



Kia Super League Finals Day is returning to the 1st Central County Ground in Hove

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Kia Super League and T20 Blast fixtures announced

An expanded Kia Super League will mean a feast of T20 cricket next summer, with a total of 165 matches in the KSL and the Blast to be played in the 74 days between July 4 and September 15.

After the success of the first two KSL seasons, the six teams will play each other home and away for the first time in 2018 – meaning they each play 10 matches rather than five in the battle to reach Finals Day, and the competition includes a total of 32 matches compared to last year's 17,

spanning 37 days from July 22 to August 27.

The Blast retains its familiar format, with the 18 first-class counties split into a North Group and a South Group, and the top four from each qualifying for quarter finals – and the action again concentrated in the summer holiday months of July and August.

Finals Day will be at Edgbaston for the sixth consecutive season, on a slightly later date of Saturday September 15, to avoid a clash with England's Test series against India.

Notts Outlaws launch their defence of the Blast title they won for the first time at Edgbaston in August with a home game at Trent Bridge against Birmingham Bears – the team they beat in the 2017 final.

That is one of three games on Wednesday July 4, and the following night features three more – including the Middlesex-Surrey blockbuster at Lord's.

“July seems a long way away, but the prospect of launching our defence of the Blast at home to Birmingham is an exciting one,” said Steven Mullaney, a key figure in the Outlaws’ 2017 triumph who was recently appointed club captain following the retirement of Chris Read.

“We get great support at Trent Bridge so it’s great to have a home game for our first game as champions, and a repeat of last year’s final against the Bears means it will be a big game for both teams.”

The Kia Super League begins on Sunday July 22, when Heather Knight's Western Storm launch their title defence against Yorkshire Diamonds at the Coopers Associates County Ground in Taunton.

The Storm will also feature in one of county cricket's most famous festivals for the first time when they host Surrey Stars at Cheltenham College on July 26.

Finals Day will again be hosted by Sussex at the 1st Central County Ground in Hove – on August 27 (Bank Holiday Monday).

"The KSL is a tournament that gets better every year and we're delighted that it's been expanded," said Knight.

"It gives more opportunities to us to play and it gives more opportunities for fans to come and watch.

"T20 cricket will be a big focus for us this year, ahead of the World T20 in November, and hopefully the expanded KSL will help the England team prepare and provide great entertainment in its own right."

There will be eight double headers featuring fixtures from both the KSL and the Blast, starting with the KSL Roses battle between Yorkshire Diamonds and Lancashire Thunder on Friday July 27 – which will be followed by the Blast fixture between Yorkshire Vikings and Birmingham Bears.

The other double headers are at Taunton (July 29), the Kia Oval (July 31), two at Emirates Old Trafford (August 3 and August 7), the Ageas Bowl (August 8), Hove (August 14), and finally Edgbaston on August 15, as Warwickshire host their first KSL fixture between Loughborough Lightning and Western Storm - before the Blast match between Birmingham Bears and Lancashire Lightning.

Sky Sports will again be providing extensive live coverage of the Blast and the KSL, and will confirm the list of televised matches shortly.

The full fixture list for the 2018 summer, including the Specsavers County Championship, Royal London One-Day Cup, tour matches and MCCU fixtures, will be released at 11am tomorrow (November 29).

Key Dates

July 4 – Blast launch night – including Notts Outlaws v Birmingham Bears at Trent Bridge

July 22 – KSL launch day – including Western Storm v Yorkshire Diamonds at Coopers Associates County Ground, Taunton

August 17 – final round of Blast group fixtures

August 18 – final round of KSL group fixtures

August 23-26 – Blast quarter finals

August 27 – KSL Finals Day (1st Central County Ground, Hove)

September 15 – Blast Finals Day (Edgbaston)

Double headers

Friday July 27, Emerald Headingley – Yorkshire Diamonds v Lancashire Thunder (KSL), Yorkshire Vikings v Birmingham Bears (Blast)

Sunday July 29, Coopers Associates County Ground, Taunton – Western Storm v Loughborough Lightning (KSL), Somerset v Middlesex (Blast)

Tuesday July 31, Kia Oval – Surrey Stars v Lancashire Thunder (KSL), Surrey v Glamorgan (Blast)

Friday August 3, Emirates Old Trafford – Lancashire Thunder v Western Storm (KSL), Lancashire Lightning v Leicestershire Foxes (Blast)

Tuesday August 7, Emirates Old Trafford – Lancashire Thunder v Surrey Stars (KSL), Lancashire Lightning v Durham Jets (Blast)

Wednesday August 8, Ageas Bowl – Southern Vipers v Yorkshire Diamonds (KSL), Hampshire v Somerset (Blast)

Tuesday August 14, 1st Central County Ground, Hove – Southern Vipers v Surrey Stars (KSL), Sussex Sharks v Glamorgan

Wednesday August 15, Edgbaston – Loughborough Lightning v Western Storm (KSL), Birmingham Bears v Lancashire Lightning (Blast)

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