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## Unforgettable international summer set to inspire a generation

A memorable summer of international cricket concluded on Sunday with England securing victory in the final Specsavers men's Ashes Test at the Kia Oval to claim a 2-2 series draw against Australia.

Captain Joe Root's Test team confirmed their fighting qualities with the 135-run victory after Australia retained the Ashes urn at Emirates Old Trafford.

The drawn men's Ashes series caps a remarkable summer that will live long in the memory after England's stunning victory in the men's ICC World Cup

final at Lord's on July 14.

The unprecedented drama of a Super Over to decide the World Cup final captured the attention of a nation and, with sustained interest during the men's and women's Ashes, there is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to inspire future fans and players to grow the game.

ECB Chief Executive Officer, Tom Harrison, said: "This has been an unforgettable summer of cricket that has elevated the profile of our sport to amazing heights.

"The heroes from the last few months have become household names thanks to their World Cup and Ashes exploits, our County Game has enjoyed a strong summer, and we can now capitalise on heightened interest and consideration of cricket.

"It is the ECB's priority to ensure new fans to cricket convert their interest into a long-term enjoyment of the sport while growing the game's appeal to core fans.

"Through 'Inspiring Generations' we have strategically mapped a course to achieve that ambition which includes doubling participation in primary schools, transforming the women's and girls' game and through our plan to improve access – which will give more people the opportunity to engage with cricket across all touchpoints.

"Lastly, I would like to say thank you to our outgoing men's head coach Trevor Bayliss and women's head coach Mark Robinson for their dedication over the past four years. They both oversaw 50-over World Cup victories and with that some of the most iconic moments in English cricket's long history."

England reached the final of the Physical Disability World Series at Blackfinch New Road in August while the excitement of the season is set to continue in the domestic game, with a tense finale to the Specsavers County Championship where Somerset lead the table in search of their first-ever County Championship title.

The potentially decisive final-round match between Somerset and Essex in Taunton is set to be available to a national audience thanks to broadcast

partners Sky Sports and BBC Test Match Special supporting the domestic game.

The Vitality Blast Finals Day will cap a Blast season in which almost 950,000 fans will have watched our men's and women's domestic Twenty20 competitions by the time the final ball is bowled at Edgbaston.

The Vitality Blast has seen a 15% uplift in average group-stage attendances from last year's record high and set a record for advanced sales of 659,000.

The opening week of the tournament, which began four days after the men's World Cup final, saw a record 65,000 advanced tickets sold in a single week – eclipsing the previous record of 44,000.

Match attendances at cricket have not been the only areas to see positive uplift this year. More than one million young people aged 5-12 were engaged with the men's World Cup through initiatives including Cricket World Cup Club Family Days, the Cricket World Cup Schools Programme and fan zone activations.

The World Cup school's activity, which was delivered in partnership with Chance to Shine, engaged 12,000 teachers, nearly 8,000 schools and over 700,000 children

More than 7,000 children took up free All-Stars taster sessions after the men's World Cup while it has been a record year for the Kwik Cricket school competition with 203,000 participants, up 13 per cent on 2018.

The men's ICC World Cup was globally the third most-watched sporting event in history and record international and domestic attendances have followed with sell-out crowds for the first four days of all five men's Specsavers Ashes Tests.

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