



May 14, 2024 13:35 BST

Cricket interest soars in record year for the game

As the game gathers in Cardiff today for the England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) Annual General Meeting, new data shows that the number of people playing, attending or following cricket surged by 2m last year as nailbiting Men's and Women's Ashes series captured the nation's imagination.

Bumper ticket sales and viewing for both series saw the total jump to 14.7m – up from 12.5m the previous year, as cricket in England and Wales recorded a strong year of growth.

Record-breaking financial results have enabled more money than ever before to be invested into support for the cricket network, growing the game and work to make cricket a more inclusive sport.

Notable results from 2023 being discussed at today's meeting include:

- The record 122,000 attending the Women's Ashes – a 139% increase on those watching England Women the previous year – and highest ever attendances for The Hundred saw the total attending matches hit 3.1m, the highest outside a World Cup hosting year.
- 10.8m watched cricket at least twice on TV - up from 9m the previous year – helped by Men's Ashes average viewing being 38% higher than any previous series on Sky.
- The continuing growth of women's and girls' cricket at a recreational level saw a 22% increase in the number of women's and girls' teams, while the number of junior teams generally was also up by 21%.
- The ECB's turnover hit a record £336m, up from £334m the previous year, with profit reaching £27.9m, up from £21.1m the year before. This enabled additional investment into both the professional and recreational games, work to make cricket more inclusive and address the challenges identified by the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC), and building the ECB reserves.

Richard Thompson, ECB Chair, said:

“Ashes years are always special, and it's great to see the impact that hosting the two series side-by-side had in capturing the nation's imagination, and inspiring more interest in our sport.

“Over the past year we've seen further rapid growth in women's and girls' cricket, with soaring attendances for England Women and increasing numbers of teams at a recreational level, and we are focused on taking this to the next level this year. Tickets for England Women's fixtures this summer have been selling even faster than for the Ashes, the number of professional women's players continues to grow, and with Metro Bank we're working to triple the number of girls' teams by 2026 when we host the ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

“Continuing this growth remains a key part of our strategy to make cricket the most inclusive team sport, along with increasing opportunities for children from state schools and ethnically diverse communities, and tackling discrimination. This requires strong finances and the record year we have just seen means that despite the challenges cricket – like other sports and businesses – has faced from the rising cost of living, we have been able to invest more in the professional and recreational games, support work to break down barriers, and build up our reserves to protect the sport against future shocks. I am delighted that the Government is also supporting our ambition to become the most inclusive sport with its recent pledge of £35million for grassroots facilities and increased cricket in state schools.

“While there is much to celebrate in our sport, there remain real challenges ahead with the global cricketing landscape continuing to change rapidly. We will continue to work collaboratively with our Members and partners across cricket to make decisions in the interests of the whole game.”

The ECB’s financial statements for the year ending January 31, 2024, have been published today and are available [here](#).



Contacts



Jonathan Reed

Press Contact

Head of Media & Publications

media@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0) 7525 596 621



Chris Tuttlebee

Press Contact

Corporate Communications Lead

chris.tuttlebee@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0)7824 551713