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Don't chuck stones

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[Quotes of the week](/quotes/0,20648,11061,00.html) (/quotes/0,20648,11061,00.html)

Sussex fast bowler James Kirtley told *Cricket AM* that being branded a 'chucker' has matured him but is a stigma that will stay with him for a while to come.

Questions were being asked of the Sussex paceman's action but he worked hard to overcome those allegations with a match winning performance in the C&G Trophy final against Lancashire last season.

"I went through a tough winter in 2005 and it was lovely to repay the Sussex faithful and produce it on one of the biggest stages in domestic cricket," he said.

"It's something I wouldn't wish anybody to go through. There were some very dark moments and a lot of hard work to go in. A lot of people helped to get me through it and then to have a day like that at the end of August last year with a day like that.

"To be labelled that (a chucker) is something that you wouldn't wish on anybody but it's something that goes with the territory now for me, sadly. I hope people can see the hard work and effort that I went through and that they can respect me for the strength and character that I've shown."

When asked by Anita if, having come through the controversy, Kirtley stuck the two proverbial fingers up at his critics, the one-time England bowler showed he has still kept his sense of humour.

"Yeah, they would probably be discussing exactly how I put the two fingers up," he replied, "I learned a lot about myself and I think I matured an awful lot over those six months."

Kirtley has continued to perform consistently this season as Sussex are aiming for another successful year.

"It's going well: nicely poised in the championship," he said, "And Twenty20 finals day to look forward to at the weekend."

And having never reached the quarter-final stage until this season, Sussex have finally cracked Twenty20 cricket.

"We have tried to be a little bit more streetwise about it and play without fear more than anything else which is what Twenty20 is all about really.

"And when you have player's playing as well as Luke Wright, it's great fun to watch as well. He's a young lad with a bright future and it's great to see someone like him come out of Twenty20 cricket."

Kirtley's forte has been his ability to bowl with control at the death and clean up the tale, not least with his deadly slower ball yorker.

"Twenty20 is tailor-made for me towards the end of the innings. The first six overs is carnage for everybody and bowling at the death is something that I pride myself in doing, but sometimes it can go awry. But if you have your good day you can be a bit of a hero.

"The margin of error is small - you can bowl a low full-toss or a half-volley into the batsman's arc and you can disappear over the boundary."

At the weekend Sussex could come up against Lancashire once again if they overcome Kent in the Twenty20 semi-final.

"We've had some really great battles over the last three or four years, but we have to concentrate on our semi-final [against Kent] first. It would be great to continue the duel that we seem to be having over the last few years."

And beyond the domestic season Kirtley could feature for England again, this time in the Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa.

"Being called up to the provisional squad was quite a big shock, especially as I wasn't even aware that they announced squads on a Thursday.

"It's great encouragement for me and lovely to see that some of the, what I would call domestic performers have come through. The likes of myself, Jeremy Snape and Darren Maddy."

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