



David Malan was one of the stars of the South's 3-0 whitewash last year, making a positive impression on the England selectors and coaches

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North-South rivalry moves to Barbados

The countdown to the 2018 cricket season moves to Barbados this week as 26 of England's most talented white-ball players prepare to renew the North-South rivalry.

The second North-South Series will be staged in the Caribbean, with the North aiming to bounce back after the South completed a 3-0 whitewash in Dubai and Abu Dhabi last spring.

The three-match series will be followed by the MCC's first-class four-day

fixture against Essex, the winners of the 2017 Specsavers County Championship, at the Kensington Oval as the culmination of a spring festival of English cricket in Barbados.

Andrew Strauss, the ECB's director of England cricket, said: "We introduced the North-South Series last year as part of a concerted attempt to emphasise the importance of 50-over cricket in the countdown to staging the 2019 ICC World Cup.

"The series was successful in a number of ways, allowing players to press their World Cup claims in front of the England selectors and management – and also re-enforcing the importance of the Royal London One-Day Cup through the link with the PCA's MVP rankings.

"This year's series was always going to be a little different given the schedule of the England team which means Trevor Bayliss and Paul Farbrace are both in New Zealand.

"But the appointment of two members of the England coaching staff in Mark Ramprakash and Paul Collingwood to take charge of the teams underlines that the stakes will again be high for the players selected.

"The selectors have also made a deliberate decision to include some younger players who have impressed on our International Pathway, whether recent graduates of the Young Lions, or from the Pace Programme and Overseas Placements – looking beyond the 2019 World Cup towards 2023."

The first two games of the series will be staged at the Kensington Oval, on March 18 and 21, with the third match switched to the Three Ws Oval on March 23.

Each team will have a warm-up game on March 15 – the South will play a Barbados Cricket Association XI at Kensington Oval, and the North will face familiar opposition at the Three Ws Oval from Northamptonshire, who are also in Barbados preparing for the season.

Both teams have been forced to make a late change to their squad.

Gloucestershire's seamer Liam Norwell has been ruled out of the South squad

by a hamstring injury he suffered training with his county in England. He has been replaced by Ravi Patel, the 26-year-old Middlesex spinner.

The North have called up Matt Critchley, Derbyshire's 21-year-old leg-spinning all-rounder, to replace Paul Coughlin, the Notts all-rounder who suffered a dislocated shoulder in the last match of the Lions' one-day series against West Indies A at the weekend.

Squads

North. Coach – Paul Collingwood (Durham). Assistant Coach – Paul Franks (Notts Outlaws – qualified through Royal London One-Day Cup). S Mullaney (Notts, captain), K Jennings (Lancashire), S Hain (Warwickshire), A Hose (Warwickshire), J Clarke (Worcestershire), A Davies (Lancashire, wk), M Critchley (Derbyshire), B D'Oliveira (Worcestershire), M Fisher (Yorkshire), S Mahmood (Lancashire), R Gleeson (Northamptonshire), M Parkinson (Lancashire), Z Chappell (Leicestershire).

South. Coach – Mark Ramprakash (ECB). Assistant Coach – A Flower (ECB). S Northeast (Hampshire, captain), D Bell-Drummond (Kent), N Gubbins (Middlesex), L Evans (Sussex), O Pope (Surrey), J Simpson (Middlesex, wk), S Curran (Surrey), D Rawlins (Sussex), D Bess (Somerset), R Patel (Middlesex), P Walter (Essex), J Porter (Essex), T Barber (Middlesex).

Dates, Venues – all matches start 930am local time (130pm GMT)

Thursday March 15, Warm-Up Games. South v Barbados Cricket Association XI (Kensington Oval). North v Northamptonshire (Three Ws Oval).

Match 1 (Kensington Oval): Sunday March 18

Match 2 (Kensington Oval): Wednesday March 21

Match 3 (Three Ws Oval): Friday March 23

Ends...

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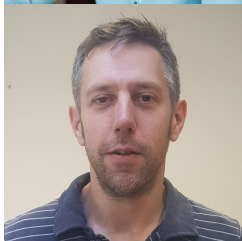


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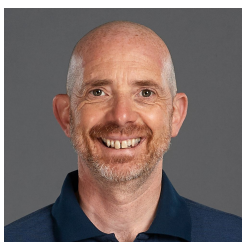
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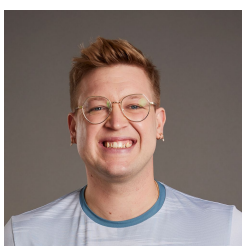
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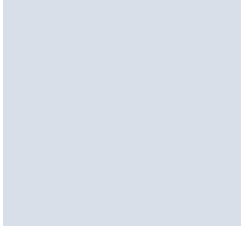


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