



Joe Root plays street cricket with Hassan in Sheffield

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Cricket, anywhere: England stars join children to celebrate street, beach and backyard cricket

ECB 'My Way To Play' campaign champions informal cricket and inspires the next generation to play anywhere, anytime.

- Joe Root, Lauren Bell and Mark Wood were invited to test their grassroots cricket skills by the next generation of young players.
- The challenge came as part of ECB campaign to get children playing anywhere, however they can, from the street to the

beach, encouraging children to pick up a bat and ball in any way that suits them.

- The ECB has signed up to London Sport's More Ball Games campaign to lobby policymakers to take urgent action to remove outdated and restrictive 'No Ball Games', which restrict play for over 560,000 young people.

They are used to playing at the world's biggest and most famous stadia, but England superstars Joe Root, Lauren Bell and Mark Wood have taken up the challenge from three cricket-mad youngsters to play cricket a very different way.

Taking England's finest out of their comfort zone of playing on well-manicured cricket wickets, Ravi (12), Taylor (10) and Hassan (9) challenged Mark, Lauren and Joe to games of visually impaired cricket, beach cricket and street cricket respectively as part of an ECB campaign challenging perceptions of what cricket is and where it can be played.

With different rules, different skills and different locations, the international stars were put to the test to see if their skills could stack up in the ultimate games of back-to-basics cricket with just a bat, a ball, some stumps and some friends.

You can see how they got on [here](#).

The 16x9 video is available to be downloaded [here](#).

The social edits in 9x16 and 1x1 are available to be downloaded [here](#).

England Men's player Joe Root said, "We used to put sticks in the ground in the grate in our driveway and that would be our stumps. It was giving us the basics of the game and you can do that wherever you want, which is great."

After playing in the street with Hassan, he added, "Just seeing that raw enthusiasm when they crack one out of the middle or bowl someone is exactly what this is all about and brings back a lot of cool memories for me."

England Women's fast bowler Lauren Bell visited Taylor for a game of beach cricket in Sussex, "It was great to have a game on the beach with Taylor and

her friends. It was back-to-basics cricket and filled with fun, energy and laughter. It reminded me of how I started, with my friends and family, and just a bat and a ball. I hope that, for Taylor and her friends, cricket can be a sport which they love throughout life and continue to enjoy, whether that is playing or watching.”

After spending a day with Ravi in a sports hall in Newcastle, as part of Lord’s Taverners Super 1s programme, England Men’s fast bowler Mark Wood said, “I’m blown away by Ravi if I’m honest. He’s a visually impaired lad and they gave me some goggles so I could understand what it is like for Ravi. His skillset is amazing, I cannot believe how easy he makes it look and how much fun he’s having. His enthusiasm for the game is infectious and it’s lovely to see him being able to do something he really enjoys.”

Alongside the ‘My Way to Play’ campaign, the ECB has signed up to and is supporting London Sport’s More Ball Games campaign, which aims to lobby policymakers to take urgent action to remove outdated and restrictive ‘No Ball Games’ signs that stifle play, physical activity, and community connection across London and England.

This will ensure that children and young people—regardless of their background, household income or postcode—have access to free spaces where they can play, move, and be active close to home. Over 7,000 signs in London restrict play for over 560,000 young people. Every sign removed helps around 80 children be more active.

The [Play section of the ECB site](#) contains support and materials for anyone who wants to get into cricket, or return to the sport, with information on clubs and community projects close to your home, materials for schools, or simply ideas on how you can play in the back garden or street.

Chief Executive Officer of the ECB, Richard Gould, said; “It is wonderful to see the next generation of cricketers challenging the current England players and showing them how it is done in the playground, or on the beach. Cricket doesn’t start with whites and wickets. It starts with chalk on a wall, sticks in the mud, or stumps made from a backpack. And that version of cricket—free, joyful and improvised—is every bit as powerful as the one played in packed stadiums.

“The ECB has an important role to play in throwing its arms around all

cricket, wherever and however it is played, and we are committed to creating more opportunities for children to play.

“I look forward to seeing where cricket can take Ravi, Taylor and Hassan in future and hope their example encourages other kids to give the sport a go, as this year will be another big one for grassroots cricket.”

Emily Robinson, CEO, London Sport, said: “Cricket doesn’t always need a pavilion or a pitch; it needs space, imagination, and the freedom to play. That’s why we’re proud to have the ECB join our More Ball Games campaign, calling for the removal of outdated ‘No Ball Games’ signs that unfairly restrict over half a million young people across London.

