

Vitality BLAST!

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Vitality Blast final re-match to open the 20th edition of the T20 competition

- This year's Vitality Blast marks the 20th edition of domestic T20 cricket with new branding for the competition unveiled today
- Champions Kent Spitfires host Somerset on opening night – May 25
- The competition will run over seven weeks, with Finals Day at Edgbaston on July 16 already sold out
- More matches in fan-friendly slots with 99 of the 126 group-stages games to be played on a Thursday, Friday or at the weekend
- Fans can have a Blast this summer at every home group-stage

- **match by buying their season tickets now**
10 double-headers when Charlotte Edwards Cup and Vitality Blast T20 matches are played back-to-back at the same venue

The Vitality Blast will begin celebrations for the 20th edition of the Twenty20 competition with an opening-night rematch of last season's final when champions Kent Spitfires host Somerset on May 25.

A new Vitality Blast brand has today been unveiled alongside the schedule, to mark the world's longest-running professional domestic Twenty20 competition turning 20.

The new brand highlights the dynamism and vibrancy that the Vitality Blast is famed for – fierce local rivalries, the forging of heroes, and the celebratory atmosphere fans know and love.

This year the Vitality Blast's rivalries will be packed into seven weeks of action as the 18 First-Class Counties bid to reach the already sold-out Finals Day at Edgbaston on July 16.

Fans will get an early taste of one of the Vitality Blast's most celebrated derbies with Lancashire Lightning hosting Yorkshire Vikings on the first Friday night of the competition.

More preferred and fan-friendly timeslots will also be a feature of the group-stage with 99 of the 126 matches to be played on a Thursday night, Friday night or at the weekend.

There will also be 10 double-headers when the men's Vitality Blast and women's Charlotte Edwards Cup T20 matches are played back-to-back at the same venue.

The Vitality Blast quarter-finals will begin three days after the group stage finishes, on July 3, with Finals Day a week later.

That continuity will help ensure the Vitality Blast's biggest overseas stars can be available for one of the biggest days in the county calendar, with superstar names such as Rashid Khan (Sussex Sharks), Carlos Brathwaite (Birmingham Bears), Marnus Labuschagne (Glamorgan), Shaheen Afridi (Middlesex), Qais

Ahmed (Kent Spitfires) and Matthew Wade (Worcestershire Rapids) already signed up for the competition.

Darren Stevens is also set to turn out for Kent Spitfires again, after playing a starring role in the Spitfires' success last September, as one of five players who played in the very first T20 season in 2003.

Current-day players Samit Patel (Notts Outlaws), Ravi Bopara (Sussex Sharks), Tim Bresnan (Birmingham Bears) and Tim Murtagh (Middlesex) were also involved in the first Twenty20 competition.

They will play alongside the likes of rising stars such as Harry Brook (Yorkshire Vikings), Saqib Mahmood (Lancashire Lightning), Tom Banton (Somerset) and George Garton (Sussex Sharks) who are currently with the England Men's squad for their five-match Twenty20 series in West Indies.

Supporters can have a Blast this summer at every home group stage match by buying their season tickets now. Visit ecb.co.uk/blast-tickets for links to every team's season ticket pass and take advantage of multi-match savings.

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Editor's Notes

****New Vitality Blast logo and key dates graphics attached below are free to use****

North Group: Birmingham Bears, Derbyshire Falcons, Durham, Lancashire Lightning, Leicestershire Foxes, Notts Outlaws, Northamptonshire Steelbacks, Worcestershire Rapids, Yorkshire Vikings

South Group: Essex Eagles, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Hampshire Hawks, Kent Spitfires, Middlesex, Somerset, Surrey, Sussex Sharks

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Contacts



Matt Somerford

Press Contact

Communications Manager - Domestic Cricket

media@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0)7551 134 716