

BFB

Beyond the Boundaries
The PCA membership magazine
for players past & present



ISSUE

37

THE DOTTED LINE

JORDAN THOMPSON COVERS
COUNTY CONTRACTS

DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

YORKSHIRE WOMEN ENTER TIER 1

ON THE BENCH

A CAREER IN PHYSIOTHERAPY

DARREN **BICKNELL**

RAVI **BOPARA**

KATHRYN **BRYCE**

LINSEY **SMITH**



MARK WOOD "THIS FEELS DIFFERENT"



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EMBRACING MOMENTUM

Welcome to the 37th Issue of Beyond the Boundaries. In a sport that never stands still, the last 12 months have seen many landmark moments in the history of English cricket with the commencement of the tiered system in the women's game and private owners investing in The Hundred.

As a sport, we should be excited for the next chapter of The Hundred with further opportunities for players. With increased resources, it is fair to say the tournament is the fastest growing franchise competition outside of the IPL.

In 2026 we will see the first player auction in a major sport in this country and a 45 and 100 per cent increase in salaries in the men's and women's competitions respectively. However, there is still progress that needs to be made, especially bridging the gender pay gap and increasing base salaries.

We are also set to welcome Yorkshire Women to Tier 1 next summer, making them the ninth team in the professional setup, the latest expansion since the introduction of professionalism in the women's game in 2021. You can hear more from Lauren Winfield-Hill, Sterre Kalis and Maddie Ward about their experiences and expectations for next summer and beyond from page 50.

We are also currently in the midst of a

very important international winter. I want to wish the England Men all the very best for the ongoing Ashes and the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka. Ahead of four career defining months, we chat with fast bowler Mark Wood who shares his frustrations of missing the summer through injury, his road to fitness and aims for the future in our cover story.

England Women's winter has already ended after reaching the semi-final of the Cricket World Cup. Linsey Smith played a major role in the competition, and she discusses how she became a leading light in the team and how she found out about earning her first Central Contract from page 38.

In this feature-rich magazine, we also have the new Warwickshire all-rounder Jordan Thompson penning down a first-person blog covering his move from Yorkshire to the Bears, unearthing some of the realities that take place in the world of county transfers from page 22.

I wanted to also mention the Cricketers' Trust and the impact it has had upon one of the game's fiercest leaders. Former Warwickshire captain Dermot Reeve shares his story with addiction and how the players' charity has provided him with a second chance. You can read this eye-opening piece on page 56.

Enjoy your magazine.



DARYL MITCHELL
PCA Chief Executive



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MARK WOOD ON THE ASHES



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STEERING THE SHIP

With almost a year under his belt as PCA Chair, **OLLY HANNON-DALBY** shares reflections from his opening spell in charge and sets out his focus for the year ahead.

Having been in place as Chair for coming up to 12 months, I continue to be in awe of the hard work of the PCA team in representing what our members believe in. There is unwavering dedication across the union to achieve what is best for players – past, present and future.

It was therefore disappointing that, despite the overwhelming feeling among men's players for a small reduction in the County Championship, this did not materialise following the vote from the county Chairs. However, the Vitality Blast has been regionalised and shortened by two games which is a positive step. As I write this, indications are back-to-back fixtures will be heavily reduced in the men's and women's Blast which is a significant improvement. I would like to thank the Players' Committee for canvassing opinions from their dressing rooms, and all the players who shared their

thoughts on this subject.

I was gutted to miss the Summit in Portugal, but the birth of my first child, Arthur, was naturally my priority. That said, I have read the notes and been fully briefed on what I understand was a fantastic event. A big thank you to all the players who attended – everyone's input was well received, and the ECB staff present certainly felt the strength of feeling in key areas such as the Futures Fund, The Hundred, the gender pay gap within The Hundred, and the overall women's schedule.

Looking ahead, I'm enjoying working towards the next County Partnership Agreement, which is due in February 2026. It's vital we continue to make progress in ongoing negotiations, particularly around the Futures Fund. Minimum standards also remain a priority – across both the men's and women's game – including accommodation, travel, meals, and

access to training facilities.

While some players spend the winter playing overseas, I'd like to remind everyone that the traditional off-season is a perfect time to focus on personal development and explore what might be of interest after your playing career. It was great to see this highlighted during PCA Futures Month in November.

The beginning of my tenure has been eye-opening, and I'm looking forward to getting stuck in and working even harder over the coming months on behalf of our members.



OLLY HANNON-DALBY
PCA Chair





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UNIQUE THINKERS

Recently diagnosed as autistic, Warwickshire keeper-batter and PCA Rep **ABBEY FREEBORN** talks testing, preferences, and optimising ability ahead of neurodiversity education this winter.

For me it was the beginning of university that I started to question why I reacted differently to others. It was so obvious to me if you compared me to other students the way I transitioned, behaved, and dealt with new problems and environments, was incredibly difficult.

That was in 2017 so it's been such a long process. I did a lot of research and I seemed to fit a lot of autistic criteria. It was only this year I felt I was in a place to deal with it head on. The test is an in-depth process, involving parents, family members and it's quite confronting about everything I've found difficult in my life. It's not a very nice thing to have to face.

The result came back as autistic shortly after the end of the season, it wasn't a surprise.

I'm not sure how I feel about the label, I didn't necessarily want to be tested for it – I just wanted help for it. I wanted strategies on how to make my life easier, but I felt that by going through the testing and having the

official diagnosis was the quickest way of getting help.

There is a stigma. I have grown up with this idea of neurodiversity and autism and now it is a different outlook from when I was a child, it has certainly progressed with the understanding.

The nature of our job as an elite athlete is incredibly intense. A lot of things we do are at our max effort, with that I have found it becomes a lot harder to mask or fit in with the way I behave as I am expending so much energy and mental load trying to perform at my best.

We're all unique and neurodiversity is actually much more common in athletes than you might think. It's important the structures are tailored in these environments and the preferences of those individuals are taken into account as it can't just be blanket communication for everyone.

I want to keep learning, so it is brilliant to see the PCA is working with Neurodiverse Sport to roll out educational workshops for players and importantly, coaches.

I attended a session with them a few years ago, hosted by their Co-Founder and former Olympic Rower, Caragh McMurty.

It was a big moment for me, hearing her perspective as a female adult. A lot of what she said I could relate to, it solidified my thinking. She has achieved so much as an athlete and businesswoman after being diagnosed with autism and suspected ADHD as an adult.

There is no barrier – things just might look slightly differently for you. As somebody who is autistic, my preferences will be different and I'll work better in different environments, but it doesn't mean you can't succeed or play at the highest level. It just means you may need something slightly different to optimise your ability.

ABBEY FREEBORN
PCA Rep



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MEET THE REP TOM HELM

“Everyone complains about the schedule and when you finally have a chance to do something about it, you don’t.”

Barely a year into his role, Tom Helm has been part of a baptism of fire with his joint Middlesex PCA Representative, Joe Cracknell in a busy first season off the field.

A former teammate of previous PCA Chair James Harris, the 31-year-old took on the position which coincided with challenges around No-Objection Certificates and the domestic structure review.

Having admitted his younger self would have felt the inner workings of the game were “irrelevant” to him, he is now spreading knowledge and aiding the PCA in its position of reflecting the true player voice.

“I have enjoyed getting to know more about the job and the game,” admitted Helm. “Even though I might be playing a very small part in helping the game grow by gathering opinions of our squad and voicing it.”

“The PCA has many difficult conversations on behalf of the players, and at times it may not

always seem like a lot has been achieved but when you actually look into the detail, you can see so much is happening to support all players.”

The former England Lions bowler was tasked with gathering views on the future of the domestic schedule, with his county publicly stating its unwillingness to meet the needs of players.

With an almost unified acceptance the 2025 schedule was not fit for purpose, Helm was disappointed to not see meaningful change to support the welfare and performance of players.

“The vast majority of counties are led by members, to ask them to have less of what they want is always going to be difficult, this was the case with Middlesex. You do question how this can be the case when everyone complains about the schedule and when you finally have a

chance to do something about it, you don’t.

“However, this is not all down to the players. Obviously, we have our say but there is always more to consider. It is frustrating and I think we did all we could.”

SCAN FOR INFO ON
**PLAYERS’
COMMITTEE**





WHAT A GAME

Mid-series, Mike Gatting reaches 100 during the third Test in Adelaide.

A young Australian side, an ageing England team, and the start of the 1986 Ashes in Brisbane. Merv Hughes and Mike Gatting remember the first Test at the Gabba.

Merv Hughes: My selection for that first Test was an interesting one. We'd just come off the back of the rebel tour to South Africa in '85, so Australia was rebuilding. We had a lot of young players – Bruce Reid, Geoff Marsh – and we were all trying to find our feet again. England, on the other hand, were an experienced side. The likes of Gatting, Ian Botham, David Gower, Allan Lamb – they were all blokes who knew what they were doing.

Mike Gatting: This Test was prefaced by a member of the English media announcing that there were only three things that this England team couldn't do, them being bat, bowl and field...

MH: The talk before the series was that England were a rabble. Their preparation hadn't been great – there were stories of players being photographed on the Gold Coast instead of training – so a lot of people here thought they'd be easy to beat.

MG: We'd not played well going into the game. The Aussie media decided we couldn't play left-arm seamers – but Beefy (Botham) got up and spoke at the eve of Test dinner, saying that all it had been to this point was practice. I think it was his first series back after a drugs ban.

MH: For me personally, I was probably more nervous than excited. I'd only played one Test before and didn't really know what to expect. You look across and see the names in that England team and you think, this is proper Test cricket now.

MG: We definitely fancied our chances. On the morning of the Test – 15 minutes before the toss – and to this day I don't know why, I asked David (Gower) if he'd mind batting at number five, so that I could bat three. I just thought that Lamb, Gower and Botham in the middle-order sounded right.

MH: Brisbane was typical Brisbane – hot, humid, and the wicket a bit sticky on day one. You didn't mind bowling on the second day once it hardened up either. I remember thinking it was a decent pitch if you got in with the bat.

MG: It wasn't dissimilar to Lord's. If you could get through to lunch, one or two down, you had a decent chance of setting a total.

MH: I got Gatting and Lamb. That settled the nerves. I bowled alright, though one of my overs went for 22 when Botham got hold of me. I think he hit three fours and a six in four balls.

MG: We went from 198-2 and looking good to 198-4 and uncertain. It would be Sir Ian who swung the game our way. To be fair to him, he was brilliant all tour. He did a great job of looking after the young seamers too; guiding them. This was Daffy's (Phillip DeFreitas) first Test, plus we had Gladstone Small and Neil Foster. Glad would make an impact later in the series and Daffy was terrific throughout.

Collar up for Mike Gatting in Brisbane, Australia.



MH: I'd watched Botham in '81, so to be bowling at him was a bit surreal. The way he played that innings was brutal. People talk about 'Bazball' now, but Beefy was playing that way 40 years ago. He changed the game on his own. By the time England made 450-odd, we knew we were behind it. The old rule in Test cricket is if you get over 300 on the first day, you've done your job. They did that comfortably.

MG: A huge influence on the series was our spinners, in the form of my own county pairing at Middlesex of John Emburey and Philippe Edmonds. They gave us great control. The seamers were asked to bowl a disciplined line outside off-stump, with the odd bumper, but it was the spinners that did the work when the pitch went flat and the ball got older.

MH: They only needed 77 to win in the last innings. As a bowler you just hope for a miracle. We had a go, but they were too good. Experience showed.

MG: I wanted to get it over with and clipped a leg-stump half-volley straight to Greg Matthews at square-leg off Merv...

MH: I was dropped after that Test – straight into a Shield match – but came back later in the series. It was a big learning curve. We were young, still finding our way, and England just had that know-how.

MG: Looking back, there wasn't much experience in the Australian bowling lineup and only really Bruce Reid anything like it. He definitely didn't deserve to be on the losing side in the series.

MH: You look back now and see how that changed over time. We rebuilt, and by 1989 when we came back to England, it was the other way around. We played 12 players that series; they played 27. Confidence makes a huge difference.

MG: From that game forward, I was disappointed to lose at all. We played well in all departments. I think we only dropped one catch in the whole series.

MH: The Ashes has always meant everything to an Australian. So when you get to play in the real thing in your backyard, losing to England was never acceptable. When we finally started beating them again

later in my career, you walked around with your chest puffed out. You'd earned the right to bang it like a big silver drum.

MG: We picked players with the right mentality. We picked players in the right roles. And at the end of the day we could bat, bowl... and field.



Seven years on, Merv Hughes gets his own back in Manchester.

14-19 NOVEMBER 1986
AUSTRALIA VS ENGLAND
AT THE GABBA

Australia 248 & (fo) 282
MARSH 110, **DILLEY** 5-68

England 456 & 77/3
BOTHAM 138, **WAUGH** 3-76

Umpires:
MEL JOHNSON, TONY CRAFTER

ENGLAND WON BY 7 WICKETS

Australia

GEOFF MARSH
DAVID BOON
TIM ZOEHRRER (†)
DEAN JONES
ALLAN BORDER (C)
GREG RITCHIE
GREG MATTHEWS
STEVE WAUGH
CHRIS MATTHEWS
MERV HUGHES
BRUCE REID

England

CHRIS BROAD
BILL ATHEY
MIKE GATTING (C)
ALLAN LAMB
DAVID GOWER
IAN BOTHAM
JACK RICHARDS (†)
JOHN EMBUREY
PHIL DEFREITAS
PHIL EDMONDS
GRAHAM DILLEY



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SHORT STORIES AND UPDATES FROM THE WORLD OF CRICKET



CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

'Cricket Meets' is a new initiative from the PCA that brings together past and present cricketers for inspiring and meaningful conversations with athletes from other sports.

