



A packed crowd look on during the Vitality Blast match between Gloucestershire and Middlesex at College Ground, Cheltenham

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## Record-setting summer for Vitality Blast

- Average attendances for the Vitality Blast group matches rose 15% this year and are now up 47% over the past five years.
- The opening week of the Blast saw 65,000 advanced tickets sold – the most in a single week in the history of the tournament.
- Nearly 950,000 fans will have attended a domestic Twenty20 match this summer – inclusive of the Vitality Blast and Kia Super League - following Finals Day on Saturday.

This weekend's Vitality Blast Finals Day will provide a showpiece event in a domestic summer in which nearly 1.5 million fans will have attended county

cricket.

The Blast has enjoyed a record-breaking season with average attendances during the group-stage matches increasing by 15 per cent on last summer.

A total of 894,000 fans have attended Blast matches ahead of Finals Day with record advanced tickets sales during the group stage totalling 659,000.

The opening week of the Vitality Blast, which immediately followed England's memorable Men's ICC World Cup final victory, enjoyed the highest-ever advanced sales for a single week in the 18-year history of the tournament.

A total of 65,000 advanced tickets were sold during the opening week to surpass the previous record of 44,000 tickets, which was set last summer.

This weekend's Finals Day sold out in record time in May and, after the Kia Super League attracted 27,000 fans, attendances for domestic Twenty20 competitions this summer will near 950,000 by the time the final ball is bowled at Edgbaston.

This season's Blast also attracted the highest attendance for an English domestic Twenty20 match when 27,773 fans watched Middlesex's home derby against Surrey at Lord's.

North Group winners Lancashire surpassed its highest attendance for a non-Roses match on three occasions while South Group winners Sussex sold out six of its seven home matches at Hove.

ECB Managing Director, County Cricket Gordon Hollins said: "The Vitality Blast continues to showcase the best of the domestic game with attendances across the country this summer reflecting the quality of cricket on offer and also the match-day experience provided by the counties.

"Finals Day was sold out in record time and Edgbaston has earned a deserved reputation as a wonderful host to benefit a tournament that has strong support from county fans and players.

“The ECB is committed to building on that support and will invest more into the Blast than ever before next summer to help maintain its success and to grow the game, in conjunction with our other domestic tournaments, to inspire more people to play, attend and watch cricket at all levels.”

Derbyshire Falcons will play at Finals Day for the first time, to confirm all 18 first-class counties have now reached the showpiece event, while their semi-final opponents Essex Eagles return for the first time in six years.

In the other semi-final defending champions Worcestershire Rapids will meet Notts Outlaws, who won the title in 2017.

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