



The venue was transformed into a festival of cricket and South Asian culture. Photo: Getty Images

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Pakistan party brought to Birmingham ahead of next-level England series

- Former gas works site in Birmingham transformed into celebration of tape ball cricket and South Asian culture to mark the build-up to England vs Pakistan
- England stars Heather Knight, Adil Rashid, Jamie Goodwin and Dawid Malan took part in a showcase tape ball cricket match alongside women's cricket fans Kate Lawler and Shazia Mirza
- Tape ball is a casual form of cricket which started on the streets

of Karachi in the 1960s and is now played by South Asian communities across the world

18th April 2024, Birmingham: To kick off the build-up to the eagerly anticipated joint Men's and Women's series between England and Pakistan, starting at Edgbaston on 11th May, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) marked the countdown by hosting a showcase tape ball cricket event full of vibrant music, entertainment and food.

Taking place at a former gas works site in Digbeth, Birmingham, the unique venue was transformed into a festival of cricket and South Asian culture.

With stars from the England Men's, Women's and Physical Disability teams playing alongside celebrities from the media and entertainment world, grassroots tape ball players from across the country and children from the local Chance To Shine programmes.

Those in attendance were treated to vibrant Bhangra music, authentic South Asian cuisine and a local DJ, bringing to life the intensity and spectacle of the stadium experience this summer.

Heather Knight, Adil Rashid, Jamie Goodwin and Dawid Malan showed off their tape ball skills alongside special guests including women's cricket fans Kate Lawler and Shazia Mirza, TV stars Kai Fagan and Jasmine Boatswain, and England women's rugby player Heather Fisher, in a celebrity invitational match.

Tape ball cricket started on the streets of Karachi, Pakistan, in the 1960s and has been played by millions of people across the world. It is an ever-growing casual form of the game played predominately by South Asian communities in England and Wales, with an estimated 20,000 players taking part recreationally at present. It is an integral part of Pakistani and South Asian cricket culture, using a tennis ball wrapped in electrical tape, providing a thrilling, fast-paced experience, not reliant on a traditional cricket setting or protective gear; embodying the inclusive spirit of the sport.

Heather Knight, England Women's Captain said: "It's massively important to us as players that entry into the game is as inclusive and accessible as possible, and tape ball is a fantastic way of opening up cricket to a wider

audience of kids and adults alike who traditionally might not have had the chance to play cricket.

"The showcase event showed just how special creating moments like this are for the local community and we absolutely loved being a part of it, you could feel the energy and excitement ahead of the upcoming series.

"This summer is going to be next level, especially with Pakistan coming over, and the electric atmosphere both their and our fans create. I can't wait to get down to Edgbaston for our first match next month and kick off the summer of cricket on home soil."

Adil Rashid, England Men's world no.1 T20 bowler said: "I used to play tape ball in the street with my brothers and it would get really competitive. It's such a great format of the game, can be played anywhere by anyone and that's what cricket should be about.

["It's brilliant that there's now a national tape ball competition.](#) It's really important give people across the country the opportunity to play.

"The British Pakistani community is cricket-mad, the game unites us and the upcoming series is going to be incredible for the players and fans – we're going to put on a show. This event really brought the Pakistan party to town early and now we can't wait to get out there and entertain!"

Kate Lawler, TV personality and women's cricket fan commented: "I've always loved cricket because of my dad and we've been to so many games together. It's a fantastic day out. I'm really excited about watching England Women play this summer, they were incredible last year and I have no doubt they'll take it to the next level this year.

"It's been amazing attending this event in Birmingham, celebrating tape ball. I had never heard of it, but from watching it first-hand I love how accessible it is and how so many different people come together to play it – that's really special. It's got me super excited ahead of the summer of cricket and I'll be cheering on the girls for sure."

The showcase event highlighted the work the ECB and its Core Cities programme has undertaken [to launch a new National Core Cities Tape Ball](#)

[Cricket Competition across the country](#), announced on the morning of the event. The new tape ball competition is designed to extend the reach and accessibility of casual cricket to more communities, promote informal styles of play in non-traditional environments and embrace diverse formats of the game to grow the sport.

Sabah Hamed, the ECB's Diverse Communities Volunteer Manager, added:

“We want to ensure access to playing cricket is possible no matter where you're from or what facilities are around you and tape ball cricket is a vital format of the game in helping reach communities in key cities across the country.

“The launch of the new National Core Cities Tape Ball Competition is incredibly exciting and part of the ECB's commitment to growing diversity and inclusivity throughout cricket. We hope the event has helped inspire some of the next generation to give cricket a try or come down to watch an England vs Pakistan match to see what it's all about.”

Experience next level international sport on home soil this summer. Tickets for the England Women series against Pakistan Women are selling fast. Secure your seats at ecb.co.uk/tickets/England.

Contacts



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