



May 31, 2018 14:00 BST

ECB and Sky to partner on Participation Test

ECB have partnered with Sky to make the second Test of the NatWest Test Series #NoBoundaries at Emerald Headingley this week *The Participation Test*. Each day throughout the Test, Sky will focus on key initiatives undertaken by the ECB to ensure grassroots participation remains as diverse and inclusive as possible.

Day one will focus on the All Stars Cricket programme and the work done across the country to help cricket clubs continue to be open and inclusive thanks to initiatives such as Women's Soft Ball Cricket Festivals and NatWest

CricketForce. This year the ECB Small Grants Scheme has been aligned to these national programmes meaning that club funding has gone into projects that create a family friendly environment.

Now in its second year, All Stars Cricket is giving over 55,000 kids aged 5-8 in over 2,000 clubs a great first experience of the game – an increase of 18,000 on 2017.

The second day will concentrate on the new South Asian Action Plan and its aim to better engage with South Asian communities at every level of the game. Three weeks on from the launch, ECB Non-Executive Board Director Lord Kamlesh Patel will talk about the progress already being made on the 11-point action plan.

Sunday will highlight the cricket charity Chance to Shine and their work delivering cricket into schools and urban areas – along with their partnership with NatWest. New Chief Executive Laura Cordingley will give her first interview after joining the charity in April alongside Chance to Shine ambassador James Taylor.

Disability Cricket will be front and centre on day four. Sky will review how Ian Salisbury's Physical Disability (PD) side are preparing for their Vitality IT20 Tri-Series against Bangladesh and Pakistan later this summer and look further ahead to the 2019 PD World Championship – due to be held in England. Ian Ward and Nasser Hussain will also try Visually Impaired (VI) cricket in a special Sky Masterclass with VI Head Coach Ross Hunter with two members of the VI squad, Pete Blueitt and Ed Hossell, on hand to offer advice.

The Test will wrap up by looking forward to the 2019 ICC World Cup with ICC Cricket World Cup Managing Director Steve Elworthy while examining the impact England's ICC Women's World Cup victory has had in inspiring more women and girls to play and follow the game.

Talking about The Participation Test, ECB Director of Participation and Growth **Matt Dwyer** said:

“Working with Sky during The Participation Test gives us a fantastic opportunity to shine a light on the multitude of ways people can get involved

in our sport – at every level.

“We want to inspire more people, no matter their background, gender or faith to pick up a bat and ball and have the opportunity to play and enjoy the game. We will also continue to support clubs to grow their player and volunteer base while recommending junior and senior formats to give players the games that they want.”

Sky Head of Cricket **Bryan Henderson** added:

“We are really excited to be working with the ECB to support some amazing activities. Whether it’s focusing on All Stars Cricket, South Asian Communities, Chance to Shine or disability cricket we want to highlight every opportunity to play the game.”

Visit ecb.co.uk/play to find all the information you need to get involved.

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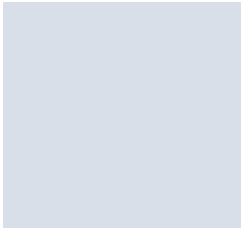


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