This year in celebration of Black History Month and its theme 'Standing Firm in Power and Pride' the panel of Warwickshire cricketer Keith Barker and former England footballer Rachel Yankey were interviewed by Chair of the Cricket Media Club, Dean Wilson.

There was also time to reflect on the legacy of David 'Syd' Lawrence who passed away from MND in a heartfelt interview with his son, Buster.



CALCULATED GENIUS

Former Surrey and Northamptonshire youngster Krish Patel decided to embark on a new academic journey by pursuing a degree in Applied Mathematics from Brown University in the United States.

The well-renowned university forms part of a group of eight highly-ranked private schools called the Ivy League.

Patel came through Surrey's Talent Pathway and made his professional debut in 2023. Leaving the game at the age of just 19, he now embarks on a personal development journey.



DOG-LOVING BREWER

Warwickshire all-rounder Chloe Brewer found a unique way to spend her time away from the cricket pitch during rehabilitation from injury.

As part of the BorrowMyDoggy scheme, the 23-year-old walks dogs for owners who are either disabled or are unable to walk their pets themselves.

Brewer, who is one of the many dog-loving players in the Warwickshire squad, believes this relationship is ideal to give each other company during tough times.

MEMBERS SHARE THEIR STORY



Steven Finn

THE ASHES FILES

Steven Finn has tons of Ashes stories to share in his book 'The Ashes Files'. From the jubilation of winning the 2010/11 series as a 21-year-old to being released from the squad in 2013/14 and then bouncing back to play a crucial role in helping England win the Ashes a year later.



Andrew Flintoff

COMING HOME

The 'Coming Home' autobiography highlights the charismatic personality of the great Andrew Flintoff and how his life on and off the pitch shaped him into the person he is today.



Ashley Giles

THE KING OF SPAIN AND I

In his book 'King of Spain and I', Ashley Giles recalls some outstanding memories from the 2005 Ashes, one of the greatest Test series ever contested in the history of the sport.



Andy Moles

AROUND THE WORLD IN 40 YEARS

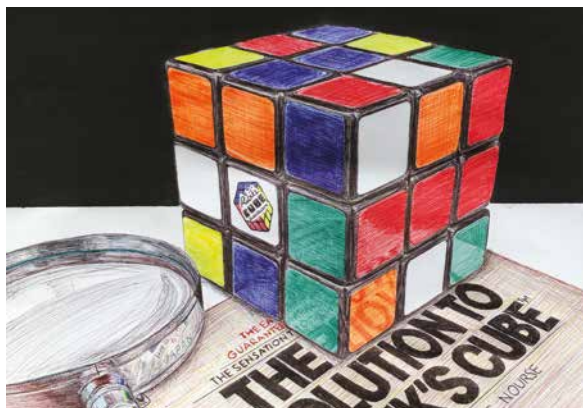
Andy Moles sheds light on his cricketing journey in his book 'Around the World in 40 Years', covering everything from a successful playing career with Warwickshire to coaching all over the globe with not even an amputated leg stopping him.



Tony Pigott

LESTER AND THE DECKCHAIR REVOLUTION

'Lester and the Deckchair Revolution' is the autobiography by former England, Sussex and Surrey cricketer Tony Pigott. Told with brutal honesty Pigott wants to help others suffering from cancer. Use code FAIRFIELD25 at checkout for 25% off at fairfieldbooks.co.uk



SPORTING DRAWS

Having followed an appetite for art and upon the completion of his degree at Cardiff Metropolitan University, Glamorgan's Ben Morris found himself with more free time on his hands to pursue his passion.

Across the summer, revisiting his skills in biro pen drawing became a favoured downtime activity and an excellent way of switching off. The bowler's work is inspired by subjects which capture a moment in time, immortalised in coloured ink on cartridge paper.



FREE METRO BANK TICKETS

The Metro Bank One Day Cup produced two fabulous finals in the men's and women's game in 2025 with Worcestershire and Lancashire claiming the titles.

PCA members are able to access free entry with a guest to Metro Bank One Day Cup matches by showing their membership ID in the 'My PCA' section of the PCA website.

Here's hoping for more thrilling 50-over matches in 2026.



STEWART'S NEW VENTURE

Kent all-rounder Grant Stewart has dipped his toes into business by launching Recuperate Ltd along with his fiancée Annie McConnell.

The recovery studio opened in the heart of Canterbury, offering various services, including Pilates sessions, ice baths and saunas to help athletes recover from the intensity of professional sport.

Stewart has already seen a bunch of his Kent teammates use the facilities during their off days in the summer.

FEEDBACK TO LOOK FORWARD

The PCA would like to thank all members who contributed with their honest opinions in our 2025 surveys. The results will help us develop strategies and services to support member needs.

Drawn randomly, Olly Cox and Paul Booth won two Test tickets while Ethan Brookes and Hannah Rainey won Amazon vouchers.

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21 JUNE 2005

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TRENT BRIDGE

Former England six foot seven inch quick, **CHRIS TREMLETT**, looks back on a dream international debut – and the hat-trick that almost was.



☞ That's cricket, I suppose. If you've done all the prep and worked hard, you go into a game knowing you've given yourself the best chance. That's what being professional is about.

☞ It all happened fast. I'd taken a hat-trick at Trent Bridge a couple of weeks earlier, so to make my England debut on the same ground felt special.

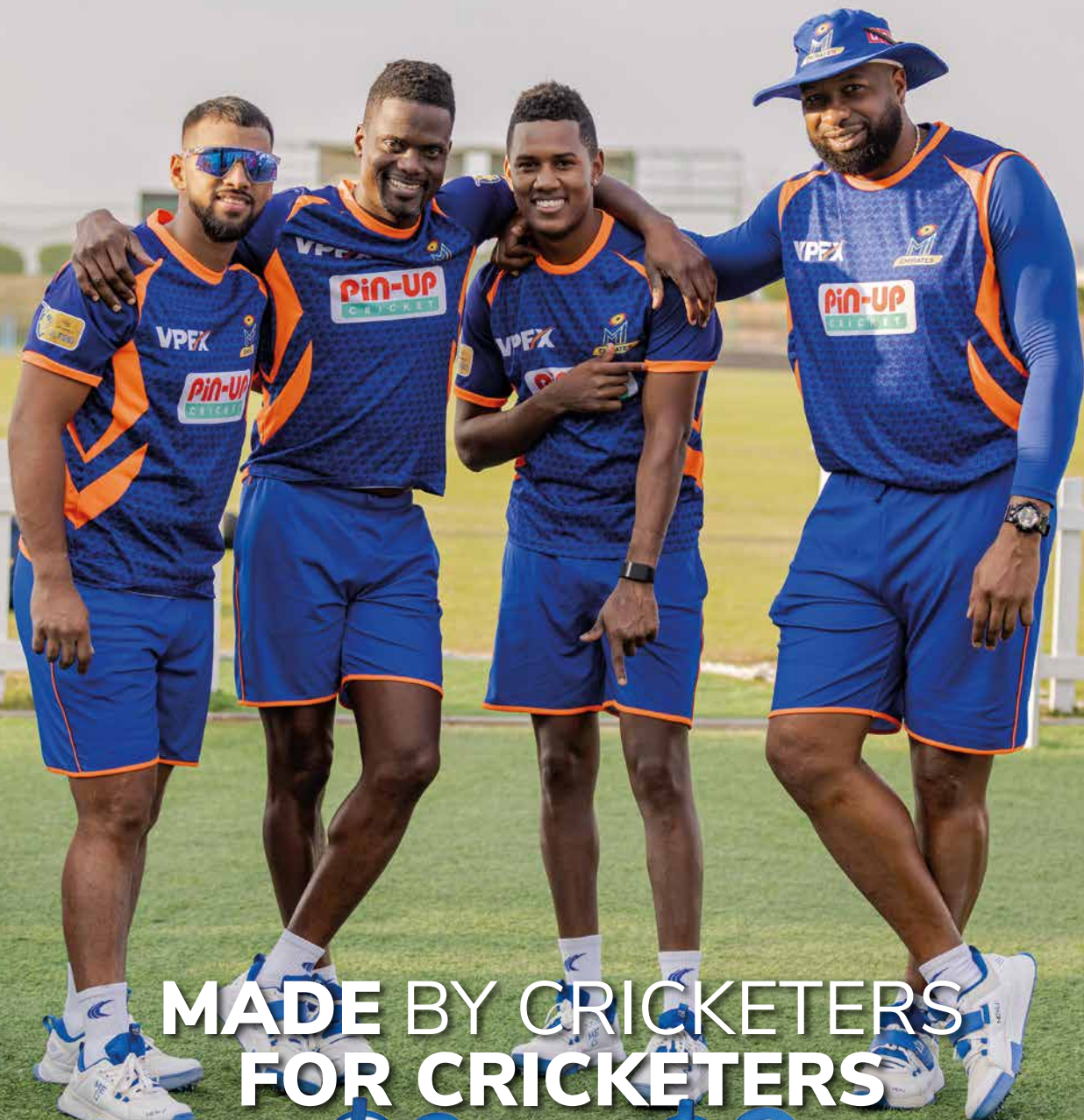
☞ I got my first wicket, then another, and suddenly I was on a hat-trick.

☞ The crowd seemed huge. Back then, county players didn't often play in front of that many people. I just tried to stick to what I'd been doing – bowl quick, hit a length, keep it simple.

☞ The third ball hit middle stump, after being chopped on by Mohammad Ashraful, but the bails didn't move. They must've been glued on! I half-celebrated, realised nothing had fallen, and just walked back laughing.

☞ I thought my Test debut would come during the Ashes series in 2005, but it didn't. I was in the squad for the first four Tests, so I knew it was only a matter of time.

☞ I'd played for Hampshire in a warm-up against England – they smashed us, but I bowled well and got a few runs. Duncan Fletcher must've liked what he saw, because a few days later I was in the squad.



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Total MVP Points

Best figures **5-38 vs Warwickshire in April 2025**

“It is great to have contributed consistently for The Blaze over the last five years.”

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Total wickets List A batting average

2,770
Total runs

“The Charlotte Edwards Cup win was really special. It will be tough to have a better day than that in a Blaze shirt.”





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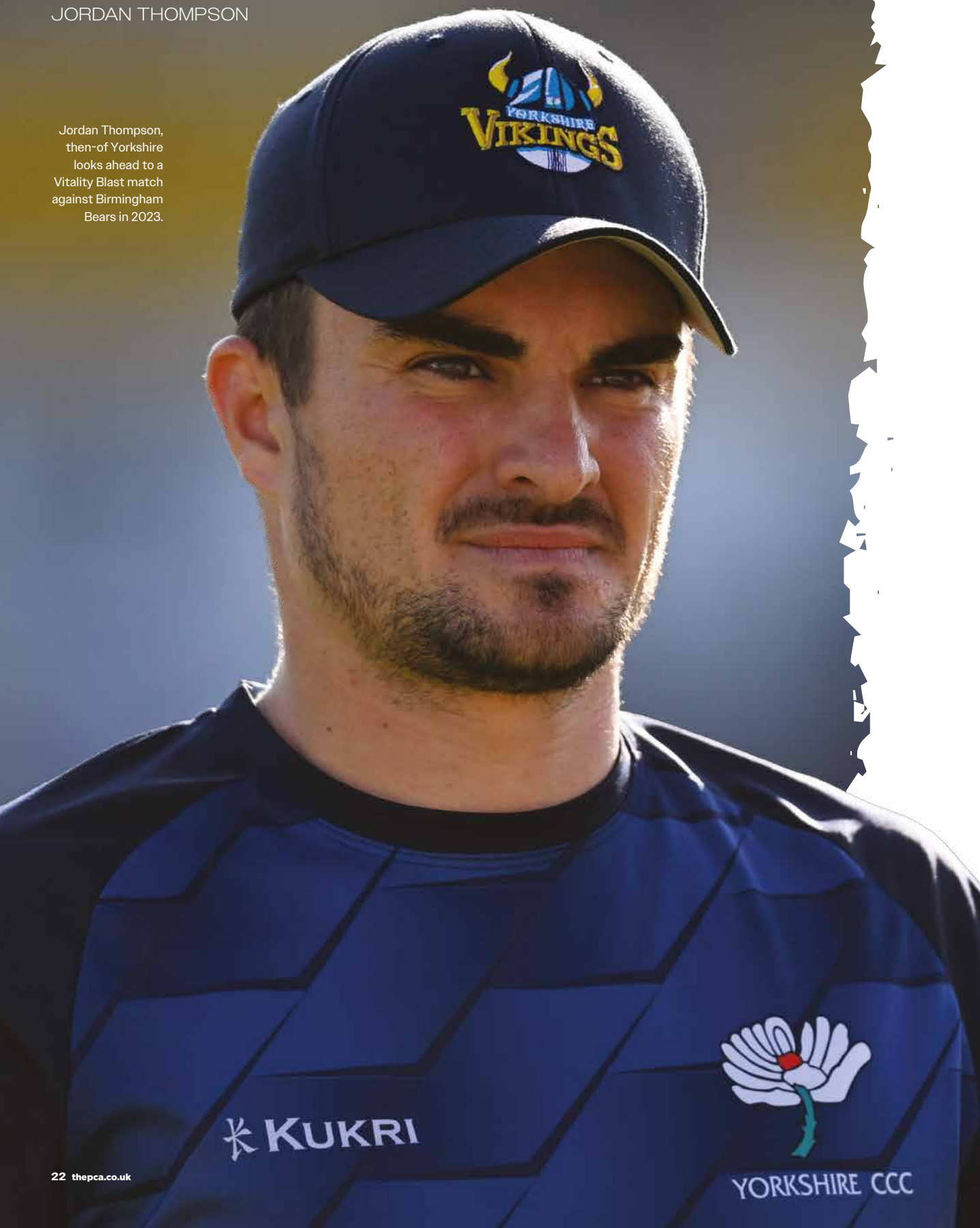
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JORDAN THOMPSON

Jordan Thompson,
then-of Yorkshire
looks ahead to a
Vitality Blast match
against Birmingham
Bears in 2023.



