



RACHAEL HEYHOE FLINT TROPHY

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ECB announce Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy

- Special-edition women's domestic tournament to be named after pioneering World-Cup winning captain Rachael Heyhoe Flint
- The month-long tournament will begin on the August Bank Holiday weekend
- Two group winners to meet in final on Saturday 26 September
- The 50-over tournament ensures competitive domestic women's cricket will be played this summer
- Full schedule to be released alongside Vitality Blast fixtures on Wednesday

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has confirmed that this summer's women's domestic 50-over competition will be named the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy in honour of England's pioneering World Cup-winning captain.

The special-edition competition has been created for this summer only to ensure women's domestic cricket is played despite the challenges of COVID-19 and underlines the ECB's commitment to professionalise the domestic game for women.

The competition will begin on the August Bank Holiday weekend and will feature the eight teams from the new elite domestic structure playing in two regionalised groups of four.

Each team will play six group-stage matches with the top team in each group to progress to a final to be staged on Saturday, 26 September. The final will be hosted by the finalist with the most points at the end of the group stage.

The full schedule for the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy will be released alongside the Vitality Blast fixtures on Wednesday morning.

ECB Managing Director of Women's Cricket, Clare Connor, said:

"I'm delighted that, despite the obvious challenges of COVID-19, we have been able to continue to build the new women's elite domestic structure to the point that we'll see the eight regions playing 50-over cricket this summer.

"Off the back of appointing the eight Regional Directors of Women's Cricket and awarding Regional Retainers, we have worked closely with colleagues across the men's domestic game to ensure we are able to stage domestic women's cricket safely and at high-quality venues.

"Rachael Heyhoe Flint would have been proud to witness the professionalisation of the domestic women's game. She did so much for our sport and without her work, passion and dedication, we wouldn't be where we are today.

"It's therefore fitting that this special edition of the competition will be played in her honour. I'd personally like to extend my thanks to Rachael's son, Ben, with whom we collaborated on the logo for the competition."

South East Stars bowler Tash Farrant said:

“I’m so glad we’ll be playing domestic cricket this summer. I know in the wake of COVID-19 it’s taken a lot of work to get to this point and it’s really important that we’ve got here.

“Playing regular and competitive regional cricket will be vital for the women’s domestic game, and it’s good that even in the current climate we’ve seen an emphasis placed on getting it across the line.

“I can’t wait to play, and I’m sure it’s the same for every player. To be competing this year for the Rachael Heyhoe Flint trophy, given everything she has done for women’s cricket, is particularly special and hopefully the trophy will head the way of South East Stars.”

Baroness Rachael Heyhoe Flint OBE was a trailblazer for women's sport captaining England to the first-ever Cricket World Cup title in 1973 while off the field her tireless determination for equality laid the foundations for the opportunities presented to modern-day players.

Heyhoe Flint played 22 Tests and 23 one-day internationals during a 19-year England career and is a member of the ICC Hall of Fame. The Women’s Cricketer of the Year award was created and named after Heyhoe Flint in 2017 as a tribute to her following her death, aged 77, that year.

Rachael Heyhoe Flint's son, Ben, said: "Mum has provided our family with so many reasons to be proud and we are grateful that her determination to give women's cricket the platform it deserves continues to be recognised.

"We are honoured that this competition has been named after her, but I know mum would only have cared that female cricketers had yet another opportunity to play the game they love in difficult times, which is something she was very used to."

Editor's Notes

Who’s playing in the Rachael Heyhoe Flint trophy?

The eight newly-formed regions of the women's elite domestic structure.

Those regions are formed of First-Class Counties and National Counties – and Loughborough University - who work together at the elite end of the women's domestic game to support a squad of professional and semi-professional players, as well as an academy.

The eight regions are:

Central Sparks (Warwickshire CCC & Worcestershire CCC, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire)

Lightning (Loughborough University, Derbyshire CCC, Leicestershire CCC, Nottinghamshire CCC, Lincolnshire)

Northern Diamonds (Yorkshire CCC, Durham CCC, Northumberland)

Thunder (Lancashire CCC, Cheshire, Cumbria)

South East Stars (Surrey CCC, Kent CCC)

Southern Vipers (Hampshire Cricket Ltd, Sussex CCC, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire)

Sunrisers (Middlesex CCC, Essex CCC, Northamptonshire CCC, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk, Suffolk)

Western Storm (Glamorgan CCC, Gloucestershire CCC, Somerset CCC, Cricket Wales, Cornwall, Devon, Wiltshire)

Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy groups

North: Central Sparks, Lightning, Northern Diamonds, Thunder

South: South East Stars, Southern Vipers, Sunrisers, Western Storm

Will The Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy be played every year?

This summer (2020) was always set to be the first summer of fixtures in the new women's elite domestic structure.

COVID-19 has impacted some of the logistics of this year's competition, the regionalised approach of the Rachael Heyhoe Flint trophy – for example – is a specific reaction to the landscape of COVID-19.

So while the eight regions will be participating in both 50-over and 20-over cricket every summer from now on the tournament structure and tournament names are yet to be confirmed.

Which players will take part in the Rachel Heyhoe Flint Trophy?

Each region will have a squad of 15 players.

Some of those players are already known, as each region has announced their intake of Regional Retainer players – an important step towards the professionalisation of the domestic women's game – and each region will soon confirm their full 15-strong squad.

The availability of England Women's Centrally Contracted players will be known once the international schedule has been confirmed.

All players who take part in the competition will be paid to play, with the exception of Centrally Contracted players.

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