



England cricketers Danni Wyatt & Chris Woakes take part in NatWest CricketForce

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England cricket stars and volunteers celebrate start of the season at NatWest CricketForce Weekend

This weekend (5-7 April), tens of thousands of volunteers across England and Wales pitched in alongside England stars Jason Roy, Chris Woakes and Danielle Wyatt to help local clubs get ready for the season as part of NatWest CricketForce.

NatWest CricketForce is a nationwide initiative that, since

launch, has helped 2,000 clubs per year open their doors to their local communities and get them involved with the game, as well as ensuring the grounds and clubs themselves are ready for the new season.

With 2019 set to be the biggest summer of cricket in England and Wales yet, the NatWest CricketForce initiative is this year focussed on making it easier for cricketers, supporters and fans alike to play, experience and follow the game.

Activities carried out in the run-up to this weekend have included everything from improving internet connections at local clubs, building social areas with BBQ facilities and big screens for watching all-important matches, to introducing digital points of sale for faster and easier payments – enabling clubs to focus more on cricket and less on paperwork. To celebrate, ECB and NatWest have highlighted two cricket clubs that have benefited from recent major renovation thanks to NatWest CricketForce, the support of tireless volunteers and local county cricket boards.

When Uttoxeter Cricket Club were given notice to leave their current ground due to developments at a nearby racecourse, the club were set to be homeless for the first time in 60 years.

Now, however, thanks to support from ECB and Staffordshire Cricket Board, a village cricket ground in Marchington that has laid dormant for 15 years is being brought back to life to become the new home of Uttoxeter CC.

England stars Chris Woakes and Danielle Wyatt visited the club to see first-hand the remarkable revival of Uttoxeter Cricket Club.

Danielle Wyatt said:

“It is fantastic to see the impact this move will have on Uttoxeter and the local community. Clubs like this play a vital role in towns and villages across the country and are the lifeblood of our sport. NatWest CricketForce is a brilliant example of how volunteers can bring clubs to life and get them ready for the new season.”

With NatWest CricketForce events taking place all over the

UK, ECB Chief Executive Tom Harrison and England and Surrey batsman Jason Roy joined NatWest at Byfleet Cricket Club for the formal opening of its brand new and refurbished Clubhouse.

ECB Interim Director of Participation and Growth, Nick Pryde, said:

“Club cricket is the heartbeat of our game and it’s vital we continue to support clubs to help them reach out to their local communities and help them grow and thrive long into the future. NatWest CricketForce exemplifies this perfectly and over the weekend an army of volunteers have helped our clubs get ready for a season we will never forget.”

NatWest Chief Marketing Officer, David Wheldon, said:

“NatWest has a long and proud association with England and Wales cricket. For the last 38 years, it has been our vision to ensure cricket is a game that has no boundaries, and our CricketForce initiative is key to making it easier for everyone to enjoy. As we embark on the biggest cricket season in a generation, we feel it’s never been more important to make it easy for everyone, anywhere, to be able to play, experience and follow cricket. We are excited for a huge summer ahead where we will also be supporting a national street cricket tournament with our charity partner Chance to Shine, as well as giving NatWest customers greater access to the game with ticket giveaways and exciting events throughout the season.”

Since its launch in 2002, NatWest CricketForce has grown into one of the largest sports volunteering initiatives in the country. An average year will see 85,000 volunteers help out at more than 2,000 clubs – with an average of 40 volunteers at each club. It offers an opportunity for clubs to engage current and attract future members. The programme has previously won a Sport Industry award for its work encouraging clubs to engage with local communities.

NatWest CricketForce is just the beginning of a whole summer programme making it easier for everyone to play, experience and follow cricket. Get the latest updates and join the conversation by following @NatWest_Cricket and #NoBoundaries on Twitter,

Facebook and Instagram.

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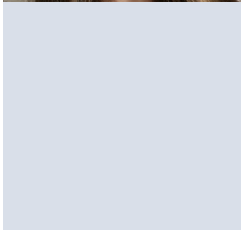


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