COUNTY CRICKET'S TRANSFER WINDOW

One of the big name moves in the 2025/26 off-season, new Warwickshire recruit **JORDAN THOMPSON** pens his journey as a leading Yorkshire player and reveals the reality behind moving county in 2025.

A little over two weeks after the opening of county cricket's 'transfer window', Yorkshire's homegrown Jordan Thompson had been announced as a new signing for Warwickshire on a three-year all-format deal in a move that turned heads on the county circuit.

Known for his variations in T20 cricket and reliability in the red-ball game, the 29-year-old also recently completed a Diploma in Freelance Journalism at the British College of Journalism, so who better to detail his journey than the man himself.

If you were to tell me at the start of the 2025 season, that I would be leaving Yorkshire by the end of it, I would've laughed at you. But I guess that's the naivety of professional sport and having the attitude that you always stay at your home club.

As I sit now, in November in Melbourne, five months after deciding to leave Yorkshire for Warwickshire, there are still so many things that need organising before I head back to the UK to meet my new colleagues and begin the 2026 season as a Bear. I need a place to live, I need to pack up my Leeds house, and I also need to play in two franchise tournaments in the UAE. It is a busy mix of visiting family, preparing for more cricket and organising life's admin.

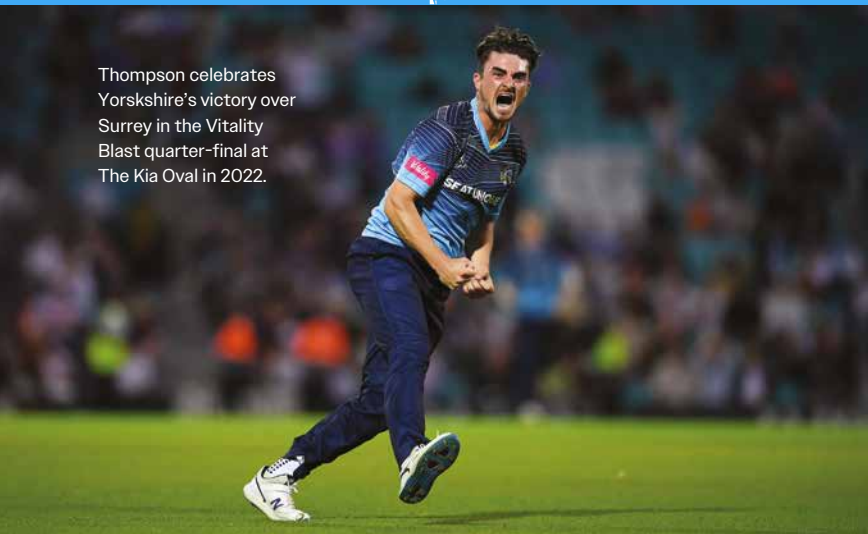
Yorkshire cricket has been a massive part of mine and my family's life. From making my under 11s debut at the age of nine, right the way up to playing seven years of first team cricket. It is something that very nearly came to a

halt at the age of 13, when I was offered a scholarship at Malvern College and a link up with Worcestershire CCC, however, this very quickly fell through as Yorkshire took it up with the ECB, the fact that Worcestershire were trying to poach three young players didn't sit right with them.

I had to bide my time at Yorkshire as a young player coming through the academy, all-rounders and bowlers such as Tim Bresnan, Liam Plunkett, Jack Brooks, Will Rhodes, Ryan Sidebottom meant that the first team was very strong when I was in my late teens but I learnt a lot from those players and played a lot of 2nd XI cricket to prepare for what was to come.

After making my debut in T20 cricket in 2018 and four-day cricket in 2019, the 2020 Covid season was a real breakthrough for me where I averaged 46 with the bat and led the line with the most wickets, cementing an all-rounder spot for the years following.

Thompson celebrates
Yorkshire's victory over
Surrey in the Vitality
Blast quarter-final at
The Kia Oval in 2022.



Experiencing Blast Finals Day with Yorkshire was a highlight of my career with them, although it is something we all look back on as a missed opportunity, especially after scoring the highest total ever scored at a Finals Day.

The biggest highlight of them all though, was being 1st XI capped. Number 189 in over 160 years of history shows that it is not an easy feat to achieve and it was an emotional moment for me and my family to be presented with the full rose at Scarborough. I recently found my academy cap and 2nd XI cap, so all three of them now sit next to each other proudly and there is still a possibility that I could wear one of them again during my career.

Back to 2025, I knew my contract was coming into its final year and I also knew that Yorkshire were being on the cautious side financially due to past controversies and the fact that they were waiting for the sale of their Hundred team to the Sun Group. With this in mind, I wasn't expecting for negotiations to be at

the forefront of their mind as they probably thought it was going to be a pretty simple deal to get over the line, as did I.

Yorkshire's first offer was presented to me in early February, prior to The Hundred draft. It was an offer I didn't see as acceptable for the age and player I am so I turned it down but said we will talk more about it once The Hundred draft had taken place, this was to see if they were going to give the Superchargers a nudge to sign me and hope that there was a link forming there between the incoming Sunrisers and the Northern Superchargers. However, this didn't happen, and I was signed by Southern Brave, a team that I enjoyed playing for, they have some fantastic players.

As the 2025 season flew by, as it always does, I was very much focused on the season and making sure we got off to the best start in our first year back in Division One. Contract talks weren't at the forefront of my mind until we crept towards June, and I started

to wonder why there weren't any talks taking place. With June being professional cricketers' 'transfer window', this is where Warwickshire first made their move.

At 10am on 1 June, an email landed in my inbox from Warwickshire CCC, the first time I really felt that it was becoming a possibility, and up to that point, there was still nothing from Yorkshire. My agent and I went straight to Yorkshire and made them aware of the situation, but Warwickshire were very proactive, made it very clear that they wanted me to sign and provided me with a presentation outlining where they see me and the club going in the next three-five years. I was impressed with the detail and thought that was put into preparing this document and it got me thinking about how this opportunity could improve me as player and a person.

Discussions with my agent were frequent around this time and with me moving towards the age of 29-30, it was clear that my next county contract was probably going to be the main one of my career, financially. As an all-rounder, who plays all formats, franchise cricket around the world and at an age where I am coming into my peak, we strongly believed that my market value was way above where Yorkshire saw me and this unashamedly played a big part in my decision.

After conversations with my family and fiancée, they were very supportive about the situation and the opportunity that had been presented to me. The days after the contract offer from Warwickshire came through, there were various email threads and a swift negotiation to get the contract to where I wanted it to be, but it didn't take long to come

At 10am on 1 June, an email landed in my inbox from Warwickshire CCC, the first time I really felt that it was becoming a possibility.

to an agreement. I had conversations with Yorkshire, via my agent, but it became clear to me that I was more than likely going to be moving on. Before I knew it, I was signing on the dotted line for Warwickshire, on Docusign, rather than in the flesh, and as soon as the email was sent back, it was a done deal.

It was a mixture of excitement and sadness when I made my final decision. I was leaving the club I have been affiliated since the age of nine, leaving a group of players who are some of my best friends, and I'm also leaving my hometown and family longer term which is probably the toughest thing. Telling my teammates I was leaving was hard and I'm not ashamed to say that I shed a tear! I made it clear to the Yorkshire management that I still wanted to play a big part in the 2025 season, and they were very appreciative of how I carried myself for the rest of the year.

However, the opportunity to sign for Warwickshire, play at Edgbaston and most importantly go there and challenge for trophies is a huge pull

for me and I really can't wait to meet up with the lads and form some new relationships. I think the transition will be pretty smooth, playing with some of the Bears lads around different competitions mean there are already some familiar faces in the changing room.

I'm looking forward to going back to Headingley and being on the other side and I'm expecting a little bit of flak from the crowd which will be good fun. I will always be proud of how I left it with the fans and members as well, I don't think I had a bad word from them about the move, and I did say that there is unfinished business down the line!

But for now, it is time for a change, and I am hopeful I can have a big influence on a new group of people and a new team. Along with that, I still aspire to make it to international level, and a change of environment might help me in that journey.



JORDAN THOMPSON

Picture day with teammates at Headingley in 2023.



THE GREAT EXHIBITION

PCA
AWARDS
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
TOYOTA

THE 56TH EDITION OF **THE PCA AWARDS** CELEBRATED A YEAR OF BRILLIANCE ACROSS ENGLISH AND WELSH CRICKET. **JORDAN COX** AND **EMMA LAMB** CLAIMED THE SPORT'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS PLAYER-VOTED HONOURS, AND AN ENJOYABLE NIGHT WAS HAD BY ALL...



Hosted at Exhibition White City, an industrial West London venue transformed by the presence of its international-standard inhabitants, the PCA Awards in partnership with Toyota staged a night deserving of its reputation.

Among the players, partners, and stakeholders in attendance, two names stood tallest. Essex's Jordan Cox and Lancashire's Emma Lamb took home top billing of Toyota PCA Men's and Women's Player of the Year, respectively. Each capping landmark seasons that welcomed consistency of

impact across all competitions.

For Cox, it was a night that confirmed the 24-year-old's rise to the top of the domestic game. Piling up 1,667 all-format runs and earning a recall to England's T20 side, his performances in The Hundred and County Championship saw the Margate-born wicketkeeper complete a treble of sorts – he was also named The Hundred Men's Player of the Year and included in the IG PCA Men's Team of the Year. Cox becomes the first man from Essex to win the award since Stuart Law in 1999.

"It's an honour, when it's your peers

“IT'S PROBABLY THE REASON I GOT SELECTED TO GO TO NEW ZEALAND, WHICH MEANS A LOT.
JORDAN COX

ROLL OF HONOUR

TOYOTA PCA WOMEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR
EMMA LAMB

TOYOTA PCA MEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR
JORDAN COX

TOYOTA PCA WOMEN'S YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR
DAVINA PERRIN

TOYOTA PCA MEN'S YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR
REHAN AHMED

PCA OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD
GRAHAM GOOCH

RADO RECOGNITION AWARDS
ADIL RASHID & NAT SCIVER-BRUNT

ECB SPECIAL MERIT
FREDDIE FLINTOFF'S FIELD OF DREAMS

PCA UMPIRE OF THE YEAR – MEN'S GAME
IAN BLACKWELL

PCA UMPIRE OF THE YEAR – WOMEN'S GAME
GABI BROWN



FROM TOP
Award winners,
Rehan Ahmed,
Jordan Cox, and
Davina Perrin;
Accepting the
Contribution Award:
Graham Gooch.

RIGHT
Nat Sciver-Brunt,
Emma Lamb, and
Adil Rashid.





and your teammates voting, that really means the world,” said Cox on the night. “My favourite moment of the year was taking my chance and scoring an international half century for England. It’s probably why I got selected to go to New Zealand, which means a lot. On the Lions trip I want to show the selectors I’m capable of playing Test cricket.”

With that first stop the aforementioned pre-Ashes tour to New Zealand, Cox is speaking ahead of the start of a busy winter for England. Ashes or otherwise. The New Year will also welcome a multi-format series in Sri Lanka before the 2026 ICC Men’s T20 World Cup.

On her own World Cup campaign in the women’s game, Emma Lamb became the first winner of the Toyota PCA Women’s Player of the Year in the Tier 1 era. The Lancashire opener scored 1,312 domestic runs, claimed 14 wickets and impressed on England duty averaging 41 in the 2025 summer – earning her selection for the semi-final-reaching World Cup squad.

“I wasn’t expecting it, but I’m very happy,” said Lamb in a video



FROM TOP
PCA Chief
Executive Daryl
Mitchell on stage;
The Chip Shop
Boys provide the
entertainment;
England’s Brydon
Carse and Harry
Brook enjoy the
big night.



