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ECB Announces Delay To Professional Cricket Season

The ECB Board has today agreed that no professional cricket will be played in England and Wales until at least May 28 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- Work has begun on possible revised schedules to begin in June, July or August.
- The ECB has worked closely with the counties, PCA and MCC

- with the wellbeing of the cricket family the number one priority.
A revised schedule would prioritise delivering as much international and domestic cricket as possible

The Board approved the recommendation to delay the start of the season following discussions with the First Class Counties, the MCC and the PCA.

It was agreed that, given the current information available, a seven-week delay to the start of the season is the most appropriate approach.

The ECB has begun modelling a range of options to start the season in June, July or August – with an immediate focus on options for cricket in June, including the three-Test series against West Indies, the Vitality Blast and England Women’s schedule against India.

Close liaison with the Government will continue, with discussions on the potential of starting the season behind closed doors and giving sports fans the opportunity to live broadcast action.

The potential for reduced versions of competitions, should the season become further truncated, will also be discussed.

The Board will meet as needed to review the position and make further decisions as the UK situation unfolds.

ECB Chief Executive Officer, Tom Harrison, said: “During this period of deep uncertainty it is the ECB’s first priority to protect the wellbeing of everyone within the cricket family, from players, to fans and colleagues across the game.

“The decision to delay the start of the season has been essential, given the circumstances the nation faces. I am reassured by the collaborative effort from across the game that together, we will make the very best of whatever length of season we are able to safely schedule in the coming months.

“With the information available to us at the moment a delay to the start of the professional cricket season until May 28 was unavoidable. This also allows us time to keep pace with a fast-moving situation and continue to plan for how a revised season might look. Critically, we can also remain as

flexible and adaptable as possible, within the obvious restrictions we face.

“Securing the future of the game will be a primary focus as we plot a revised schedule with an emphasis on the most financially important forms of the game for the counties across international and domestic cricket.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

In modelling the alternative scenarios, the ECB is focusing on:

1. Public safety, health and wellbeing of players, operational staff and cricket fans;
2. The most financially important forms of cricket for our First-Class Counties: International cricket, the Vitality Blast and The Hundred, to help ensure the future of 18 First-Class Counties;
3. Working closely with our broadcast partners to provide as much live cricket as possible to cricket fans; and
4. Supporting the women’s game to continue its growth journey.

The broader game

1. As the situation unfolds, consultation will be ongoing between the ECB, FCCs, MCC and PCA to understand the changing concerns and needs of the professional game’s chief stakeholders.
2. In the coming days, we will provide further plans around our support for the wider game and our communities.

The April/May Schedule

1. The English professional domestic cricket season was scheduled to get under way on March 24 with the traditional Champion County match between holders Essex and MCC in Galle, Sri

- Lanka.
2. The MCCU matches were due to commence in the first week of April while the Specsavers County Championship would have started on Sunday April 12.
 3. In total there were seven rounds of County Championship action scheduled up to May 27.
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