



Shaheen Afridi gets picked up by Welsh Fire in The Hundred Draft. Photo: Getty

Mar 23, 2023 21:30 GMT

Shaheen Afridi, Sophia Dunkley, Tom Abell and Shabnim Ismail join Welsh Fire in The Hundred Draft

- Welsh Fire select Sophia Dunkley and Tom Abell as the first picks in the men's and women's competitions
- Pakistani duo Shaheen Afridi and Haris Rauf picked up for the men's side
- Shabnim Ismail, Georgia Elwiss, Freya Davies, Laura Harris and Alex Hartley complete the women's squad
- In the men's competition 30 players drafted, 34 players drafted

in the women's competition

- **For more information and to sign up for priority ticket access visit thehundred.com**

Sophia Dunkley, Tom Abell, Shaheen Afridi and Shabnim Ismail headlined an exciting day for Welsh Fire at The Hundred Draft, powered by Sage.

With the most picks of the eight teams, Fire kicked off the women's draft by selecting England Women's Sophia Dunkley. Shabnim Ismail also joined the side, arriving from two-time winner Oval Invincibles. Spinner Alex Hartley returns for her second year.

Welsh Fire men came into the draft with eight picks and came out with explosive top order batter Tom Abell as their first pick. Abell was joined by England all-rounder David Willey, Pakistani duo Shaheen Afridi and Haris Rauf and New Zealand's batter Glenn Phillips.

Haris Rauf, set to make his first appearance in The Hundred, said "I'm really excited about being picked by Welsh Fire. The Hundred is a really good competition and I'm looking forward to getting to Cardiff and working with Mike Hussey. It looks like we've built a good squad, and I'm excited about meeting the rest of the team and helping us win games of cricket."

Top pick of the women's draft, Sophia Dunkley, said: "I can't wait to get going this summer in The Hundred with Welsh Fire. I'm excited to cross the border for 2023 and play in Cardiff which always has an incredible atmosphere. We've picked up some incredible talent today in the draft and know we can improve on the performances over the past few years and build something special for the fans across Wales and the South West."

The Hundred Draft saw 64 spots filled across the men's and women's competition, with the eight teams taking it in turns to select players – the order for selections is based on last year's finishing positions.

The open market process will see the remaining 56 places filled in the women's competition, while 16 spots remain up for grabs in the men's competition by virtue of The Vitality Wildcard Draft, which will be held in the week commencing 3 July.

Across the men's and women's competitions, the following players were signed:

Women's

Sophia Dunkley, Shabnim Ismail, Georgia Elwiss, Freya Davies, Laura Harris, Alex Hartley.

Men's

Tom Abell, David Willey, Shaheen Afridi, Haris Rauf, Glenn Phillips, Roelof van der Merwe, Stephen Eskinazi and Dan Douthwaite.

The third year of The Hundred will start with a double-header at Trent Bridge on Tuesday 1 August – the first of 34 matchdays that promise high-octane men's and women's sporting action, live music, and a host of family-friendly entertainment.

More than half a million people attended games during The Hundred's second year in 2022, including a record-breaking 271,000 watching live women's fixtures across the competition and more families buying tickets than in 2021.

Tickets are now exclusively on sale for anyone who has previously bought tickets for The Hundred until 28 March. Those yet to attend can sign up in advance at thehundred.com to get priority ticket access from 5–18 April.

Tickets will then go on general sale on Thursday 20 April. Tickets this year remain great value in line with 2022 pricing, with prices set at £5 for juniors aged 6-15, free for children five and under, and adults starting from £10.❌❌❌

Over 14.1 million people tuned in to watch The Hundred action in 2022 and games will again be broadcast live on Sky Sports and BBC broadcast and digital channels throughout the competition.❌❌

To stay up to date with the latest news, buy tickets or to sign up for priority access, visit thehundred.com or follow The Hundred, and the eight teams, on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube.

To view all the players picked in The Hundred Draft, powered by Sage, please visit www.thehundred.com/draft.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

About Sage:

The Hundred Draft is powered by Sage. Sage supports insights and key decision-making moments in The Hundred. As Official Insights Partner, Sage brings fans closer to The Hundred's big decisions, powering the Decision Review System (DRS) in broadcast and on the cricket grounds' big screens, together with sponsoring the umpires' kit during the competition. Across The Hundred Draft, coaches used data, analysis, and insights to help them make the crucial decisions needed to build their squads in both the men's and women's competitions. Sage aims to bring fans closer to the action as part of this exciting start to The Hundred.

About The Hundred:

The Hundred is an action-packed, unmissable cricket competition that fuses world-class cricket with blockbuster entertainment.

Combining a short, fast format of cricket, with each game lasting less than three hours, and incredible entertainment beyond the sport, The Hundred is making cricket more accessible and reaching a broader audience. It's simple: 100 balls per team, most runs wins, so every ball counts.

The Hundred features eight teams from seven cities, with men's and women's competitions taking place side by side: Welsh Fire (Cardiff), Southern Brave (Southampton), Northern Superchargers (Leeds), London Spirit, Trent Rockets (Nottingham), Oval Invincibles (London), Manchester Originals and Birmingham Phoenix. Each team features some of the best international and domestic cricketers from around the world, including England Men's & Women's World Cup winners.

Highlight statistics from The Hundred 2022:

- More than 500,000 people attended games across the course of the competition☒
- The Hundred continued to take cricket to new audiences with more women (28%), children (22%) and families (41%) attending than in the first year☒
- 2022 once again set a new global record for total attendance at a women's cricket competition, with 271,000 people attending☒☒
- All eight venues broke their previous best for domestic women's attendances
- Of the Sky and BBC TV coverage, 42% hadn't watched any other ECB cricket in 2022 prior to The Hundred, resulting in 5.9m new viewers
- Women (31%) and children (14%) made up a significant share of the TV audience

About The Hundred fixtures:

For all fixtures in The Hundred, follow this [link](#).

You'll find all ECB Media Releases and associated resources on our [Newsroom](#) >

Contacts



Hen Cowen

Press Contact

Senior Communications Manager (they/them)

hen.cowen@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0)7585 987 302