Jul 18, 2021 22:30 BST

World first: Sky Sports and The Hundred unveil ground-breaking technology to enhance the spectator experience

The Hundred (a new 100-ball cricket competition) and Sky have joined forces to develop an industry first augmented reality experience on a scale never before seen in sport by creating avatars using motion capture. Sky and The Hundred have captured players' full range of movement in accurate detail, which will be used to enhance Sky's TV broadcast coverage and at home fan experience via The Hundred app.

The Hundred is putting digital innovation at the heart of the event

experience, with the ambition to push the boundaries of sport, technology and entertainment and draw broader audiences into cricket. The avatar technology, housed on The Hundred app, is one of the strongest examples of this vision – providing progressive digital and mobile interactivity for fans to try out.

The unprecedented technology is set to be used as a world-first in broadcasting on Sky Sports from 21 July during the opening game of Oval Invincibles V Manchester Originals, from 6pm on Sky Sports The Hundred channel (404). The technology will also be available for fans via Sky Sports' digital platforms.

The avatars have been created using 'MetaStar', Dimension Studio's hyper-real avatar solution and the AR experience created by Arcade (an immersive experience creative agency, using Unity), in order to bring fans closer to the players than ever before. The idea was born out of a collaboration between The Hundred and Sky Sports in a bid to make cricket more accessible and interactive for sports fans with the ambition of enticing new audiences.

As the Sky Sports on air team use the avatars to enhance the coverage, viewers will be able to bring them into their homes via the app with the opportunity to engage with their heroes.

Heather Knight, Jos Buttler, Moeen Ali and Ben Stokes are just a few household names fans will recognise, as well as Sky's coverage star and ex-England player Freddie Flintoff.

Alison Crowe, Director of Digital and Data, ECB said: *"Through our partnership with Sky, the creation of our hyper-real avatars will bring fans and players together on an unprecedented level. Imagine having a virtual Heather Knight, Saqib Mahmood or Ben Stokes showcasing their skills in your home – it's incredibly exciting. We can't wait for fans to try it out through The Hundred app, where they can also vote for the match hero in each game, vote for the music a player will walk out to and test their knowledge with some fun trivia – there's something for all the family to get involved with."*

Bryan Henderson, Sky Sports Director of Cricket said: *"We are so excited to present this incredible technology to our viewers. We have worked in partnership with The Hundred on a fan-first approach we believe will open the game up to new audiences.*

“The Hundred will have a bespoke look and feel on TV and the avatars are a key part of what will make our coverage so dynamic. We have worked hard on every aspect of our presentation to ensure we have something for everyone, and I have every confidence the avatars will become one of the most popular aspects of our storytelling.”

Jason Landau, Creative Director of Innovation for Sky Creative said: *“Off the back of our success with Sky Scope, our thought process was ‘what can we bring to a new competition like The Hundred?” Thanks to our partnership with The Hundred we’ve been able to bring something to life – quite literally – for fans around the world.*

“With a focus on accuracy and authenticity, we have created ground-breaking hyper-real avatars, achieved by using 3D scans of the players and then applying these to individual motion data. Hopefully something everyone will be able to enjoy, allowing them to see the game differently.”

The avatars will make their broadcast debut during The Hundred opening game on the 21st July from 6pm on Sky Sports The Hundred channel (404).

Download The Hundred app and buy tickets for this summer’s must-see sporting entertainment event at thehundred.com.

Notes to editors

About The Hundred

The Hundred is a brand new sports competition launching this summer (21 July-21 Aug). It fuses blockbuster entertainment with world-class cricket, inviting everyone to fall in love with the game at its intense, electrifying and incredible best.⊠⊠

Combining a new short, fast format of cricket, with each game lasting less than three hours, and incredible entertainment beyond sport, The Hundred will make cricket more accessible to reach a broader audience. It’s simple: 100 balls per team, most runs wins, so every ball counts.⊠⊠

The Hundred will feature eight brand new teams⊠from seven⊠cities, with men’s and women’s competitions taking place side by side:⊠Welsh Fire

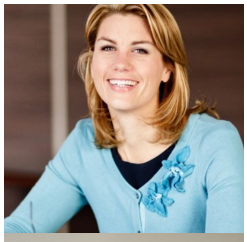
(Cardiff), Southern Brave (Southampton), Northern Superchargers (Leeds), London Spirit, Trent Rockets (Nottingham), Oval Invincibles (London), Manchester Originals and Birmingham Phoenix. Each team will feature some of the best international and domestic cricketers from around the world, including England Men's & Women's World Cup winners.

Games will be broadcast live on Sky Sports and BBC throughout the competition – so whether in ground or watching from home – you'll be right amongst all the action.

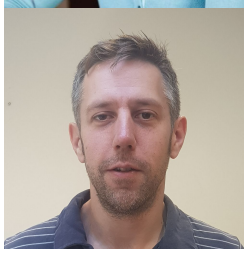
You won't want to miss out on this summer's sporting entertainment event! Download The Hundred app and buy tickets for this summer's must-see sporting entertainment event at thehundred.com.

You'll find all ECB Media Releases and associated resources on our Newsroom >

Contacts



Kate Miller
Press Contact
Director of Communications
media@ecb.co.uk



Jonathan Reed
Press Contact
Head of Media & Publications
media@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0) 7525 596 621

Danny Reuben
Press Contact
Head of Team Communications
England Men's team
danny.reuben@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7825 723 620

Matt Somerford
Press Contact
Communications Manager - Domestic Cricket
media@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7551 134 716

Hen Cowen
Press Contact
Senior Communications Manager (they/them)
hen.cowen@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7585 987 302

Chris Tuttlebee
Press Contact
Corporate Communications Lead
chris.tuttlebee@ecb.co.uk
+44 (0)7824 551713

Emily Liles
Press Contact
Communications Manager - Performance (England Women)
emily.liles@ecb.co.uk