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Rothsay County Championship format to be retained following PCCs vote

The Professional County Cricket Clubs (PCCs) have voted on the future format of the Rothsay County Championship.

A proposal to play a remodelled 13-match Rothsay County Championship did not receive the required majority of votes from the PCCs to affect change.

The decision follows a county-led review into the structure of the men's county competitions.

The review, which was staged in consultation with the Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA), made proposals for changes to the Rothesay County Championship, Vitality Blast men's competition and Metro Bank One-Day Cup men's competition.

The PCCs agreed, via a vote in July, to alter the format of the Vitality Blast men's competition when the review's proposals did receive the required majority for change.

From next season the Vitality Blast men's competition will be staged over 12 group-stage matches with counties moving into three groups of six.

The competition will also be played in a block before The Hundred, to enable a better competition narrative, with the 2026 Vitality Blast Men's Finals Day confirmed for Saturday 18 July at Edgbaston.

A second vote was held this week regarding the county-led review's proposal to play a 13-match Rothesay County Championship – featuring a 12-county 'Championship' and six-county 'Championship Two' – which included increasing the men's Metro Bank One-Day Cup to 10 group-stage matches.

The result of the vote means that the Rothesay County Championship will remain at 14 matches, with Division One consisting of 10 counties and Division Two consisting of eight counties.

The same promotion and relegation mechanic also applies with the bottom two counties in Division One relegated and the top two in Division Two promoted.

The Metro Bank One-Day Cup men's competition also retains the same format with each county playing eight group-stage matches in two groups of nine.

The outcome of the vote was shared with the PCCs yesterday evening to ensure that all players, support staff and supporters could be aware prior to the start of the final round of matches in the Rothesay County Championship.

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Editor's Notes

The below provides an updated version of the format for each of the men's and women's county competitions from 2026.

Rothesay County Championship

The competition retains the same 14-match format.

Division One

10 counties play 14 matches. The county with the most points at the end of the season is crowned county champion, while the bottom two teams are relegated to Division Two.

Division Two

Eight counties to play 14 matches. The county with the most points at the end of the season is crowned Division Two champion and is promoted alongside the second-placed county.

Validity Blast men's competition

GROUPS

Group A: Derbyshire Falcons, Durham, Lancashire Lightning, Leicestershire Foxes, Notts Outlaws, Yorkshire.

Group B: Bears, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire Steelbacks, Somerset, Worcestershire Rapids.

Group C: Essex, Hampshire Hawks, Kent Spitfires, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex Sharks.

Group-stage matches

Each county will play the other counties in their group on a home-and-away basis – a total of 10 matches. They will additionally play one home game against a county from outside their group and one away game against a county from outside their group.

This will allow counties to play against all 18 counties, over time, on a rolling basis during the group stage of the competition.

Knockout stage

The top two teams in each group plus the best two third-placed teams will progress to the quarter-finals. The winners of the quarter-finals will progress to men's Vitality Blast Finals Day.

Vitality Blast women's competition (Tier 1)

Group: Bears, Durham, Essex, Hampshire Hawks, Lancashire Thunder, Somerset, Surrey, The Blaze, Yorkshire.

Group-stage matches

Each county will play 12 group-stage matches – six home and six away. They will play four counties twice and four counties once.

Knockout stage

The top four counties at the end of the group stage will progress to women's Vitality Blast Finals Day, which will include two semi-finals and the Final.

Vitality Blast Women's League 2 (Tier 2)

Group: Derbyshire Falcons, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Kent, Leicestershire Foxes, Middlesex, Northamptonshire Steelbacks, Sussex Sharks,

Worcestershire Rapids.

Group-stage matches

Each county will play eight group-stage matches – four home and four away. They will play each county either home or away.

Knockout stage

The top three counties at the end of the group stage will progress to Vitality Blast Women's League 2 Finals Day, which will include an Eliminator and Final.

Metro Bank One-Day Cup men's competition

Groups are to be randomly drawn. The two groups will consist of nine counties.

Group-stage matches

Each county will play eight group-stage matches – four at home and four away – meeting those counties in their group once.

Knockout stage

The knockout stage remains the same with the top team in each group progressing directly to a home semi-final. The second and third placed teams from either group meet in a play-off to earn the right to reach the semi-finals.

Metro Bank One-Day Cup women's competition (Tier 1)

Group: Bears, Durham, Essex, Hampshire Hawks, Lancashire Thunder, Somerset, Surrey, The Blaze, Yorkshire.

Group-stage matches

Each county will play 16 group-stage matches – each county plays each other county at home and away.

Knockout stage

The top three counties at the end of the group stage will progress to the knockouts stages. The top county progresses straight into the final to meet the winner of the Eliminator between 2nd and 3rd place.

Metro Bank One-Day Cup Women's League 2 (Tier 2)

Group: Derbyshire Falcons, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Kent, Leicestershire Foxes, Middlesex, Northamptonshire Steelbacks, Sussex Sharks, Worcestershire Rapids.

Group-stage matches

Each county will play eight group-stage matches – four home and four away. They will play each county either home or away.

Knockout stage

The top four counties at the end of the group stage will progress to the knockouts stages. The winners of the two semi-finals progress to the final.



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