“THE MOST
PRESTIGIOUS
AWARDS CEREMONY
IN CRICKET IS ALWAYS
A WONDERFUL
OPPORTUNITY TO
CELEBRATE.

DARYL MITCHELL

PLAYING SPORT FOR A LIVING IS NOT A JOB, IT IS A DREAM... YOU JUST WANT TO TRY AND PUT SOMETHING BACK INTO THE GAME.

GRAHAM GOOCH



The PCA Outstanding Contribution Award was presented to Graham Gooch for his incredible support of the game.

over three years, launched a Scholarship in his name, and helped stage the inaugural Golf Invitational in Portugal – raising £45,000 in due process.

“What I’ve tried to do is go back into the game I love and give something,” the 72-year-old said, speaking on the night. “Playing sport for a living is not a job, it is a dream... you just want to try and put something back into the game.

“A lot of people helped me during my career, and I have just tried to help a few others along the way with good advice and setting up things for them. It is a pleasure to help people who are making their way in their careers. It’s a great honour to do so for the PCA and the Trust, who are always there for members in their hour of need.”

There were further honours for Adil Rashid and Nat Sciver-Brunt, who picked up Rado Recognition Awards, while Ian Blackwell and Gabi Brown were named Umpires of the Year.

As ever, the evening raised funds for the Cricketers’ Trust, the players’ charity providing support to members and their families in times of need – a closing reminder that amid all the glitz and glam, the PCA Awards remain a celebration of a community brought together by cricket.

recording sent from her campaign in India. “It’s really lovely that my peers have taken the time to recognise my performances this year. It’s been an enjoyable one with Lancashire, winning two trophies, with opening the batting with Eve Jones a definite highlight.”

Elsewhere, Leicestershire’s Rehan Ahmed continued to deliver on his well-touted promise by winning Toyota PCA Men’s Young Player of the Year. The 21-year-old all-rounder hit five First-Class centuries, took 52 wickets across 12 months and earned another England call up for the white-ball tour to New Zealand after a duo of IT20 appearances this summer.

Warwickshire’s teenage star Davina Perrin, meanwhile, was named Toyota PCA Women’s Young Player of the Year after a breakout season saw her score 1,000 domestic runs across formats.

The 18-year-old also lit up The Hundred with a 42-ball century, for Northern Superchargers, helping her side go on to win the competition, and went past three figures in the Metro Bank One Day Cup, scoring 113 against Surrey.

“It’s been a massive year for the women’s game,” Perrin reflected. “Winning The Hundred was a standout moment for me and playing in front of those crowds was surreal.”

The PCA Awards also honoured Graham Gooch, recipient of the Outstanding Contribution Award for his lifelong service to cricket and the Cricketers’ Trust. Welcomed by a standing ovation, Gooch received his award from Eoin Morgan.

The 67,057-run man has been a guiding voice, a coach and a fundraiser. In 2024 he pledged £90,000 to the players’ charity the Cricketers’ Trust

BACK ON THE HORSE

Back from injury and bound for Australia, **MARK WOOD** reflects on time away from the game, life with family, and the excitement of re-joining England's pace pack for another crack at the Ashes.

WORDS: Kieran Longworth

Mark Wood re-enacts his iconic 'invisible horse' celebration in his native north-east during a photoshoot commissioned for the PCA's commercial magazine, First Class, following the 2015 Ashes.







WOODY IN NUMBERS

FULL NAME: **MARK ANDREW WOOD**

DATE OF BIRTH: **11 JANUARY 1990**

PLACE OF BIRTH: **ASHINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND**

HEIGHT: **6 FT (1.83M)**

BATTING STYLE: **RIGHT-HANDED**

BOWLING STYLE: **RIGHT-ARM FAST**

INTERNATIONAL TEST CAREER *

MATCHES: **37**

WICKETS: **119**

BOWLING AVERAGE: **30.42**

BEST BOWLING IN AN INNINGS: **6-37** V AUSTRALIA AT HOBART, JANUARY 2022

FIVE-WICKET HAULS: **5**

STRIKE RATE: **54.9**

ECONOMY RATE: **3.31**

*Stats are accurate at time of print, before the 2025/26 Ashes Series.

Durham and England's Mark Wood joins on the phone having missed the entire home summer of 2025 through injury. The fast bowler was deemed too central to England's Ashes hopes this winter, for any risks to be taken.

The 35-year-old from Ashington, Northumberland, underwent knee surgery in March and was initially targeting a return for the decisive fifth Test against India in late July. Despite bowling in the intervals during that series, his comeback was pushed back again – first to a possible County Championship outing for Durham, and now with the withers being lifted for the Ashes.

"That's just how life goes," the paceman reflects, speaking to Beyond the Boundaries en-route to Manchester Airport to join the squad during England's white-ball tour of New Zealand.

"Rehab's never a straight line, is it? You feel like you're getting there,

then it's up and down. I thought I was pretty close, but with everything that was going on, we took a more cautious approach. A couple of little niggles kept popping up, so the sensible call was to hold off rather than rush it.

Those who know Wood best – notably Stuart Broad on his 'For the Love of Cricket' podcast and Chris Woakes guesting on 'Stick to Cricket' – say the man in question doesn't need a huge number of overs in his legs to be at full tilt. The stats back that up too. On his return to the side in 2024, Wood's first over was the fastest by an Englishman since records began – a top speed of 97.1mph on day two of the second Test against the West Indies at Trent Bridge, saw him average 94.5mph across the set of six.

That ability to find top gear again became evident in 2023, when he and Woakes transformed England's fortunes in the second half of the home Ashes.

"From 2-0 down, that finish with Chris coming back into the side sticks with me," Wood recalls. "We talk about it now

and, honestly, in 10 or 15 years' time I think we'll still talk about it. That was an incredible end to the series.

"Woakesy was fantastic; he's one of those players who can come in and change a game in an instant. We had an impact together and we still laugh about it. I always say we won our series 2-0 – in our heads, we did anyway."

Individually, that summer was among the best Wood has ever felt. His devastating 5-34 at Headingley was voted Wisden's best men's Test spell that year. "Everyone's heard it a million times before, but Baz (McCullum) and Ben (Stokes) give me so much confidence to steam in and do what I do best," Wood continues. "The faith to do that is special. You go away from those moments wanting to repay that faith – and, above all else, hoping you can replicate it away from home.

"There's a lot you learn about your game in big series like the Ashes. Playing Australia is always a different test. Conditions – both on and off the

There's a lot you learn about your game in big series like the Ashes. Playing Australia is always a different test.



In the nets: Wood shows England Lions his skills as coach.



“I wouldn’t say I’m turning into a full-time broadcaster any time soon. But if I tried a ‘normal’ desk job I think it’d drive me crazy.”

field – are unique and, as a collective, they’re very hard to beat at home. You want the respect of your teammates and the opposition – that’s what these contests are about. You want to be remembered for having contributed. Properly.

“I’ve been fortunate that my career’s almost felt like two separate callings. When I first started, I had a different run-up and action – I’ve changed a lot since then as a bowler. Sprinting in and hitting the crease is tough at the best of times, and it’s gutting how things have finished up for some lads, like Woakesy,” he adds, on the Warwickshire man’s recent retirement. “You miss them – it’s a real personal miss when a mate like him isn’t there, it’s huge.

“Who’s going to hold my hand on the aeroplane?” Wood jokes. “I’m a terrible flyer, I need someone to distract me. He’d be the one bringing the biscuits and watching TV with me in the evenings. He’s been super reliable, a proper team guy who quietly gets on with the job. He’s underrated as a player too because he doesn’t shout about himself; he just does his job brilliantly. I’ll miss Chris massively, but I’m sure we’ll keep in touch over the winter.”

Wood, yet to play a Test for England in 2025, remains full of energy – as ever. Seemingly unable to sit still, he’s been keeping busy. “In the off-period I tried my hand at coaching, had a go on radio and TV, and spent some proper time with the family. Those are the things I’ll

There's real confidence in our attack and it feels like this is something we've all been working towards.

take out of it. But I'm still not giving up playing – not by a long way. I want to be out there. I can't wait to get the ball back in my hand.

"Being around a young family, life's been great," he continues, referencing what is a considerable change of pace. "I've enjoyed spending time at Durham too. Working with Neil Killeen and the backroom staff has been brilliant; they welcomed me straight away and made me feel part of the group. Neil's been fantastically inspiring as a coach, it's that stuff that keeps you interested in the game while you're off it.

"The media stuff was eye-opening," he adds, referring to stints on Test Match Special and appearances for Sky Sports during the summer. "There's a lot more to it than you think. It's not just someone telling you what's happened ball by ball – their analysis has real depth, and you quickly realise the commentators are proper pros. They're passionate, they're critical; they want England to win as much as anyone.

"I wouldn't say I'm turning into a full-time broadcaster any time soon. But if I tried a 'normal' desk job I think it'd drive me crazy. I like having a bit of variety, but nothing beats being in the team. That's the bit I've missed most."

Rehab, for Wood, has meant plenty of miles up and down the M1 to Loughborough's state-of-the-art indoor training centre. "It's a way to stay involved even when I'm not fully available," he adds



of that journey. "When I join back in with the squad proper, I'm confident I'll slot straight back in and pick up where I left off.

"This will be my fifth Ashes series, if I've counted them right – 2015, 2017-18, 2021, the home Tests in 2023, and now this. That's quite something when you say it out loud. There's a bit of experience there, and that matters when you've got a group where people know their roles."

England travel with one of the fastest groups of bowlers they've ever assembled. Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Josh Tongue, Brydon Carse and Wood himself mark five bowlers all capable of hitting 90mph, plus the golden arm of captain Ben Stokes, who when fit is right up there with them.

LEFT
Broadcast duty with former England partner-in-crime, Stuart Broad.

ABOVE
Wood gives it everything during the 2024 English summer; An arm round the shoulder from England captain Ben Stokes.

Tongue out for Woody
as he enjoys bowling
at Headingley in
September, 2025.

“If I’m in the side, I’ll be surrounded by lads who can bowl absolute rockets.”

“There’s real confidence in our attack,” says Wood. “And it feels like this is something we’ve all been working towards. Australia are a brilliant side and they don’t get beaten much at home, but I think this tour will be much tighter than it has been before. We’ve been to Australia and it’s gone one way, but this feels different. The way we’ve built, the way we want to play – it gives us belief that we can make it a real contest.”

“When you look at what the coaches have done – building a squad of 17 or 18 core players where everyone knows their role – it reminds you of what Eoin Morgan did ahead of the 2019 World Cup. There’s a lesson there about experience and clarity. If someone’s rested for a certain pitch, everyone else believes they can do the job.



“If I’m in the side, I’ll be surrounded by lads who can bowl absolute rockets too. That’s exciting. We’ve seen what Australia do in their conditions and how well they bowl and bat, so the plan is simple: if our top seven can put runs on the board – and they’ve been reliable for a few years now – our bowlers can then really put their top order under pressure.”

“Like Morgan, Stokes has that presence about him too,” Wood says of his fellow Durhamite. “He might come across as this big alpha – and he’s got that about him – but he’s so much more than that. As a captain he works meticulously hard behind closed doors, and we’ve all seen it on the field too. He’s very clear with his plans, he’s got a proper cricketing brain, and him and McCullum together are always

plotting new ways to affect the game. Sometimes it’s something you don’t expect, but it’s always about getting an edge. Everyone wants to follow that – you can see it in their eyes.

As England’s premier quick pulls into Manchester Airport, conversation turns to fond memories gone by. Reminded of an ‘invisible horse’ photo shoot – commissioned for the PCA nearly a decade ago – in Old Horses Yard. ‘Woody’ picks up the tale: “I’ve been watching Yellowstone recently, if we win here, the next photoshoot could be in Montana with the Ashes. Who knows?”

For now, England’s fast-bowling thoroughbred is back on the road – fit again, full of belief, and ready to climb back on the proverbial saddle for a spectacular series Down Under.



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TURNING POINT

After five years away from the England XI, **LINSEY SMITH** played a key role at the World Cup and now has her first Central Contract to boot. Ollie Collins reviews a whirlwind 12 months.

England has enjoyed a wealth of spin options in recent years – Sophie Ecclestone, Charlie Dean and Sarah Glenn among them – but another has now earned her place in that conversation: Linsey Smith.

The Hampshire left-arm orthodox bowler came through the Oxfordshire pathway and made her England debut at the 2018 T20 World Cup against Bangladesh. Despite claiming 13 wickets in nine matches over seven months, she had to wait five years for another opportunity in international cricket – returning for the 2024 T20

World Cup – before finally making her ODI debut against the West Indies in May 2025.

The appointment of Charlotte Edwards as head coach breathed new life into the England side after a disappointing winter at the T20 World Cup and Ashes. The former PCA President brought with her vast experience from franchise and domestic cricket worldwide – and, crucially, she already knew Smith well from their time together at Southern Vipers.

“Lottie knows my game and how I work,” says Smith in conversation

with Beyond the Boundaries. “She picks on form, so I stayed focused knowing I had to perform for Hampshire. When she told me I was in both squads against the West Indies, I was absolutely delighted. To make that breakthrough into the ODI setup was really pleasing.”

