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## Women's captains predict domestic summer

South East Stars have the best shot at upsetting Southern Vipers' dominance over the women's domestic season according to the captains of the eight teams.

The ECB has released its annual survey of the women's regional captains who have predicted what they expect to happen ahead of the opening round of the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy on Saturday.

Georgia Adams' Southern Vipers won both white-ball trophies last year, and

have won five of the seven trophies available over the past four seasons. Four of the women's domestic regional skippers expect the Vipers to add to that tally by winning the 50-over competition again this summer.

Only one captain, however, has backed them to lift the Charlotte Edwards Trophy, as the South East Stars, led by Bryony Smith, were predicted by four skippers to win the 20-over format.

Thunder, chasing their first title in the final year of the women's regional structure, earned two captains' votes to win the Charlotte Edwards Cup while across the Pennines the Northern Diamonds have been tipped as the most likely to challenge the Vipers in Rachel Heyhoe Flint Trophy.

The Thunder's teenage wicketkeeper-batter, Seren Smale, earned the most votes as the most exciting young England-qualified player.

Smale toured New Zealand with England A in the winter and was picked up in last month's The Hundred Women's Draft by Birmingham Phoenix.

The depth of young talent across England and Wales was evident in the fact 11 young guns earned votes from the captains, with Grace Scrivens (Sunrisers), Mahika Gaur (Thunder) and Ryana Macdonald-Gay (SE Stars) all also earning multiple selections.

Macdonald-Gay was also tipped to be one of the leading wicket-takers in the Charlotte Edwards Cup, with Vipers spinner Linsey Smith the best backed with four votes.

Northern Diamonds skipper Hollie Armitage received the most votes to be the leading run-scorer in the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Trophy ahead of her team's derby opener against Thunder at the Seat Unique Riverside tomorrow.

**Women's regional team captains survey – anonymous predictions for the 2024 red-ball season:**

**Which team - not including your team - do you think will win the Rachael**

### **Heyhoe Flint Trophy?**

4: Southern Vipers; 2: Northern Diamonds; 1: SE Stars 1, Sunrisers 1

### **Which team - not including your team - do you think will win the Charlotte Edwards Cup?**

4: SE Stars; 2: Thunder; 1: The Blaze, Southern Vipers.

### **Which player - not from your team - will be the leading run-scorer in the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy?**

3: Hollie Armitage (Northern Diamonds); 2: Grace Scrivens (Sunrisers); 1: Georgia Adams (Southern Vipers), Kathryn Bryce (Blaze), Lauren Winfield-Hill (Northern Diamonds)

### **Which player - not from your team - will be the leading run-scorer in the Charlotte Edwards Cup?**

2: Bryony Smith (SE Stars), Lauren Winfield-Hill (Northern Diamonds); 1: Hollie Armitage (Northern Diamonds), Freya Kemp (Southern Vipers), Danni Wyatt (Southern Vipers)

### **Which player - not from your team - will be the leading wicket-taker in the RHFT?**

2: Katie Levick (Northern Diamonds); 1: Georgia Adams (Southern Vipers), Emily Arlott (Central Sparks), Georgia Davis (Central Sparks), Ryana Macdonald-Gay (SE Stars), Fi Morris (Thunder), Amanda-Jade Wellington (Western Storm)

### **Which player - not from your team - will be the leading wicket-taker in the Charlotte Edwards Cup?**

4: Linsey Smith (Southern Vipers); 2: Ryana Macdonald-Gay (SE Stars); 1: Hannah Baker (Central Sparks), Mady Villiers (Sunrisers)

**Who is the two most exciting young England-qualified players - not from your team, and aged 23 or under - to watch out for this summer in the women's regional game?**

3: Seren Smale (Thunder); 2: Mahika Gaur (Thunder), Ryana Macdonald-Gay (SE Stars), Grace Scrivens (Sunrisers); 1: Hannah Baker (Central Sparks), Freya Kemp (Southern Vipers), Charis Pavely (Central Sparks), Davina Perrin (Central Sparks), Grace Potts (Central Sparks), Alexa Stonehouse (SE Stars), Mary Taylor (Southern Vipers)

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