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Cricket Stars Team Up with Dr Ranj to Help Kids Get Outdoors and Active Again

- England cricketers Chris Woakes and Sophie Ecclestone, who are also set to play in The Hundred this summer, have written a letter to more than 150,000 kids and their parents around the country about the positive role cricket can play in their lives
- The two international players visited their old primary schools to read the letters to pupils
- Exacerbated by the pandemic, a recent survey has revealed that activity levels have fallen for Years 1-2 (ages 5-7) and Years 3-6 (ages 7-11) over the past year^[1]
- As a way to get kids back outside and active again, the England

and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Dynamos Cricket and All Stars Cricket programmes offer the perfect solution for parents

England cricketers Chris Woakes and Sophie Ecclestone have penned heartfelt letters to more than 150,000 kids across the country in a rallying cry to get back outside and active as the country begins to open up again.

The duo hope to inspire kids to get active again after lockdown – and surprised pupils at their old schools by reading out the letters which explained what inspired them to get into cricket.

In the letters, sent to all schools that deliver Chance to Shine, men's World Cup Winner Woakes and Ecclestone, the number one IT20 bowler in the world, who will also play in the first season of The Hundred this summer, detail their own experiences of playing when younger, and the benefits it brought them – from physical health to having fun with their friends.

As the nation comes out of a third lockdown, the impact on children's activity levels has been profound. Research shows that nearly a third of children and young people (2.3m) are doing less than an average of 30 minutes a day – with activity levels lowest for school Years 3-4 (ages 7-9).[\[2\]](#) This is despite the government recommending that children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 should do 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity each day[\[3\]](#).

Findings have further shown that organised sport and activity have huge benefits for kids. From the development and improvement of cognitive skills[\[4\]](#) and the positive effects on attitudes and academic behaviour[\[5\]](#) to improving mental health,[\[6\]](#) self-esteem and leadership skills,[\[7\]](#) the benefits are broad – and a generation has missed out on these benefits for over a year. Cricket in particular is a great way to get kids active and offers much more than just physical benefits: giving kids more freedom and independence in a safe space, promoting togetherness and socialising as part of a team, better wellbeing and a break from the pressures of life.

To help parents get their children more active, the ECB has launched Dynamos Cricket, a new programme for 8-11 girls and boys of all abilities. Designed with kids' needs in mind, Dynamos Cricket will see participants get active, have fun and make new friends while developing their cricketing skills and playing a fast-paced, exciting game of countdown cricket – a new format

that mirrors The Hundred competition launching this summer.

To support this, the ECB has unveiled a video of the players reading the letters to the pupils at their old schools, in which they acknowledge the difficulties that children have had in getting outdoors with friends over the past year of lockdowns and encourage them to give cricket a go.

Woakes described just how difficult the year has been for him and his own two young daughters who he can't wait to try playing cricket with in the future. Ecclestone discussed the impact that the limitations of the past year have had on her, and had the kids laughing when she revealed she'd once bowled their headteacher out first ball. She also discussed the challenges she faced as a young girl looking to get into sport and how she believes there have been huge changes since to help inspire more girls to take up cricket.

For parents and carers who want to give their children an opportunity to take advantage of these benefits and experience a summer of fun with friends, the ECB's new Dynamos Cricket programme debuts on 7 May across the country with further programmes due to take place across the summer holidays. Parents can find out more about Dynamos Cricket and register their children to take part at dynamoscricicket.co.uk.

Chris Woakes, Birmingham Phoenix and England Cricketer: *"It has been such a tough year for kids all over the country, and we have to do all that we can do help them. They've been separated from their friends and they haven't had the opportunity to get outside and live active lives as they normally would. This has to change. I have personally benefitted hugely from exercise and cricket over the years, and I just want kids to be able to have that opportunity too. We all stand to lose out if they are denied it. As a kid, I'd have loved to have something like Dynamos and after the year we've had I hope it will offer lots of fun for kids and parents alike this summer."*

Sophie Ecclestone, Manchester Originals and England Cricketer: *"While I was growing up, playing cricket and getting outside were a constant source of fun and relaxation for me, and have continued to play a crucial role in my life. I'd hate to have had that taken away for one week, let alone a whole year, so I can only imagine what kids have been going through. I loved revisiting my old school to talk to the kids about it all – especially the girls – and chat about the positive impact sport can have on their mental and physical health, because it is such an important message. It is why getting kids back outside and active is so*

important.”

Dr Ranj Singh: *“The physical benefits of fitness and getting outside are well known. However, their role in reducing stress and anxiety, developing social skills and, crucially, given the events of the last year, bringing people together to reduce isolation and loneliness are more important than ever. Cricket is such a great way to get outside for a prolonged period of time with friends and is the perfect antidote to the lockdowns kids have been impacted by over the last year.”*

Alongside Dynamos Cricket, the ECB’s All Stars Cricket entry level programme for 5-8-year-olds is also open for registration for this summer with activity taking place across England and Wales in May and July.

Families also have The Hundred to look forward to this summer - a brand new sporting event, fusing fast-paced 100-ball cricket with blockbuster entertainment. Featuring eight men's and eight women's teams, from seven cities across England and Wales, it aims to open up the game to more families and young people. Kids that sign up for Dynamos will receive priority access tickets for their family, as well as receiving a whole host of free gifts and money-can't-buy experiences associated with the competition and its partners.

Parents can find out more about Dynamos Cricket and register their children to take part at dynamoscricicket.co.uk. They can also sign up their younger kids up to All Stars Cricket at www.allstarscricket.co.uk

For more information about The Hundred and ticket access visit www.thehundred.com

Ends

A video about the visits can be downloaded [here](#)

About Dynamos Cricket

Kids that sign up for Dynamos will receive priority access tickets for their family for The Hundred, as well as receiving a whole host of free gifts and

money-can't-buy experiences associated with the competition and its partners.

The programme is complemented by the free Dynamos Cricket app which contains loads of exclusive content. Kids will be able to learn new skills, take part in interactive quizzes and unlock videos and challenges from key players from The Hundred.

[1] Sport England Active Lives Survey 2019/20

[2] Sport England Active Lives Survey 2019/20

[3] [https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/children/index.htm#:~:text=Children%20and%20adolescents%20ages%206,doing%20push%2Dups\)%20%E2%80%93%203](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/children/index.htm#:~:text=Children%20and%20adolescents%20ages%206,doing%20push%2Dups)%20%E2%80%93%203)

[4] Piche, 2014

[5] GAO, 2012

[6] Women's Sports Foundation, 2004

[7] GAO, 2012

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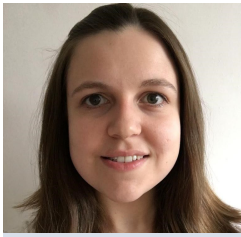
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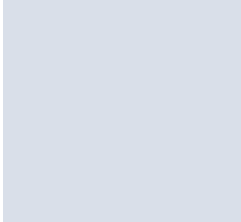
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