That debut came in memorable fashion at Derby some five months before this conversation took place. Hundreds from Tammy Beaumont and Amy Jones set up a 108-run win, but it was Smith’s extraordinary 5-36 that saw England home.

“It was a massive moment,” the 30-year-old recalls. “I’ve probably not reflected on it properly yet, but I was just so proud – and having my family there made it even better. Dunks (Sophia Dunkley) presented my cap, and she took the catch for my fifth wicket,

It’s about influencing games and doing the best I can for England.

which came on the last ball of my spell. It all felt a bit fairy-tale-like, honestly. It was such a special day.”

England’s spin department remains fiercely competitive – and Smith is well aware of the standards set. Ecclestone (323), Dean (149) and Glenn (112) boast a combined 584 international wickets.

“The competition is huge and those

three have done so well for so long,” she says. “I knew it wouldn’t come easy. I wanted my performances to speak for themselves – it’s about influencing games and doing the best I can for England. I try to stay focused on what the team needs and go from there.”

After impressing through the summer, Smith’s inclusion in the World Cup squad for India and Sri Lanka was just reward. In England’s chaotic opening match in Guwahati, she helped skittle South Africa for just 69 with a devastating powerplay spell of 3-7 from four overs, including two maidens – setting up a 10-wicket win.

“It was a surreal day,” she continues. “On the bus to the ground I had this moment of reflection, just thinking how lucky I am. This is where I’ve always wanted to be – representing England at an ODI World Cup. I’m still pinching



LEFT
Smith bowls during the Women’s World Cup against India in October 2025.

BELOW
Net sessions in Guwahati, India, during the ICC Women’s World Cup, 2025.



myself; it was a great day.”

The tournament ultimately ended in disappointment with semi-final defeat to South Africa, but Smith looks back with pride on what she achieved, acknowledging there were lessons learned along the way.

Her performances with the new ball and at the death were enough to earn her a first full Central Contract – recognition of a breakthrough year that yielded 27 international wickets, including 22 in ODIs. For Smith, it was also a chance to shed any pre-contract uncertainty on the biggest stage.

“You feel a bit of an outsider when you’re in the team but not contracted,” she admits. “Even though my teammates kept telling me that was silly, you just don’t have that full confidence. Getting the contract is exciting – I can hold my head high knowing my game is good enough for the international stage.”

Having previously held a Rookie Contract in 2019, this was a milestone moment long in waiting. “Lottie pulled me to one side and said, ‘I’ve got some great news – congratulations, you’ve got a Central Contract. You deserve it because you’ve worked so hard.’ That was really special. She’s been such a big part of my career, so to hear that from her meant a lot and gave me a real drive to push on.”

Speaking from Australia, Smith has linked up with the Hobart Hurricanes for the Women’s Big Bash League, her next step towards next year’s home T20 World Cup. With previous experience at Sydney Sixers and both Melbourne sides – plus a 2025 Hundred title with Northern Superchargers – she’s well-placed to talk about franchise experience.

“Hobart’s a new squad and it’s an exciting opportunity. I’ll be bowling tough overs in the powerplay and at



On fire: Smith enters the frame prior to playing a T20 against India at Edgbaston, July 2025.

With a home World Cup and the Olympics on the horizon, it’s a fantastic time to be a female cricketer in England.

the death, and hopefully that puts me in good stead for the home World Cup. I was in the crowd at Lord’s in 2017 and felt so inspired by what I saw – it’s an amazing time for English cricket.”

With improved facilities, increased salaries, growing franchise

opportunities and a tiered county system drawing more eyes to the women’s game, Smith remains optimistic about the future.

“It’s so inspiring for girls everywhere. As a kid, all I wanted was to play cricket for England, now it’s my career. The opportunities ahead are amazing. People say you have to see it to believe it, and that visibility is huge for our game. With a home World Cup and the Olympics on the horizon, it’s a fantastic time to be a female cricketer in England. Hopefully we can inspire even more girls to take it up.

“It’s been a really special year, for me personally,” she concludes. “I’ve not taken it all in yet, but I’ll look back and be really proud. The exciting thing is I’m still early in my international career with so much to learn. That hunger keeps me motivated – trying to win games for England. I’m just excited for what the future holds.”

SECOND INNINGS

From an aspiring student to a pair of seasoned pros, three cricketers share their journeys into physiotherapy – with one commonality that sparked their interest.



KESH FONSEKA

- LANCASHIRE AND ENGLAND U19
- UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD
(FROM SEPTEMBER 2026)

I'm out in Australia at the moment and absolutely loving it – playing loads of cricket, learning a lot, and soaking it all in. I'll be here until March, then back to Lancashire for the summer.

I've recently had an offer to study part-time physiotherapy at the University of Salford, which would be ideal really. I could keep training at Lancashire while studying – it's the perfect balance. I've always been fascinated by how the body works, and drawn to biology, and through cricket I've seen how rewarding the role of a physio can be.

When you've been injured and someone helps you back to doing what you love, that leaves a mark. I had a pretty bad knee tear last year and needed surgery. That ruled me out for the Under-19 World Cup, which was really tough at the time, but it turned out to be one of the best learning experiences I've had. The physios at Lancashire were brilliant. They helped me through it physically and mentally. When you're side-lined for months, you go through frustration, boredom, everything – but those guys kept me motivated.

During that process I realised how rewarding it is to help someone get back to what they love doing. It's a proper journey, and I think I'd really enjoy being part of that for other players one day.

The PCA has been great through the whole process, helping me with the Salford application and interviews while I was still training. It's a big commitment but I'm really looking forward to it.

For now, my focus is still on cricket – playing as much as possible, learning every day. But it's nice knowing I've got something I'm genuinely passionate about outside the game. It feels like the start of something exciting.

Smile and wave:
Fonseka reaches
fifty against South
Africa U19s.





I've always been someone who throws myself fully into whatever I'm doing, and luckily that side of things – and being in a team – is something I enjoy.

James Pipe in role at Nottinghamshire CCC, in 2020.



JAMES PIPE

- PHYSIOTHERAPY & MEDICAL LEAD, ROB
- LONDON SPIRIT LEAD PHYSIOTHERAPIST
- GULF GIANTS LEAD PHYSIOTHERAPIST
- UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD BSC (HONS)

I have always been driven by a desire to help people. It's a privilege to be entrusted with the health of players and patients across a variety of settings. I've always been fascinated by the complexity of the human body, particularly in how it responds to injury, and I've always had a strong curiosity to keep learning to help me provide the best possible care to everyone I have the honour of working with.

I was extremely lucky in my formative years to play for Worcestershire and Derbyshire. My journey into physiotherapy began after sustaining a serious eye injury when a ball passed between the peak of my helmet and the grill. The specialists were uncertain if my sight would return and whether I would be

able to play again! Fortunately, after a prolonged period out of the game I was able to return.

It was during this period that I applied to study Physiotherapy at the University of Salford. The experience made me realise that my career could end anytime and reinforced the importance of planning for the future.

Throughout my playing career, I was fortunate to be supported by some outstanding physiotherapists and S&C coaches. Their knowledge, care, and encouragement were fundamental in inspiring me to pursue a career in physiotherapy. I am extremely grateful to the PCA, whose guidance played a significant role in helping achieve my goal.

Balancing full-time cricket with part-time study at Salford was

demanding, but I received exceptional support from my family, the university, and the club. Although intense, it was an experience I valued greatly. Studying helped provide life balance, perspective, and personal growth.

I have spent the past 15 years working in cricket, the NHS and private healthcare settings. You can see my ongoing work for franchises above, and between competitions, I continue to work in clinical practice.

It has been an unbelievable experience and I've loved every minute. I still wake up every day with the same excitement to help as I had on the first day I walked into university to begin this journey. I genuinely appreciate how fortunate I am and sincerely grateful for the opportunities and support I've received along the way.

LEE DAGGETT

- HEAD PHYSIO, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CCC
- DIRECTOR OF MOVE4 PHYSIO
- UNIVERSITY OF COVENTRY BSC (HONS), BA (HONS) MCSP

The past six months have been a bit of a whirlwind, to be honest. I've just started as Head Physio at Northamptonshire, which feels like things have come full circle after finishing my playing days here. When I retired, I went straight into studying physiotherapy at Coventry University, and after that I spent almost a decade at Northampton Saints before setting up Move4 – a clinic with an elite-sport approach that now has two sites and 13 staff. It's been an amazing journey.

Going from the high-performance environment of rugby back into cricket has been fascinating. The main difference from a physio point of view is the type of injuries. In rugby, you're dealing with a lot of acute

stuff from collisions and training load, whereas in cricket it's more chronic – overload issues, repetitive strain, stress injuries, that kind of thing. But the principles are the same: prevention, communication, trust.

Prevention is the aim of the game, obviously. The goal is to understand what's going on before it breaks down. That means looking at the bigger picture: sleep, nutrition, psychology, growth for younger players, and training loads. Cricket's a unique sport in that there's barely any off-season, so managing players' bodies and minds becomes the real challenge.

I've been lucky to have mentors across both sports. We all share ideas and experiences because no one's

cracked it yet, especially things like fast bowling injuries – lower back stress fractures for example. That's a big challenge, and one I'm really interested in. I've been speaking to people like Pipey (James Pipe), Alex Tysoe at Surrey, and Mozzy (Gerhard Mostert) at Warwickshire – trying to learn from those who've been in the game a long time. It's that constant learning that keeps things interesting.

When I was studying, the PCA were brilliant – they supported me financially, but also just being there as a sounding board. They understand the ups and downs of that transition. You go from a team environment to suddenly being on your own, trying to figure out what's next. Having that backing made a massive difference.

“When I was studying, the PCA were brilliant – they supported me financially, but also just being there as a sounding board.”

Physio Lee Daggett, then of Northampton Saints, leads an injured George Pisi off the field in 2021.





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THE GREAT OUTDOORS

DARREN BICKNELL, co-founder of the Belvoir Education and Sports Trust, approaches life after cricket and explains how his team help thousands of children discover a healthy, active lifestyle.



Former Surrey and Nottinghamshire all-rounder, Darren Bicknell, joins us fresh off the back of a meeting with potential funders for a new community facility the Belvoir Education and Sports Trust is planning in Knipton, Grantham.

For the uninitiated, the Trust is committed to changing futures through the power of sport and play, inspiring children to lead healthy, active lives through sport and countryside education.

Now well into its second decade, the charity's standing as one of the country's outstanding sports set-ups is something Bicknell is quietly proud of. "Cricket finished for me in 2006," he opens.

"Nobody ever wants to leave sport. Playing is something you dream of doing as a kid. But it comes to a point where you can't do it anymore. And setting up the Trust is the closest thing I've got to playing professionally. That is, apart from golf, of course.

Bicknell, who has a golf handicap of five, spent nearly two decades in cricket as a player, debuting for Surrey in 1987 before moving to Nottinghamshire and bowling out in 2006. "Back in the days of six-month contracts, I'd worked many winter jobs before retiring from cricket," he explains. "Those jobs gave me real-world experience. You'd go from signing autographs one day to being

They're the best sponges. If you can teach them about being outside early, they'll stay outside.

ignored by a pub landlord in my role as an account manager for Scottish Courage the next. I worry that players don't get that now. They're full-time cricketers, 12 months a year, and might not get the same life skills. I'd urge them to use their downtime to get experience – talk to sponsors, network. A lot of life is who you know.”

After retirement, Bicknell joined Welbeck Cricket Club as Commercial Director, at the John Fretwell Centre. “It was interesting, but it was hard work –



starting something from scratch as a former athlete was a massive learning curve. Then 18 months later, I was made redundant. Suddenly, you're left thinking, what now?”

What came next was an idea that would change his life. “I had met professional photographer, Phil O'Brien, a few months before. He had mentioned an idea to set up a charity. He'd taken his seven-year-old son to Belvoir Cricket Club, only to be told to 'bring him back when he's 10.' Phil's view was, 'I can either have a moan about it or do something to fix it.' That became the blueprint.”

Together, with the help of Stephen Henderson, they formed the Belvoir Education and Sport Trust, inviting local schools for days out around the Belvoir estate. “We recognised early that we wanted to work with primary schools,” he says. “They're the best sponges. If you can introduce them to sport and being outside early, they'll stay in sport and the outdoors. Making a difference to young people's lives was a passion that drove us.”

Inspired by John Barclay's work at the Arundel Castle Cricket Foundation, which was founded in 1985, the work at Belvoir continues to use cricket and sport to bring children out of cities and into the countryside.

In its first year, 2009, the Trust welcomed around 200 children. Sixteen years on, that number has grown to more than 5,000 annually, 5,419 in 2025. “Initially it was just me, working out of a hot desk at Belvoir Castle,” says Bicknell. “Now we've got a small, dedicated team. Neil Atkins, who joined after two years, is still with us as our Director of Operations. We've got a fundraiser, a young coach, and this year we've taken on an apprentice, Lily Smith – she's fabulous, and a brilliant role model for the kids.”

“Each summer, the Trust runs 20 days of outdoor activity at Belvoir Castle. Schools bring up to 100 children a day.

They do cricket in the morning – batting, bowling, games – then have a picnic lunch, and in the afternoon meet the shepherd, the gamekeeper, the farmers, do orienteering and many other activities. It's a brilliant day. And Belvoir is such an inspirational place.”

