



Sam Northeast being congratulated by Ben Foakes after scoring a century in the South's series-clinching win in Dubai in 2017

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Mullaney and Northeast appointed captains for second North-South Series

Steven Mullaney and Sam Northeast have been appointed as captains for the 2018 North-South Series, which will be staged in Barbados in March.

Mullaney, who recently succeeded Chris Read as the Nottinghamshire captain and played a key role in the Outlaws' white-ball double last season, will lead a North squad coached by Paul Collingwood as they aim for revenge for the 3-0 whitewash inflicted by the South in the first series in the UAE last year.

Northeast, who scored an unbeaten century in the second game of last season's series in Dubai, is joined in the South squad by two more key figures in their 2017 domination - Kent team-mate Daniel Bell-Drummond and Hampshire all-rounder Liam Dawson, who was voted man of the series by the England selectors.

Bell-Drummond is the only one of the four players who earned automatic invitations to join the South squad last summer to take up his place in this year's series. The top four England-qualified players in the PCA's MVP Rankings for each group of the Royal London One-Day Cup were again invited - but Alastair Cook and James Vince are unavailable after their inclusion in England's squad for the Test series in New Zealand, and Ravi Bopara has signed to play in the Pakistan Super League.

Of the four players who qualified from the North Group, Warwickshire's Sam Hain and new Lancashire signing Keaton Jennings are two of six survivors from last year's beaten North squad - with Ben Duckett, Joe Clarke, Paul Coughlin and Saqib Mahmood. Shiv Thakor is deemed unavailable as a result of his recent criminal conviction and suspension from all cricket activity [under the ECB's auspices], and Gary Ballance has chosen to concentrate on his role as Yorkshire captain in their pre-season plans including a warm-weather training camp in South Africa.

James Whitaker, the National Selector who finalised the squads after discussions with coaches Collingwood and Ramprakash, his fellow selectors Angus Fraser and Mick Newell, and the England and Lions coaching staff, said: "We believe these are two exciting squads which again underline the value of this North-South Series as an opportunity for us to see some strong contenders for white-ball cricket playing at a higher level of competition and intensity.

"The unavailability of several of the players who had earned automatic invitations means the squads are tilted more towards youth and potential this year.

"The North squad has six players aged 21 or under, and the South squad includes four 20-year-olds plus Sam Curran, who is still only 19.

"Some of the players we have selected have very limited List A experience with their counties. But in those cases their potential has already been

identified with selection on the ECB's International Pathway.

"For example Delray Rawlins is currently in Sydney on an Overseas Placement, and we have included three fast bowlers currently training with the Pace Programme - Zak Chappell in the North squad, and Paul Walter and Tom Helm with the South.

"But it is also a good opportunity for more experienced players who have impressed in the county game, such as Steven Mullaney, Brett D'Oliveira, John Simpson and Sam Northeast, to show the selectors and England coaches what they can do at a higher level."

The squads include 15 players who have already been selected for the England Lions tour of West Indies this spring, and the series will follow on from the one-day section of that tour.

The teams will each play a warm-up game on March 15 before the three-match series at the Kensington Oval on March 18, 21 and 23. The Kensington Oval will also stage the MCC's Champion County match against Essex from March 27-30 in a spring festival of English cricket in Barbados.

"It's a new series this year with completely different squads, and we know Colly and the North will be keen to make amends for what happened in the 2017 series in the UAE," said Ramprakash, who will be assisted by the Lions head coach Andy Flower. "There's a big incentive for all the players to impress as we get closer to the 2019 World Cup, and I'm looking forward to getting involved in the series for the first time."

Collingwood will be assisted by Paul Franks, the former Nottinghamshire and England all-rounder who was appointed in recognition of his contribution to the Outlaws' title-winning Royal London One-Day Cup campaign in 2017.

Collingwood said: "We know we'll be the underdogs after what happened last year, but there's plenty of talent in our squad and we're all looking forward to getting stuck in - and putting on a good show for the North."

Squads

North: S Mullaney (Notts, captain), S Hain (Warwickshire*), B Duckett

(Northamptonshire), J Clarke (Worcestershire), K Jennings (Lancashire), B D'Oliveira (Worcestershire), A Davies (Lancashire, wk), P Coughlin (Notts), M Fisher (Yorkshire), S Mahmood (Lancashire), R Gleeson (Northamptonshire), Z Chappell (Leicestershire), M Parkinson (Lancashire).

South: S Northeast (Kent, captain), D Bell-Drummond (Kent*), N Gubbins (Middlesex), D Lawrence (Essex), D Rawlins (Sussex), L Dawson (Hampshire), J Simpson (Middlesex, wk), S Curran (Surrey), P Walter (Essex), D Bess (Somerset), T Helm (Middlesex), J Porter (Essex), G Garton (Sussex).

*Means automatic qualification through PCA MVP Rankings

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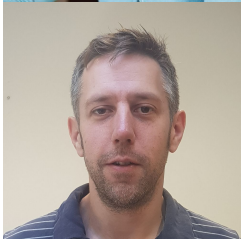


Kate Miller

Press Contact

Director of Communications

media@ecb.co.uk



Jonathan Reed

Press Contact

Head of Media & Publications

media@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0) 7525 596 621



Danny Reuben

Press Contact
Head of Team Communications
England Men's team
danny.reuben@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7825 723 620



Matt Somerford

Press Contact
Communications Manager - Domestic Cricket
media@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7551 134 716



Hen Cowen

Press Contact
Senior Communications Manager (they/them)
hen.cowen@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7585 987 302



Chris Tuttlebee

Press Contact
Corporate Communications Lead
chris.tuttlebee@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7824 551713



Emily Liles

Press Contact
Communications Manager - Performance (England Women)
emily.liles@ecb.co.uk