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The launch of cricket's newest competition, The Hundred, will take place in 2021

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) today confirms that the launch of The Hundred will now take place in summer 2021. The news follows a meeting dedicated to the subject, where the Board concluded it was not possible for the competition to be staged this year.

The new competition has a vision to grow the game and is part of the ECB's long-term strategy to inspire a new generation to choose cricket.

A number of reasons were outlined for the decision including:

- Operational challenges caused by social distancing, alongside ongoing global travel restrictions, making the competition's ambition to feature world-class players and coaches unattainable in 2020.
- A behind closed doors competition directly contradicts the competition's goal to attract a broader audience through a unique event experience for viewers and spectators.
- With significant furloughing across the partnership network of 20 venues, the logistics of delivering a brand-new sporting event, without a tried-and-tested delivery plan, would be incredibly challenging.

Refocused efforts will now look forward to 2021, centering on the competition's four key objectives to support the game, which will be even more imperative as the nation emerges from this pandemic:

1. Engaging a broader audience in cricket to grow the game
2. Driving participation throughout the game with the support of partners Sky and BBC
3. Delivering guaranteed revenues and support for First-Class Counties (FCCs), MCC and the wider game
4. Developing young talent as they grow their skills playing for and against teams made-up of world-class players and coaches

ECB Chief Executive Officer, Tom Harrison, commented: "The situation we find ourselves in as a country means that delivery of The Hundred will not be possible this summer. Whilst we are naturally disappointed that we won't get to realise our ambitions this year, The Hundred will go ahead in 2021 when we are safely able to deliver everything we intended to help grow the game.

"As we emerge from the fallout of COVID-19, there will be an even greater need for The Hundred. Our survival as a game, long-term, will be dependent on our ability to recover financially and continue our ambition to build on cricket's growing fan base. That need has not gone anyway, if anything, it is now more critical.

"The Hundred will create millions in revenues for the game, through hosting fees, hospitality and ticket sales, as well as delivering £25m in annual financial distributions to all First Class Counties and MCC. Its role in driving participation alongside supporting the development of the women's game will be material in generating take-up of our game across country-wide communities.

"The Hundred is an important element of the game's Inspiring Generations strategy, which has been debated and agreed upon across the whole game. While financially, our plans may be impacted, our ambition, 'to inspire a generation' should in no way be diluted.

"We would like to thank our broadcast partners, for their extraordinary commitment and support to get The Hundred to this point and our commercial partners for their ongoing support. We very much look forward to working with them as we build to the 2021 launch."

For more information visit thehundred.com

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