The next chapter, for the business, Bicknell explains, is about infrastructure. “We've outgrown our old pavilion – there's no heating, or disabled toilets in there – so six years ago we decided to build a new one. We've raised £670,000 and we're around £150,000 short of finishing phase one. Then in a few years, we'll add the sports hall as phase two. We're ambitious,

20.3%

OF CHILDREN AGED 8 TO 16 IN ENGLAND HAVE A PROBABLE MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER

there are so many children we have yet to reach – the world's our oyster.”

Funding, like in any business, has been a constant challenge. “We run charity dinners – Stuart Pearce was a guest last year, he was fantastic – and we do an annual golf day, bike rides, and fundraising events. Such work extends to our 'Friends of' scheme where people can give between £1 and £10 a month – or whatever they can, really. But most of our funding comes from applying for grants and trust funding. That takes time, but when you see the difference it makes, it's worth it.”

The 58-year-old, continuing when asked to describe his varied role, says: “My job as Chief Exec ranges from cleaning the pavilion to teaching kids and organising dinners. That's what it's about when running any small and medium-

“The charity’s focus has broadened over time...We realised there’s more to life than just cricket.”

sized enterprise, but I love being busy.

“The charity’s focus has broadened over time. Where we were definitely cricket-first when we began – we were actually called the Belvoir Castle Cricket Trust – over time, we realised there’s more to life than just cricket. That’s why we branched into other sports and countryside education. It grew naturally – we followed what worked, and most importantly what the kids enjoyed. Those cricketing roots will always be there.

“That’s the aim of the game really. I love working with our team – it’s nice to know we’ve built something that gives people jobs and purpose. We started with one desk, and now we’ve got nearly 5,500 children a year, a £200,000 turnover, and

a new facility on the horizon. It’s not enormous, but it’s sustainable.”

That sense of belonging and community extends beyond the Trust. “Admittedly, I used to avoid PCA Past Players’ Day,” Bicknell acknowledges, when asked about the annual gathering. “I think it’s because I didn’t know anyone – it used to be just for the older players.



But Notts have done a brilliant job of galvanising the more recently retired. Those days are really special now. Spending time with people you played with or against – you share that common experience. Once you’ve been part of it, you’re part of the history. And before you know it, the day’s gone.”

It’s that spirit he tries to recreate for the children who come through the Trust.

78%

OF PARENTS BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN ARE SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME ONLINE AND NOT ENOUGH TIME WITH EACH OTHER IN PERSON

“That sense of community, of friendship – it’s so important. Transitioning out of cricket is hard. You’ve played it since you were 10, and played professionally for 20 years, and suddenly it ends. It’s well documented how many players struggle with that. You need another outlet. I’ve had moments where I’ve really missed those days in the dressing room and competing. But if you can find something that excites you again, you’ve got a better chance.”

The PCA has played a role in that support network. “When I first started, the Association was a much smaller organisation. By the time I retired, it had grown into something that offered real opportunities – though like a lot of people, I probably didn’t make the most of them,” he says. “Since then, I’ve had some really good support. The PCA helped me when I needed a hip resurfacing operation, and when I’ve had dark days, they’ve put me in touch with people to talk to.”

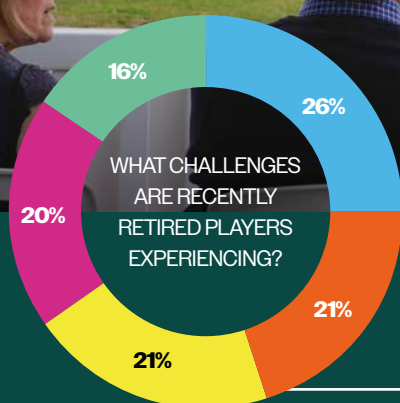
With that a fitting addition, and asked if there’s anything else left to add, Bicknell says of the Belvoir Education and Sports Trust: “We’re always looking for people to help – whether that be volunteers, fundraisers, or supporters. I know everyone’s asking for money these days, but we’re always open to new ideas about how to do things better. We’re proud of what we’ve built, and excited about where it’s going.”

23.4%

OF YEAR SIX AND 10.1% OF RECEPTION CHILDREN IN ENGLAND ARE OBESE AND RATES ARE HIGHER THAN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

PAST PLAYER SURVEY

What happens after the close of play? The 2025 Past Player Survey hears from 416 former pros on careers, connection, and life after cricket.



IDENTITY SHIFT 26%

UNCERTAINTY OVER CAREER DIRECTION 21%

LACK OF FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS 21%

FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTY 20%

JOB NOT ALIGNING WITH MY INTERESTS 16%

Stats taken from question that allowed multiple answers.

86%

OF RECENTLY RETIRED PLAYERS FOUND WORKING WITH A PDM HELPFUL IN PREPARING FOR A SECOND CAREER

95%

SAY THE FREQUENCY OF PCA COMMUNICATIONS IS 'ABOUT RIGHT'

76%

OF MEMBERS WHO ENGAGED WITH A PDM SAY IT PREPARED THEM WELL FOR LIFE INTO A SECOND CAREER

100%

OF THOSE WHO ENGAGED RATED THE QUALITY OF PDM SUPPORT POSITIVELY

34%

ARE WILLING TO HELP WITH OFFERING GUIDANCE TO CURRENT CRICKETERS

92%

SAY THEY ARE CURRENTLY FINANCIALLY SECURE

* The 2025 Past Player Survey captured feedback from 416 former professionals to help shape the PCA's ongoing support for life after cricket. Completed between June and July 2025, the survey gathered perspectives from both recently retired players (since 2015) and those who left the game earlier.

Just 12 months into the new tiered system in the women's domestic game, changes are already afoot as Yorkshire step up to the elite. Luke Reynolds speaks to three of their standout performers with two already having a taste of what is to come...

SCALING NEW HEIGHTS



Wednesday 17 April 2024 will be a date that will go down in history as the ECB unveiled their long-term plan for the professionalisation of domestic women's cricket within the Professional County Club set up, formerly known as First-Class Counties.

Eyebrows were raised as Yorkshire was omitted from the initial eight counties to join the top division as the game moved away from the regional model encompassing multiple counties. Instead, the impressive Durham bid secured the spot for the north-east region. However, following lobbying from the white rose county,

a little over a month later, Yorkshire had confirmation they would join from 2026, sparking the club into action to recruit the best talent a year before their professionalisation.

With the then Northern Diamonds players caught in a cricketing quandary, the Headingley based outfit had players who wanted to remain in Leeds but retain their professional contracts. Many left for pastures new, including captain Hollie Armitage and leg-spinner Katie Levick who relocated up the A1 to test themselves immediately in the Tier 1 environment at Durham.

With minimum professional squad sizes of 15, starting senior salaries of £28,000 and impressive facilities

and standards linked to their male counterparts, it was a gargantuan move for the women's game which was widely lauded for its success come the end of its maiden summer.

Meanwhile, it was a transitional year for Yorkshire and despite their financial woes, their hierarchy made a commitment to the women's game and managed to secure many experienced players such as Lauren Winfield-Hill, Sterre Kalis and Beth Langston to name three while exciting youngsters were retained such as Erin Thomas and Maddie Ward, despite competing in Tier 2 in 2025.

Winning the Metro Bank One Day Cup League 2 was vindication for




IT'S BEEN AN EXCITING YET UNSTABLE FEW YEARS IN THE WOMEN'S GAME, HOW HAVE YOU FOUND THIS PERIOD?

STERRE KALIS: I joined the Northern Diamonds in 2020 during the pandemic so there were only a few games that season, and everyone was on a pay-as-you-play contract. Throughout the years more and more contracts have been awarded allowing players to play cricket full-time. The growth has been tremendous. The stadiums we play in and the crowds we get is developing so quickly.

LAUREN WINFIELD-HILL: We have tinkered with the structure so much in terms of teams, names and who looks after it, so I am just excited to have the one club ethos. I am looking forward to them leaving the structure alone and letting us crack on with representing our teams and build fan bases. That piece is so important, to let people in to watch the game.

MADDIE WARD: I didn't have much experience in the regional setup at a first-team level but I know the ones that have all agreed that transferring to the county setup has been beneficial in terms of getting people to come and watch. Even the crowds we have had in Tier 2 have been great and having that real connection with one club has been great.

 I am looking forward to them letting us crack on.

LAUREN WINFIELD-HILL

the club which heavily invested in a professional infrastructure ahead of time, in an intriguing year that saw Kalis and Winfield-Hill spend time on loan in an unusual temporary move up the sporting pyramid, in Tier 1.

The top order batters and regular stand-in captain Ward take stock of the women's game heading into 2026...

ABOVE Yorkshire celebrate a Vitality Blast wicket at Headingley.

ABOVE RIGHT All smiles for Loran Winfield-Hill after winning the Metro Bank One Day Cup League 2 Final against Glamorgan.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO STAY AT YORKSHIRE WHEN THEY MISSED OUT ON THE INITIAL TIER 1 SELECTION?

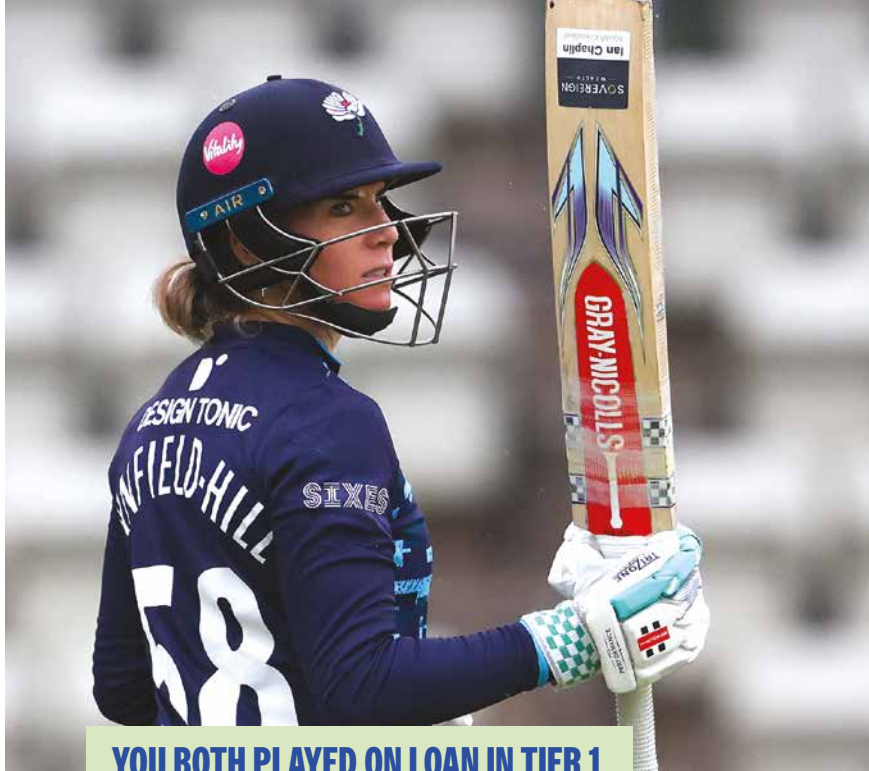
SK: When we heard that Yorkshire was not going to be a Tier 1 team it was a shock to the system. Half of our team split up even though we didn't deserve to since we had such a nice group.

I could have left. However, I came here from the Netherlands in 2020, they were the Northern Diamonds back then and they made me feel welcomed from the very start. It's my home away from home. I love playing there, I love playing at Headingley.

I have also got a house in Leeds which played a big part in my decision since I didn't want to move away from that. Then I said to myself that it is just one year so I am going to try and go on loan. If not, it is just 20 games of my career, I will still get good training because the setup was like a Tier 1 side.

LWH: The minute we found out we weren't going to be in Tier 1, but we will get the upgrade after a year, it allowed us to get the best staff we could and run the best programme. There were no corners cut whatsoever by the club which has been amazing. It has been business as usual. Nothing is going to change going forward apart from the status of being in Tier 1, the frequency of games and the actual standard of competition for the girls.

MW: Tier 2 has been a blessing in disguise in terms of being able to create a group ready for Tier 1. We have been able to have a transitional year where we can get to know each other and play the brand of cricket we want to. We have had amazing backing from the club to be able to do that. The standard of Tier 2 hasn't been bad at all. There are some really good players with experience and youth coming through.



YOU BOTH PLAYED ON LOAN IN TIER 1 LAST SEASON ALONGSIDE YORKSHIRE COMMITMENTS, HOW DID YOU FIND THAT?

SK: It was a hectic season. I really wanted to play for Yorkshire and be around the team since I love playing for them and being part of that squad. But ultimately, I also had to look at my own development. So, I spoke to my head coach and shared my thoughts. Both Yorkshire and Warwickshire were really flexible. I just wanted to play as much cricket as I could. So, I played for Bears two or three times a week and then in between, I travelled back to Yorkshire to train and play if the schedule did not clash. So, I think I played around 60 games including warm-ups, so it has been hectic and involved a lot of driving.

