I think it’s really pleasing to see our bowling unit perform as a unit,” added Burns.

“They hunt as a pack, and different people are putting their hands up. That’s the most pleasing thing.”

Surrey were left with 227 runs to chase down on the final day, which they negotiated for the loss of just three wickets.

The 27-year-old left-hander, with 97, came closest to being the only centurion in the contest.

He added: “The way we went about our run chase was really good. It helps when you get a solid start from the likes of me and Rocky [Mark Stoneman].

“Then myself and Scott Borthwick got in a partnership and Ryan [Patel] and Scotty did the same thing, which bodes really well.”

Whilst Burns leads Division One of the County Championship in runs scored, 20-year-old Ollie Pope is in second place with 654 at an average of 93.42.

“Once again Ollie chipped in with more runs in the first innings,” said Burns.

“I think he’s showing maturity beyond his years at the minute. He’s playing some really good cricket. Hopefully he continues to keep churning them out.”

When questioned about whether Surrey can maintain their spot at the top of Division One through until September and the conclusion of the season, Burns commented: “We’re just happy with how we’re going about our cricket.

“Hopefully we continue to do the business.

“That’s our fifth win from seven games. That’s very pleasing.”

Surrey’s attention now turns to T20 cricket with the start of the Vitality Blast this Thursday, under the guidance of T20 captain Jade Dernbach.

Surrey’s first home game of the season against Kent on Friday is sold out.

“The next fixture for which tickets are still available is the Essex clash at the Oval on July 12.

Essex have posted just two totals over 178 to Surrey’s seven.

Ball 5 - Then on Friday (July 6), Kent are heading to the Oval, having just lost the final of the 50-over Royal London One-Day Cup. Kent’s last victory in a Lord’s final was in 1978. Since then, the Spitfires have lost eight.

Ball 6 - In the T20, Kent have progressed to the quarter-finals twice in the last seven seasons, but not any further since 2009. Their head-to-head record against Surrey at the Oval currently stands at seven victories apiece.

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overcame Kent by three wickets at Beckenham in 2015.

Ball 3 - On Thursday (July 5), Surrey get their T20 campaign underway against Middlesex at Lord’s. So far, in the 15 seasons, Middlesex have only reached the knockout phase three times.

Ball 4 - Surrey-Middlesex T20 clashes have generally been low-scoring affairs. In 28 meetings, Mid-

SURREY CCC NEWS

Sarah’s arrival is Taylor-made

Nat Sciver believes the addition of Sarah Taylor can take the Surrey Stars one step closer to winning their first Kia Super League title this summer.

The Stars, who last season lost out to Western Storm on finals day, have balanced the departure of Tammy Beaumont by signing Taylor from Lancashire Thunder.

It marks a huge coup for Surrey, given the form the wicketkeeper-batter has already shown in an England shirt this summer – hitting 118 in England Women’s 69-run ODI victory over South Africa at Hove last month.

Sciver, who guided England home in the Women’s Twenty20 Tri-Series final against New Zealand two days ago, is convinced that the Surrey Stars have the talent to return to reach Finals Day again – on Bank Holiday Monday, August 27.

“We’ll miss Tammy, but it’s exciting to have signed Sarah Taylor,” said Sciver, the 25-year-old all-rounder who has emerged through the Surrey Academy and was one of the stars of England’s World Cup triumph last year.

The 20-over KSL has been expanded in 2018 with the six teams now playing each other home and away. The Stars play three of their five home matches at Guildford, starting against the formidable Southern Vipers team on Sunday, July 22.

“It’s a longer competition this year which will hopefully help, as we’re pretty consistent,” said Sciver, who added: “I would say the Vipers are the toughest team to beat, especially now they’ve signed Tammy.

“I’m sure the girls on the team will probably give her a little bit of banter on the pitch – but I think actually she likes that so ignoring her is probably a better tactic.

“This competition is really important for the development of younger players coming through.

“After the big World Cup last year it’s a tournament to help develop those players underneath the international levels.”

Elgar can bring some variation

South Africa’s Dean Elgar will return to Surrey as the club’s overseas player for the final five matches in this season’s Specsavers County Championship.

Elgar, who scored 402 runs across three first-class and four one-day matches for Surrey at the start of the campaign, will be looking to pick up where he left off on August 29, against Notts at the Oval.

The 31-year-old is currently ranked the seventh best Test batsman in the world and is the highest-rated South African in the ICC batting rankings.

Surrey’s director of cricket Alec Stewart said: “We’re pleased Dean is returning to the club for the last part of the Specsavers County Championship. His experience and proven qualities at the business end of the campaign will add real depth to the squad.”

