

= Somerset County Cricket Club in 2009 =

Somerset County Cricket Club competed in four domestic competitions during the 2009 English cricket season : the first division of the County Championship , the Friends Provident Trophy , the first division of the NatWest Pro40 League and the Twenty20 Cup . Through their performance in the Twenty20 Cup , the team qualified for the Champions League Twenty20 . They enjoyed a successful season , but fell short of winning any competitions , prompting Director of Cricket Brian Rose to say " We 've had enough of being cricket 's nearly men . "

Consistent performances in the County Championship helped Somerset remain challengers for the competition until the last few weeks of the season , but the batting @-@ friendly pitch at their home ground , the County Ground , Taunton , meant that the county finished with too many draws to claim their first Championship title . Consistency was also key for Somerset 's success in one @-@ day cricket , where they remained unbeaten in the group stage of the Friends Provident Trophy , but were eliminated in the first knock @-@ out round , and finished runners @-@ up by one point in the NatWest Pro40 . In the Twenty20 Cup , Somerset finished as losing finalists . This meant that they qualified for the Champions League Twenty20 , where they progressed into the second group stage of the competition . They failed to win any matches in that phase of the competition , resulting in their elimination .

Somerset were captained for the third successive season by their Australian overseas player , Justin Langer , who announced during the season that it would be his last with Somerset . Marcus Trescothick topped the national batting tables , scoring almost 3 @, @ 000 runs in all competitions in 2009 ; as a result , he was named as both Professional Cricketers ' Association (PCA) Player of the Year and the PCA 's Most Valuable Player of the Year .

= = Background = =

After promotion from the second division of the County Championship in 2007 , Somerset were among the first division title contenders in the 2008 . A loss to Lancashire in the final match of the season meant they finished in fourth place . David Foot , writing in Wisden , claimed that too many of the Somerset batsmen had " lost their way " in one @-@ day cricket , as they narrowly avoided relegation in the NatWest Pro40 , and were eliminated in the Friends Provident Trophy .

Somerset promoted four players from their academy for the 2009 season , giving contracts to Jos Buttler , Adam Dibble , Chris Jones and James Burke . Of these , only Buttler appeared in the first @-@ team during the season . They also signed David Stiff , a fast bowler capped at Under @-@ 19 level for England , on a two @-@ month contract at the beginning of the season , which was later extended to the end of the season . Ian Blackwell , captain of the side in 2005 and 2006 , left for Durham after coach Andy Hurry and captain Justin Langer made it clear that they regarded fitness as a priority . John Francis and Keith Parsons both retired at the end of 2008 , Francis cited lack of first @-@ team opportunities for his departure , while at the age of 35 , Parsons declared that : " There comes a time when your body tells you it 's time to pack in professional sport . "

In his preview of the 2009 season for ESPNcricinfo , Andrew McGlashan identified Somerset 's opening partnerships with bat and ball as their main strengths , but predicted that the middle order would struggle to make an impact in the County Championship , stating that " none [of the middle order] jump out as potential match @-@ winners in four @-@ day cricket . " He speculated that the team 's best chance of success would come in the one @-@ day competitions . The Daily Telegraph provided a more positive outlook , claiming that the county had " enough depth in batting and seam bowling to challenge [for the County Championship] again . " They identified spin bowling as an area of weakness following the departure of Blackwell . Bob Willis , writing in The Guardian , shared this view , and predicted that Somerset would also be hindered by the difficulty of getting 20 wickets at home , resulting in too many draws .

= = Squad = =

The following players made at least one appearance for Somerset in first @-@ class , List A or Twenty20 cricket in 2009 . Age given is at the start of Somerset 's first match of the season (15 April 2009) .