LWH: What was really nice was that it was good to see that what we have been doing at Yorkshire in Tier 2 is not different to the Tier 1 structure. Going to Essex was great for me. It is a great club with some great people. The intensity of Tier 2 is different from Tier 1 so it was a perfect fit for me. No disrespect to Essex, but the resources and programmes run at Yorkshire are probably superior to that of Essex, just in the sense of them being a smaller club meaning the resources are different.



Yorkshire made me feel welcomed. It's my home away from home. I love playing there, I love playing at Headingley.

STERRE KALIS



ABOVE LEFT Lauren Winfield-Hill celebrates her half century during the Metro Bank One Day Cup League 2 Final.

ABOVE Sterre Kalis warms up before playing for Warwickshire on loan.

LEFT Maddie Ward takes the gloves for Yorkshire in the Vitality Blast.

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE NEW DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE OF THREE TIERS, AND THE ABILITY FOR PLAYERS TO MOVE UP AND DOWN IN A CLEAR PYRAMID?

SK: Now you can drop down to Tier 2 which is still a good standard of cricket, you still play against good teams and those players improve the overall standards as well. It works really well because everyone can get game time and if you do well in Tier 2, you can obviously play in your Tier 1 team once again.

LWH: The standard in Tier 2 is really good. There are really good players in there even though there is not much depth.

When you look at some of the players that have come down from Tier 1 like Emma Jones and Abbey Freeborn, it is so much more beneficial for them to be playing in Tier 2 than it is for them to be carrying drinks and never play any cricket, so I think it is a really good thing, the Tiered structure just works. The ultimate goal is to get as many players playing cricket as possible and obviously clubs want to keep control of their players. It happens in the men's game all the time.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT WILL BE THE BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING A FULL-TIME TIER 1 PLAYER?

SK: The standards in Tier 1 are a lot better, especially when the England players are back you play really competitive cricket. You play at big grounds. When we play at home or away, we will play in bigger stadiums which will get a bigger crowd. We are really ready for it, and we have got a good winter now to reflect on a lot of things we need to be better at going into Tier 1. From March, Jess Jonassen and Sarah Glenn are joining our squad which is really exciting.

MW: We will be exposed playing against some really high-quality players, players that we haven't really played against including a lot of international cricketers and overseas players as well. When England players are involved, that only makes the standard of county cricket better. I am definitely looking forward to coming up against players I have not played against before, it will definitely be a challenge, but I have got no doubt that we are ready to combat all of that and show our skills on the pitch next year.

WHAT ARE YOUR AIMS FOR 2026?

SK: We are all excited to compete in Tier 1. It might just be our first year, but we are going to try our hardest to be competitive.

LWH: Everybody wants to win the competition, but I think a more realistic goal would be finish mid-table. I look at our team on paper and I do get giddy thinking there is no reason why we cannot win it. It is always a natural thing to say but we need to not set our expectations too high. I honestly think that the team that we have got, adding Sarah Glenn into that, myself and Sterre Kalis are back full-time and Jess Jonassen. There is no reason why we cannot compete against the best. Whether it is too soon to say that we can win a competition, maybe. But I think we will do well. I certainly don't see ourselves at the bottom of the pecking order at all.

I think we might surprise a few people, but I still believe it's a two-to-three-year project to get where we want to be, and I don't think we will look like a team which has just been promoted like you see in football.

MW: Rich Pyrah and the staff have created an unbelievable environment and we get on like a house on fire and that can only help us moving forward into Tier 1. It's great to have such a good group of girls to play with and an amazing group of staff. I would really like to cement myself in the team next season. As a club, we have the ambition to win trophies. There's no reason why we cannot go and take Tier 1 by storm. People probably look at us as underdogs, but I don't think there's any reason why we cannot have that success and that is definitely what we should be aiming for.



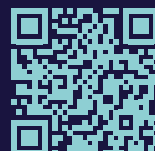
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REGAINING SELF-RESPECT



Warwickshire legend **DERMOT REEVE** takes stock of over two decades of turmoil, addiction, and how the Cricketers' Trust has now provided a ray of sunshine.

Born in the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong in 1963, Dermot Reeve made his First-Class debut for Sussex in 1983. However, it would be at Warwickshire where the England international wrote his name in the history books.

The all-rounder played more than 350 times for the Bears, where he was made captain in 1993. During his tenure, Reeve guided Warwickshire to an unprecedented treble. Coached by the late Bob Woolmer, that side included the talent of Brian Lara and a young Ashley Giles in its ranks.

Despite having many contrasting personalities in the team, one of his many nicknames was 'marmite', a tag that sits comfortably with the 62-year-old today. The principled leader set the tone in the dressing room, enough to be voted as Warwickshire's Greatest Ever Captain in 2020.

Soon after his retirement, the 750-wicket man moved into coaching and broadcasting where he commentated on Channel 4 alongside the legendary Richie Benaud. The world was at his feet on the verge of calling the 2005 Ashes, however, one bad decision cost him everything. Something he still lives with to this day.

"It all started when I was in broadcasting around 2002," Reeve

says, speaking to Beyond the Boundaries some 23-years on.

"Cocaine was quite prevalent and freely available. I turned it down for a couple of years, thinking it was dangerous, but eventually I made the mistake of trying it. That was the worst decision of my life.

"Two years later, I was doing four grams a day, and I stopped turning up to work because I was not in a position to commentate. It took me from someone who was at a good job, and functioning, to a person who lost everything."

The situation deteriorated quickly when Reeve lost his job and the support of his family as a direct consequence of being clinically addicted. "I ended up feeling like I lost the respect of my four children in Australia along with a tough few years of home life.

"Little relapses that I have had over the last 10 years have had monumental consequences. I went from being an energetic, positive person to spiralling down to a place of depression which I have been dealing with ever since."

At his lowest, Reeve admitted to having some very dark thoughts and sought help from the Cricketers' Trust, the charity which looks after professional cricketers and their immediate families in



TOP Dermot Reeve sports his Somerset coaching attire in 1997.

BOTTOM Tim Munton and Reeve show off a record three trophy haul they won with Warwickshire in 1994.

“The most powerful thing in the universe is to control your thoughts, to rule your emotional state.”

Reeve wins the Bears' Natwest Trophy semi-final against Kent in 1994.

England and Wales.

The former England international heaped praise on the Trust for coming to aid during his time of adversity. He received a range of mental health support, including a strict intervention through a spell in a residential facility to overcome his depression.

“I wasn't too knowledgeable about what support was out there and it was my old teammates at Warwickshire who said I should get in touch with the Cricketers' Trust. The Trust has been so good to me. Having that care from them has been exceptional and has kept me going through some dark times.

“I have had such positive help from the Trust. They do an amazing job and if I can help repay them one day by doing this article or in a fundraising capacity, it would be an honour.

“The reason why I wanted to talk about my life experiences was to say thank you to the PCA and the Cricketers' Trust.

“One thing I can pass on to anyone who reads this piece is don't be tempted. When you are offered something, you think 'it's okay, I will do it just once', don't risk it because you could end up losing your job, losing your family, and losing your self-

respect. I am still working hard to try and get those three things back.”

With support of his PCA Personal Development Manager, Cookie Patel, the Warwickshire great is looking to a bright future now he is back in control of his mental state. And in talking to Reeve, it's clear the natural leader has got his mojo back.

“It is very powerful to have the mental skills to think in the right way,” he continues. “These days I am living on the positive side of joy and happiness. The most powerful thing in the universe is to control your thoughts, to rule your emotional state.”

Reeve is now ready to give himself a second chance in life and hasn't given up hope of getting back into the professional game. He remains keen to help the future generation be better cricketers, but more importantly, better human beings.

“I would love a county to give me a chance, even if it is just for six weeks of pre-season, asking me to join them and help in their academies or women's teams. I still believe I have got plenty to offer in coaching and developing mental skills.”

Cricketers' Trust



The Cricketers' Trust funds the PCA's free Confidential Helpline which is available to past and present players and immediate families whenever they need it most.

SIMPLY CALL 07780 008 877



SCAN FOR MORE INFO ON THE
CRICKETERS' TRUST

MISSION TOUBKAL ACCOMPLISHED

After battling against the harsh and unpredictable Moroccan climate, 20 hikers ascended an astonishing 4,167 metres above sea level to reach the summit of Mount Toubkal as they raised over £30,000 for the Cricketers' Trust.

The challenge was successfully attempted by current and former players, including the new Gloucestershire Women's head coach and World Cup winner Fran Wilson, former England bowler Stuart Meaker and The Blaze duo of Grace Ballinger and Ella Claridge.

The two-day trek commenced with an intense six-hour hike, taking the climbers to the Toubkal base camp.

Following an early morning start in freezing cold weather the next day, the challenge was officially accomplished when they reached the peak, celebrated by a group photo at sunrise with the picturesque Atlas Mountain

range in the backdrop.

However, the descent caused more challenges to our mountaineers with the rocky nature of the terrain paired with steep slopes down the Imlil Valley.

The Cricketers' Trust has previously organised many gruelling challenges to raise funds for past and present professional players and their immediate families. The Toubkal Trek joins a list of other ambitious endeavours, including the Three Peaks Challenge and the London to Paris Bike Ride.

After successfully scaling Mount Toubkal, an elated Ballinger said, "To do this trek for a charity so

close to home that can impact myself and my friends and family is really important. It felt more worthwhile with how tough it was, but I am really pleased to have contributed to the Cricketers' Trust."



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NOTICES FOR MEMBERS

CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE

A free helpline funded by the Cricketers' Trust is available 24/7 – and there is no such thing as a time waster. Whatever your problem please do reach out.

Call: **07780 008 877**

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We all have a role to play in raising the game.

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From making a simple phone call for advice to a full contract negotiation, the PCA's Director of Cricket Operations Rich Hudson will be able to support you. Email: **rich.hudson@thepca.co.uk**
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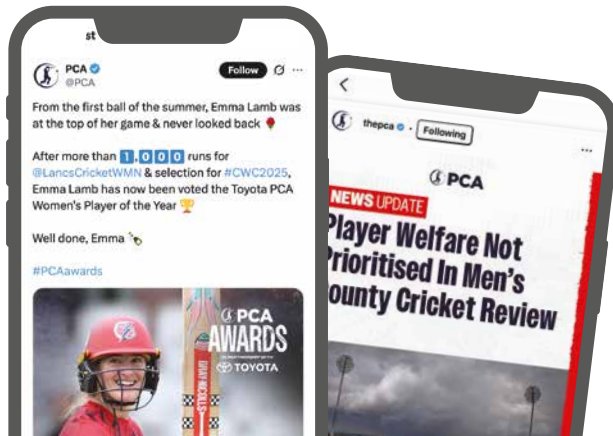
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OBITS

Remembering those who have
graced this great game.

1941-2025

JOHN JAMESON

WARWICKSHIRE,
ENGLAND

Born in Mumbai and educated in Somerset at Taunton School, John Alexander Jameson, universally known as 'Tub' played for Warwickshire from 1960 until 1976. Whether batting in the middle-order or opening, this 6ft-tall 15-stone right-hander was one of the most destructive post-war batters of his generation.

Amid 17 glittering seasons at Edgbaston – appearing in three Gillette Cup Finals and winning two – he was a member of the Warwickshire side that won the County Championship in 1972. Two years later, batting first against Gloucestershire, after Neal Abberley had fallen to the second ball without a run on the board, the Warwickshire innings closed on 465-1 some 99.4 overs later. Jameson was unbeaten on 240 and Rohan Kanhai not out on 213, a new world record.

Playing four Tests between 1971 and 1974, Jameson also has the unique



distinction of being the only England player to have been run out in three successive Test innings.

With 33 centuries in his tally of 18,941 First-Class runs, he later returned to Taunton School to coach, with future assignments taking him to Bangladesh and Sussex.

From 1984 until 1987 he served as a First-Class umpire. He later moved 'upstairs' at Lord's, operating as Assistant Secretary (Cricket) for MCC. A member of the Warwickshire Committee and MCC's Laws Sub-Committee, in 2010 he was awarded the MBE. He was 84.

1943 - 2025

PETER LEDDEN

SUSSEX

A left-handed batter and right-arm medium-pacer, Ledden played 35 First-Class matches between 1961 and 1967, scoring 756 runs and taking eight wickets. Fondly remembered as Rottingdean CC captain, husband and father of three, he later emigrated to Perth, Western Australia, where he left a lasting legacy as both player and mentor. He was 81.

1930 - 2025

ALAN ARMITAGE

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

A right-handed batter and occasional wicketkeeper, Nottingham-born Alan Armitage made seven First-Class appearances for Nottinghamshire and Oxford University in 1950-51. His final match, against Yorkshire, saw him part of a Fred Trueman hat-trick. Living later in Knaresborough, he was Nottinghamshire's oldest surviving cricketer at 95.

1944-2025**MIKE HARRIS**MIDDLESEX,
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

A cricketer of the old school, Mike Harris devoted his life to the game – first as an opening batter, then as coach and umpire.

Born in St Just-in-Roseland, Cornwall, and educated at Gerrans School, Michael John 'Pasty' Harris debuted for Middlesex in 1964, scoring 160 in a record first-wicket stand of 312 with Eric Russell three years later. Over 72 matches for the county he made 3,371 runs, including six centuries.

