



We raise our bats to all Key Workers

England Cricket would like to say thank you to all Key Workers. Use **#raisethebat** to recognise your local heroes.



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ECB announces #raisethebat Test Series with players wearing key workers' names on shirts

- Upcoming Test series against West Indies named **#raisethebat Test Series** in honour of key workers
- Players to wear key workers' names on training shirts

The England Men's Test series against the West Indies will honour heroic cricketing key workers and be named the **#raisethebat Test Series**, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced today.

Marking the return of international cricket, the three-Test series taking place behind closed doors will honour and celebrate heroes within the cricket family, many of whom have been playing the innings of their lives to support those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On day one of the first Test (Wednesday 8 July), the England Men's players will pay tribute to cricket's heroes by wearing the names of key workers on their training shirts before the start of the match – shining a light on their bravery and sacrifice as fans watch live from home.

The people named on the shirts have all been nominated by their local cricket clubs and include teachers, doctors, nurses, carers, social workers and other vital professions. Their stories will be amplified across the ECB's digital platforms.

The shirts will feature the names of people like Dr Vikas Kumar, a Specialist in Anaesthetics and Critical Care at Darlington Memorial Hospital, who has been working on the frontline throughout the pandemic while also taking care of a young family at home. In his spare time, Vikas is a keen cricketer playing at Cowgate Cricket Club in Newcastle and the Gilli Boys Amateur Club in Darlington.

Emily Blakemore, a nurse, will also feature on a shirt. She has been working in a hospital looking after COVID-19 patients. As well as providing vital support to those most in need, she is a dedicated player for Astwood Bank Cricket Club where she also volunteers in the junior section, inspiring the next generation of cricketers. Those who know her say she's a huge role model to all, always staying positive despite working in very tough circumstances.

As part of the ECB's nationwide 'Together Through This Test' campaign, which launched last month with a short film narrated by Stephen Fry, the #raisethebat initiative has already featured key workers on over 300 billboards across England and Wales, with more billboards to come from 29 June. The cricket family is also being encouraged to highlight the many more key workers who deserve recognition using #raisethebat on social media.

Commenting on the #raisethebat Test Series, Tom Harrison, ECB Chief Executive Officer said: "As we stage the first international sporting

competition in the UK since COVID-19 began, we want to pay tribute to the people who have bravely played their part during this crisis. Through the #raisethebat Test Series, we will show our gratitude to key workers.

“It has been a long and challenging journey to cricket’s return and while this pales in comparison to what the country has faced, we hope the #raisethebat Test Series will bring some enjoyment and light relief to people’s lives.”

England Men’s Test captain Joe Root said: “We’ve waited a long time for this moment, and we wouldn’t be here without the West Indies – we are so grateful to them for making the tour happen. As we get back to playing the game we love, we want to take the time to honour the brave key workers who went into bat for their country under the toughest circumstances. It’s only fitting that we use this series as an opportunity to ‘raise a bat’ in their honour. We’ll wear their names with pride.”

Emily Blakemore, a nurse whose name will feature on an England player’s shirt, said: “It’s going to be an absolute honour to see one of the England Men’s players come out while wearing my name on the back of their shirt. It has been such a difficult time for so many people, and there’s still a lot of hard work ahead, but it’s exciting that we’ll be able to see some cricket again. The cricket family has really pulled together at a tough time and I can’t wait until we can get playing at my club again. Until then, hopefully Joe Root and the team can give us something to cheer about. Summer isn’t summer without cricket.”

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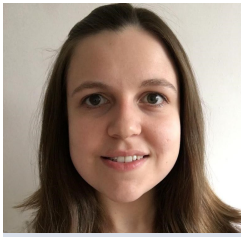
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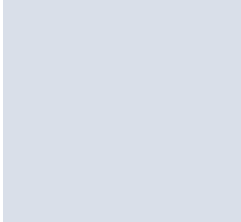
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