



Sep 22, 2020 15:30 BST

Community heroes and professional stars to be recognised at first NatWest Cricket Awards live on Sky

- *NatWest Cricket Awards to be held live on Saturday 3 October during Vitality Blast Finals Day*
- *Awards will honour grassroots volunteers through to professional stars from the men's and women's games*

Fans tuning in to watch the Vitality Blast Finals Day on 3 October will be treated to an exclusive broadcast of the NatWest Cricket Awards live on Sky Sports Cricket for the first time ever.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA) and NatWest have come together to create the first ever NatWest Cricket Awards hosted by Sky. The event will combine the much-anticipated annual NatWest PCA Awards and NatWest Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards (OSCAs) into one exciting show, with awards interspersed amongst the Finals Day coverage.

Cricket's biggest stars and club cricket heroes alike will be given the same platform as we celebrate their achievements in an extraordinary year that saw the game rally together to deliver a compelling season of international, domestic and recreational cricket against the odds. The Awards will reflect on the year's highlights and challenges overcome, celebrate achievements on and off the field, and honour the cricket volunteers who have supported their communities during the most trying of circumstances.

The PCA Awards traditionally brings the curtain down on the professional season in the biggest awards ceremony in English and Welsh cricket. It's where hundreds of current and former players are joined by key members of the industry to champion the best performing individuals of the summer while reflecting on those who have given so much to the game.

This year, with the virtual event forming part of the NatWest Cricket Awards on Sky Sports, ten awards will be presented to professional players in England and Wales. Covering the full professional game, players will be honoured across international, domestic, men's and women's cricket. The three headline awards will be voted for by current professional cricketers: the NatWest PCA Men's Player of the Year, the Vitality PCA Young Player of the Year and the NatWest PCA Women's Player of the Year.

Last year saw Ben Stokes take home the Reg Hayter Cup in the men's category at the 50th PCA Awards ceremony, while Sophie Ecclestone was named the standout performer in the women's game and Tom Banton won Young Player of the Year.

There are also three ECB community awards taking place - #Raisethebat; Connecting Communities; and Proactive Leadership – in which volunteers will be recognised for the significant contribution they have made to cricket across England and Wales over the past year.

The nominees include inspirational volunteers like Kanan Thiyagarajah who

used his club, Barking CC, as a hub to collect for local food banks and Miles Horner from Macclesfield CC who started his own podcast to keep club members entertained during lockdown and to extend the club's reach in the community. Others, like Jane Reeson, not only worked hard to get cricket safely back up and running in their communities but also volunteered throughout the pandemic to support the vulnerable.

Martyn Wilson, Head of Sponsorship at NatWest Group, commented:

“At NatWest, we support cricket communities from the ground up. That's why we're delighted that the NatWest Cricket Awards will bring together two of our key end of season events into one special moment to celebrate those involved at every level – from the international stars to our grassroot heroes - who have all kept the game alive during this extraordinary summer. This year we've been united in adapting to get games back on safely and clubs up and running, and the new awards will allow us to celebrate the entire cricket community.”

Daryl Mitchell, Chairman of the PCA, said:

“In a year when it looked as though we may not see any international or domestic cricket take place at all, it's fantastic that we are still able to celebrate the on-field achievements of PCA members during this most unique of summers.

“It is a testament to the hard work of - and sacrifices made by - the teams at the PCA, ECB, NatWest and Vitality that we have been able to come together to put on the NatWest Cricket Awards ceremony.

“I wish the very best of luck to those PCA members vying for each award category, and hope that you enjoy the show when it airs alongside Vitality Blast Finals Day on 3 October.”

Nick Pryde, ECB Director of Participation & Growth, said:

“Cricket wouldn't be cricket without the amazing work of volunteers up and down the country. That has never been truer than in 2020 when we saw club volunteers come together to support their communities during lockdown and to help ensure the safe return of cricket. Their passion and drive to inspire

the next generation of players are qualities that we at the ECB are so proud to honour via the NatWest Cricket Awards. It's exciting that for the first time ever we can give them a platform alongside the professional stars live on Sky Sports, thanks to the help of our brilliant broadcast partner."

ENDS

Notes to Editor:

About NatWest's partnership with cricket:

NatWest has been involved in cricket for 39 years, supporting cricket communities from the ground up. Its sponsorship starts with community club cricket and extends to the pinnacle of the game, as the principal partner of England Cricket men's, women's, age-groups, disability and VI teams.

NatWest CricketForce is an annual event that has helped thousands of clubs to upgrade their facilities and is the United Kingdom's largest annual sport-volunteering programme. This year, NatWest adapted its programme to create a digital, six-week programme throughout July and August to help grassroots clubs get up and running – including free online financial advice and toolkits as well as providing clubs with PPE equipment.

Over 3200 clubs signed up for NatWest CricketForce this year, beating 2019's record of 2200. Just under 3000 PPE kits have been sent to clubs and over 1300 club members have engaged with NatWest's Club cricket financial guide, a financial toolkit to help clubs navigate through the difficult financial environment post-lockdown.

NatWest is also the main charity partner of Chance to Shine, which uses cricket to engage with children and young adults, aiding education, social cohesion and wellbeing.

To find out more about NatWest's involvement in cricket at all levels of the game, head to: natwest.com/cricket

Full list of awards to be given out at the NatWest Cricket Awards:

- NatWest PCA Men's Player of the Year
 - NatWest PCA Women's Player of the Year
 - Vitality PCA Young Player of the Year
 - Test Player of the Summer
 - Royal London ODI Player of the Summer
 - Vitality IT20 Player of the Summer
 - Greene King Team of the Year
 - Bob Willis Trophy Player of the Year
 - Vitality Blast Player of the Year
 - Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy Player of the Year
 - ECB Special Award
 - #Raisethebat Award
 - Connecting Communities Award
 - Proactive Leadership Award
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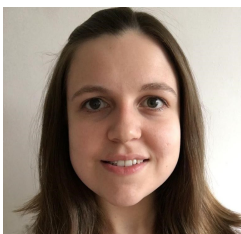
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