= = County Championship = =

Although Marcus Trescothick had a season which David Foot described as " imperiously assured " , Somerset failed to win enough matches to pose a real challenge in the 2009 County Championship . The flat pitch at the County Ground , Taunton did not help their efforts ; the imbalance in favour of the batsmen meant that all but one match at the ground was drawn . Sussex 's total of 742 / 5 declared was the fifteenth highest total in the history of the County Championship , while Murray Goodwin 's innings of 344 not out in that match was the sixth highest score by a batsman in the history of the competition . In total , six of Somerset 's eight home matches contained scores of 500 or over in a single innings . In contrast , 500 was reached in only one of their away matches , by Hampshire at The Rose Bowl . The home conditions helped three of Somerset 's batsmen pass 1 @, @ 000 first @-@ class runs in the season , including Craig Kieswetter and Arul Suppiah , who were both awarded their county caps after passing the landmark . Trescothick 's 1 @, @ 817 runs were the most by any batsman in the 2009 competition , finishing over 200 runs ahead of the next most prolific batsman , and he was named as both PCA Player of the Year and the PCA 's Most Valuable Player of the Year for 2009 . He was also selected as part of the team of the year , along with wicket @-@ keeper Kieswetter .

In contrast to the strong batting line @-@ up , Foot suggested that Somerset " lacked a seam bowler to compensate for Andrew Caddick 's withdrawal " . Caddick ? who made his first @-@ class debut for Somerset in 1991 ? only played five matches in 2009 , and announced his intention to retire at the end of the season . He took ten wickets in 2009 , and finished his career as Somerset 's sixth highest wicket @-@ taker of all @-@ time . This placed the majority of the wicket @-@ taking burden upon Charl Willoughby , the South African fast @-@ medium pace bowler . He responded well , and took 54 wickets in the County Championship , more than any other bowler in the first division . He was aided by seam bowlers David Stiff , who returned to the first @-@ class game for the first time since 2006 , and Alfonso Thomas . Stiff took 31 wickets , more than quadrupling his career first @-@ class wicket total , and Thomas took 35 , his highest return in an English domestic season . Somerset lacked an effective spin bowler in 2009 following the departure of Ian Blackwell the previous season , and the spinners combined only claimed 31 wickets , bowling less balls between them than Willoughby alone .

Somerset began their season by playing out a high @-@ scoring draw at home against Warwickshire , in which both teams reached 500 in their first innings . James Hildreth scored a triple @-@ century , reaching the milestone earlier in an English season than any player previously , and became the first English player to pass 300 runs in an innings for Somerset since Harold Gimblett in 1948 . In contrast , Somerset had to battle back for a draw in their second match . After Durham scored 543 in their first innings , Somerset collapsed to 69 all out in reply ; only Langer passed 20 runs , while six of his batting colleagues made ducks . After being forced to follow @-@ on , Trescothick , Langer and Kieswetter all scored centuries to secure a draw . Somerset 's third match resulted in their only loss of the County Championship season , coming against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge ; and at the end of May , they were second bottom in the first division . Their next match finished in a draw against Lancashire , a result which was always likely after the first day was lost to rain . Somerset next picked up victories against Yorkshire and Sussex before scoring the second @-@ highest ever fourth innings winning total in the County Championship to beat Yorkshire at Taunton . These three wins propelled Somerset to third in the competition at the start of July , and they did not drop below this position for the remainder of the season .

In each of their following two matches , at home against Hampshire and away to Worcestershire , Somerset batted first and then enforced the follow @-@ on after bowling their opponents out cheaply . In each their opponents managed to avoid defeat , and both matches resulted in draws . During the Worcestershire match , Langer 's first innings 107 took him past Sir Donald Bradman 's

total of 28 @, @ 067 first @-@ class runs to become the highest @-@ scoring Australian batsman . Successive draws against Nottinghamshire , Warwickshire , Sussex and Hampshire meant that Somerset travelled to Durham requiring a victory to maintain any realistic hopes of claiming the County Championship title . No play was possible on the third and fourth days , and the match resulted in another draw , leaving Somerset with only a slim mathematical chance of the title . Another draw , against Lancashire , while Durham beat Nottinghamshire , meant that Durham clinched the title . Somerset drew with Worcestershire (their ninth draw in a row in the competition) , and finished third in the first division .

= = = Season standings = = =