



England Women cricketers and Jason Roy at a Metro Bank event. Photo: Getty Images

Sep 06, 2023 10:03 BST

ECB & Metro Bank pledge to treble number of girls' cricket teams by 2026

The England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Metro Bank have pledged to treble the number of girls' cricket teams in England and Wales.

The two organisations will work together with the aim of transforming access to grassroots cricket by recruiting 6,000 volunteers to grow girls' cricket so there are 2,000 clubs with a girls' section and 6,000 girls' teams by 2026.

The announcement follows the record-breaking Metro Bank Women's Ashes –

which saw a record 110,000 people watching England Women's cricket team – and continues the momentum generated in women's cricket, which recently saw the news that England Women's match fees would be increased to bring them in line with England Men's.

With joint funding, Metro Bank, which is the ECB's Champion of Women's and Girls' Cricket partner, and the ECB – along with the wider cricket network - will play a significant role in supporting cricket's ambition to be the UK's most inclusive team sport.

In advance of the 2024 season, we'll be using insights and data from across the game to maximise the reach of the funding, listening to female players, coaches, volunteers and Women's and Girls' Cricket Development Officers.

“We do not underestimate the task ahead of us,” explains Danielle Lee, director of brand and marketing at Metro Bank. “As Champion of Women's and Girls' cricket, we will work closely with the ECB and Women's & Girls' Cricket Development Officers to use the fund to invest in coaches and volunteers to help inspire more girls to play cricket. Our vision is seeing confident women and girls in thriving cricket communities, empowered to reach their full potential in sport and beyond.

“We have identified that to help the women's and girls' game grow, there needs to be more coaching support; especially as this is one of the key barriers for clubs starting a girls' section. By 2026, we are aiming to recruit, train, support and celebrate up to six thousand coaches and volunteers focussed solely on the women's and girls' game.”

Coaches and volunteers play a critical role in creating welcoming spaces and actively encouraging more girls into the sport. Each coach makes a personal impact on the lives of at least fifteen girls; and girls need to see more women in cricket to believe they too can take the sport up.

Clare Connor, ECB deputy chief executive, said: “The unprecedented success of the Metro Bank Women's Ashes this summer, both in terms of the England teams' performance and ticket sales, showed us all what is possible. The investment we are announcing today alongside our fantastic new partners, Metro Bank, is another commitment to accelerate the rate at which the sport is able to grow at the grassroots level. It will provide greater access and more opportunities for young girls to experience cricket, to feel included and

valued in cricket, and perhaps one day to follow in the footsteps of this summer's Ashes heroes.”

The Metro Bank One Day Internationals (ODIs), for both women and men will start on September 8. The ODIs are looking to mirror the success of the recent Women's Ashes which saw a record 110k attendance - 4.5 times higher than the 2019 Ashes series, broadcast to 5.3m – more than double the viewers in 2019, as well as being the first England Women's ODI series to sell out.

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Contacts



Hen Cowen

Press Contact

Senior Communications Manager (they/them)

hen.cowen@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0)7585 987 302