“We want every child - no matter their postcode or background - to have access to safe, free spaces where they can be active, connect with their community, and fall in love with sport on their own terms. The My Way To Play campaign perfectly captures the spirit of informal, joyful, and accessible play. Together with the ECB, we’re championing a future where every street, park and estate can be a gateway to a lifelong love of physical activity.”

Hear from the children featured in the My Way To Play video

Hassan, 9, plays cricket through Chance to Shine’s schools programme, as well as regularly playing outside his grandparents’ house in Sheffield. He challenged Joe Root to a game of street cricket near his school and said, “Hi I’m Hassan and I’m 9 years old. I love street cricket! All we need is a bit of pavement, a wheelie bin and a bat and ball. We make the rest up as we go along. You should play cricket too because you might hit it for six or bowl someone out! My favourite players are Joe Root for England and Mohammed Ali for Pakistan.”

Taylor, 10, a Dynamos participant at West Wittering CC said, “I play cricket at my local club and on the beach. I like playing cricket on the beach because you can just be free, not worry about the rules and, most importantly, have fun. After a long day, it’s always nice to catch up with your friends and play some cricket, especially on a sunny day. Sliding on the sand or splashing for a celebration—beach cricket is always fun. Come and play.”

Ravi, a cricket superfan who plays Visually Impaired cricket through the

Lord's Taverners Super 1s programme in a sports hall in Newcastle said, "I really enjoy playing and watching and I love playing at Super 1s because you get to play cricket with other people. It's not just playing the odd game with dad or grandad, its playing games against other young people of a similar age.

"Just because you've got a disability does not stop you from playing cricket at all. I want anyone who is visually impaired to think 'I love cricket and I can do it exactly the same' – it does not stop you from doing anything."

"The radio commentary is great for me because they describe everything that happens and I love guessing how many runs they scored based on the noise from the bat. When I play there is no better feeling when I crisply hit the ball or when I take a catch or run someone out. I tell my dad I'm going to skittle him and I love the sound when the stumps come crashing down!"

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Notes to editors

Please feel free to download and embed the videos in any online media.

The 16x9 video is available to be downloaded [here](#).

The social edits in 9x16 and 1x1 are available to be downloaded [here](#).

About the ECB

- Ahead of the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup and the 2030 ICC Men's T20 World Cup, more investment than ever will go into grassroots cricket to maximise their impact to inspire the next generation. In 2024, over 1.1 million children were supported to play cricket by ECB and partner programmes, and 2025 is now on track to surpass this.
- The ECB's flagship national programmes, All Stars and Dynamos Cricket, have seen record sign-ups for the first window of

delivery this summer, with 90,000 children signing up to take part. This is supported by the ECB's new partnership with Toyota, which has added an extra 4,000 free All Stars 'bursary' places for children this year; while Sky continue to partner the Dynamos programme and fund free bursary places also.

- The ECB already invests £4million each year to support the free delivery of cricket in schools via Chance to Shine and Lord's Taverners, reaching 600,000 children, and working with every Recreational Cricket Board across England and Wales.
- Lord's Taverners SEND and ALN schools programme has provided cricket opportunities to 24,279 young people with additional needs participants in the school year of 2023/24 and 20,685 young people in the school year of 2024/25 so far.
- Lord's Taverners Super 1s programme provided cricket opportunities to 1791 young people with additional needs in 2023/24 and 1653 as of April 2025, for the 2024/25 year.
- The ECB recognises the importance of cricket in state schools, and, as part of the ECB's State School Action Plan which launched in November, the ECB is launching a major programme for secondary schools, Cricket for Teachers, and through this will train hundreds of PE teachers to deliver cricket and provide equipment for them to do so, free of charge.

Grassroots participation in 2025 by numbers

- 34,864 fixtures have been played at this point in the season vs a last-3-year average of 22,685 (up 53%).
 - Good weather means 93% of all fixtures scheduled have been played. By comparison an average of 78% of scheduled fixtures were played at the same point in the last 3 seasons.
 - However, there is non-weather-related growth too - there have been 15% more fixtures scheduled, and types of teams (Girls, Junior, Women & Senior/Open) have scheduled and played more than their average in the last 3 seasons.
 - As of April, 14,808 teams had played - this is 74% higher than the same point in the previous season (8,529 teams in 2024).
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