Joining Nottinghamshire in 1969, he was capped the following year and reached 2,000 runs in 1971. That season he equalled the county record of nine centuries, including twin hundreds in two separate matches. Across 344 First-Class games, he scored 19,196 runs with a highest of 201 not out against Glamorgan in 1973.

After his playing days, he coached at Stowe School and managed the Trent Bridge squash club before becoming a First-Class umpire between 1988 and 2008, standing in 161 County Championship and 171 one-day matches. He was 81.

1930 - 2025**SIMON KIMMINS**

KENT

Born in Belgravia, Simon Kimmins played 16 First-Class matches for Kent, taking 5-42 against Glamorgan at Gravesend in 1950. A Free Forester and MCC member, he toured India and the Far East with E.W. Swanton's XI in 1964. Away from the game, he served as a Director at Debenhams and Managing Director at Thomas Cook.

**1933-2025****HAROLD BIRD**YORKSHIRE,
LEICESTERSHIRE

Born in Barnsley, the son of a miner, Harold Dennis 'Dickie' Bird was a proud Yorkshireman whose love for cricket spanned more than seven decades. Educated at Raley School, he excelled in both football and cricket, playing 'round-ball' for Barnsley alongside Michael Parkinson and Geoffrey Boycott.

Joining Yorkshire in 1953, he made 14 First-Class appearances, his highlight an unbeaten 181 against Glamorgan in 1959. Moving to Leicestershire in 1960, he passed 1,000 runs in his first season before turning to coaching.

Appointed to the First-Class umpires list in 1970, he became one of the game's most recognisable figures. Across 495 domestic games, he stood in 66 Tests and 69 ODIs, including three Men's World Cup Finals (1975, 1979, 1983) and the 1982 Women's Final.

A bestselling author and popular after-dinner speaker, Bird was commemorated with a statue in Barnsley in 2009 and served as Yorkshire President in 2014-15. Awarded an MBE in 1986 and OBE in 2012, he also financed the Players' Balcony at Headingley – a lasting tribute to his beloved county.

1950-2025**BERNARD JULIEN**KENT,
WEST INDIES

First spotted by Colin Cowdrey while touring the Caribbean with the Duke of Norfolk's XI in 1970, Trinidad-born Bernard Denis Julien was a hard-hitting right-hander and left-arm fast-medium bowler who could also turn to spin – once hailed as the natural successor to Gary Sobers.

Making his Kent debut in 1971, he claimed 5-29 and the Man of the Match award in his first Gillette Cup appearance. Across 179 games for a successful Kent outfit, Julien took 336 wickets and scored 3,296 runs, quickly becoming a hugely popular figure.

Selected for the West Indies' 1973 tour to England, he made his Test debut at The Oval and, in the third Test at Lord's, struck a maiden century of 121 off 127 balls. A member of the side that won the inaugural 1975 World Cup, he finished with 24 Test and 12 ODI caps, 952 runs and 68 wickets.

Released by Kent in 1977, he played 20 matches in Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket, before controversially joining Lawrence Rowe's rebel tour to South Africa in 1983. Condemned by the Trinidadian authorities, he later struggled to find a role for his talents.

1942 - 2025**ANDREW DINDAR**

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The South African-born all-rounder featured for Gloucestershire in the early 1960s before later representing Hertfordshire and Berkshire. A respected club captain and groundsman, he championed cricket in Brighton and Berkhamsted. He was 82.

1938-2025

BARRY KNIGHTESSEX,
LEICESTERSHIRE,
ENGLAND

All-rounder Barry Rolfe Knight played 28 times for England between 1961 and 1969 and was dominant enough on the county circuit to complete the domestic double of 1000 runs and 100 wickets in a season on four separate occasions.

After Essex, he played three seasons for Leicestershire, before ultimately emigrating to Australia where a career as a coach saw him credited with the formative development of future Aussie skipper Allan Border.

1929 - 2025

HARRY KELLEHERSURREY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Harry Robert Albert Kelleher, who has died aged 96, was both Northamptonshire and Surrey's oldest former player. Born in Bermondsey, the right-arm fast bowler made a remarkable First-Class debut for Surrey in 1955, taking 10 wickets in the match against Worcestershire.

Finding opportunities limited, he joined Northamptonshire in 1956, forming a new-ball partnership with Frank Tyson. On debut, he claimed another five-wicket haul and helped Northants finish runners-up in 1957. Between 1955 and 1958 he played 55 matches, scoring 256 runs and taking 112 wickets.

Afterwards he played club cricket for Southgate, Old Hill and Dudley, while working for British Timken. He later lived in the United States.

1964-2025

DAVID LAWRENCEGLOUCESTERSHIRE,
ENGLAND

David Lawrence's Test career ended abruptly in Wellington in 1992 when his left kneecap shattered – an injury that resulted in two years of determined, yet unsuccessful, rehabilitation.

Born in Gloucester to Jamaican parents, David Valentine 'Syd' Lawrence made his Gloucestershire debut aged 17 and rose to prominence in 1985. In a potent new-ball partnership with Courtney Walsh, Lawrence took 85 wickets to earn the Cricket Writers' Young Player of the Year award.

Making his Test debut against Sri Lanka at Lord's in 1988, he later toured India (cancelled after political objections) and played five Tests, taking 18 wickets and scoring 60 runs. Across 185 First-Class matches he took 515 wickets, with a best of 7-47 at Cheltenham in 1988.

After cricket, he became a champion bodybuilder and entrepreneur, serving as Gloucestershire's first Black President in 2022. Diagnosed with motor neurone disease two years later, Lawrence bravely told his story to support the Cricketers' Trust and was awarded an MBE for services to cricket in 2025.



1963 - 2025

MARTIN OLLEYNORTHAMPTONSHIRE,
MIDDLESEX

Playing cricket and hockey to a good level, Martin Olley was a wicketkeeper and lower-order right-handed batter. Primarily playing Minor Counties cricket, in 1983 he made one First-Class appearance for Northamptonshire, and having made a number of appearances for Surrey's Second XI during the 1988 season he played four games for Middlesex.

Born in Romford, Martin William Charles Olley was educated at Felsted School. While playing club cricket for Hitchin and then Saffron Walden, it was during the winter of 1982-83 that he further refined his talents in Australia, playing for Northern Districts in Sydney. From 1985 until 1990 he was a regular in the Hertfordshire side, moving to Cambridgeshire in 1991. During 12 seasons at this level, he claimed 100 catches and made 25 stumpings, with a highest score of 67, made in 1985. He later enjoyed a successful career as a quantity surveyor and property valuer.

1952 - 2025

TONY GOOD

LANCASHIRE

Antony John Good was born November 10, 1952, in Kumasi, Ghana. As a right-arm fast-medium bowler, he made a First-Class debut for Lancashire in 1973, ahead of graduating from Durham University with a degree in geography in 1975. His career-best of 5-62 came against Northamptonshire in what would prove his final season of 1976. Good also played for Cheshire from 1977 to 1979.



1953-2025

WAYNE LARKINSNORTHAMPTONSHIRE,
DURHAM,
ENGLAND

Wayne 'Ned' Larkins, one of the most naturally gifted and destructive openers of his era, thrilled crowds for over two decades.

Born in Roxton, Bedfordshire, and once on Notts County's books as a footballer, he joined Northamptonshire in 1972, earning his cap four years later and helping secure the Gillette Cup that same season. He passed 1,000 runs every year between 1978 and 1985, forming a prolific opening partnership with Geoff Cook.

Capped 13 times by England across 11 years, he also played 25 ODIs but, like many of his generation, found Test opportunities limited. He joined the rebel tour to South Africa in 1982 and later represented Durham and Bedfordshire, remaining a prolific run-scorer into his fifties.

Across 482 First-Class matches he made 27,142 runs, including 59 centuries and a highest score of 252 at Cardiff in 1983. In 485 one-day games he added another 13,594 runs. Known for his easy power and instinctive strokeplay, he later worked for the postal service. Larkins died aged 71 while awaiting heart surgery.

1936 - 2025

BILL HIGGINSON

MIDDLESEX

Born in Esher, Surrey, Bill Higginson played three First-Class matches for Middlesex in 1960 as a right-handed middle-order bat and right-arm medium-pacer. His greatest impact came after cricket, as chairman of the British Association for Cricketers with Disabilities, significantly advancing the sport's accessibility. He was awarded the MBE in 2020.

1947-2025

DILIP DOSHINOTTINGHAMSHIRE,
WARWICKSHIRE,
INDIA

One of India's finest left-arm spinners, Dilip Doshi won 33 Test caps between 1979 and 1983. Born in Rajkot, Gujarat, the bespectacled, scholarly Doshi trialled with Sussex and Lancashire before joining Nottinghamshire in 1973, making 44 appearances.

After a spell with Hertfordshire and Northumberland, where he once took all 10 wickets in an innings, he joined Warwickshire, helping them win the 1980-81 John Player League and becoming one of only two bowlers that season to take over 100 wickets.

Settled in North London, the sharp-suited Rolling Stones fan ran the British arm of his family's engineering business. He played regularly for MCC and Walsall in the Birmingham League, and his 1991 autobiography Spin Punch laid bare the many tensions at the heart of Indian cricket. On the opening day of the 2025 Headingley Test, both England and India wore black armbands in his honour. His son Nayan represented Surrey and Derbyshire.

1944 - 2025

KEN SHUTTLEWORTHLANCASHIRE,
LEICESTERSHIRE,
ENGLAND

Born in St Helens, Ken Shuttleworth made his First-Class debut for Lancashire in the 1964 Roses match and became instrumental in the county's late-60s and early-70s revival.

Selected for England in 1970, he toured Australia and New Zealand with Ray Illingworth's side, taking 12 wickets in five Tests, including 5-47 in Brisbane. Moving to Leicestershire in 1977, he helped win the Sunday League that year and the Benson & Hedges Cup in 1979.

Across a 17-year career he took 623 First-Class wickets, with a best of 7-41 against Essex. Later a darts champion and businessman, he also ran an off-licence and civil engineering firm before joining the First-Class umpires list from 1998 to 2003. He was 80.

1968-2025

JON ATKINSON

SOMERSET

Jonny Atkinson was a dashing right-hand middle-order bat, playing 41 First-Class matches, primarily for his native county between 1985 and 1989. A graduate of Cambridge University, he was first a Blue in 1988 (later again 1989, 1990), his debut would be the only occasion the match was abandoned without a ball being bowled; the fixture dating back to 1829. A storied career as a heavyweight in the insurance world, Atkinson rose to become Chief Distribution Officer at Aspen Insurance in 2024. He was 57.

FULL COLOUR CRICKET

Five years in, The Hundred remains cricket's most vivid experiment – the competition bursts with colour, character, and invention by its very nature. BtB asked some of the game's finest photographers to bring it to life, frame by frame.



PHOTO BY ALEX DAVIDSON

ROLY-POLY RUNS

Despite audaciously reverse-scooping the ball for six, Chris Benjamin couldn't stay on his feet at The Kia Oval. A familiar sight in today's game, the South African's shot perfectly captures how The Hundred has reshaped modern batting.

THE KIA OVAL, AUGUST 23, 2022
166/6 **PHOENIX (M) V INVINCIBLES (M)** 156/8

A HUNDRED'S HUNDRED

Photographers are often privileged to capture moments of history – and Tammy Beaumont's celebration of the first-ever women's century in The Hundred was one of them. Her 118 from just 61 balls remains a landmark innings.

CARDIFF, AUGUST 14, 2023
181/3 **FIRE (W) V ROCKETS (W)** 140/5



PHOTO BY ALEX DAVIDSON



SOUTHERN SUCCESS

LORD'S, AUGUST 27, 2023
139/6 **BRAVE (W) V SUPERCHARGERS (W)** 105

Emotion runs high in this frame from The Hundred's 2023 final, as Lauren Bell and Rhianna Southby collide mid-air in a jubilant embrace. The Southern Brave would, of course, go on to lift the trophy.

PHOTO BY ALEX DAVIDSON

FLAMIN' HOT

LORD'S, AUGUST 31, 2025
168/5 **INVINCIBLES (M) V ROCKETS (M)** 142/8

Skipper Sam Billings appears caught in a ring of fire as the Oval Invincibles clinch their third consecutive title in 2025. The image celebrates the remarkable record of the Kent-born captain and his side.

PHOTO BY MATT LEWIS



A STORM'S BREWIN'

LORD'S, AUGUST 30, 2022
139/6 **SPIRIT (M) V PHOENIX (M)** 140/9

The orange-clad Birmingham Phoenix players stand out against a dark backdrop at Lord's. The rain stayed away, allowing the visitors to edge home by a single wicket.



PHOTO BY ALEX DAVIDSON



MY FAVOURITE KITS

There isn't a loft big enough to house **RAVI BOPARA'S** 28-team strong collection of playing shirts but the T20 great recollects an iconic three from his memory bank.

ESSEX EAGLES VITALITY BLAST 2019

We won the Vitality Blast wearing this beautiful shirt. It was our best year in cricket as a team and was also my last year at Chelmsford. It's the only kit that I still have in my collection because I just don't like the clutter!



ENGLAND ODI 2013

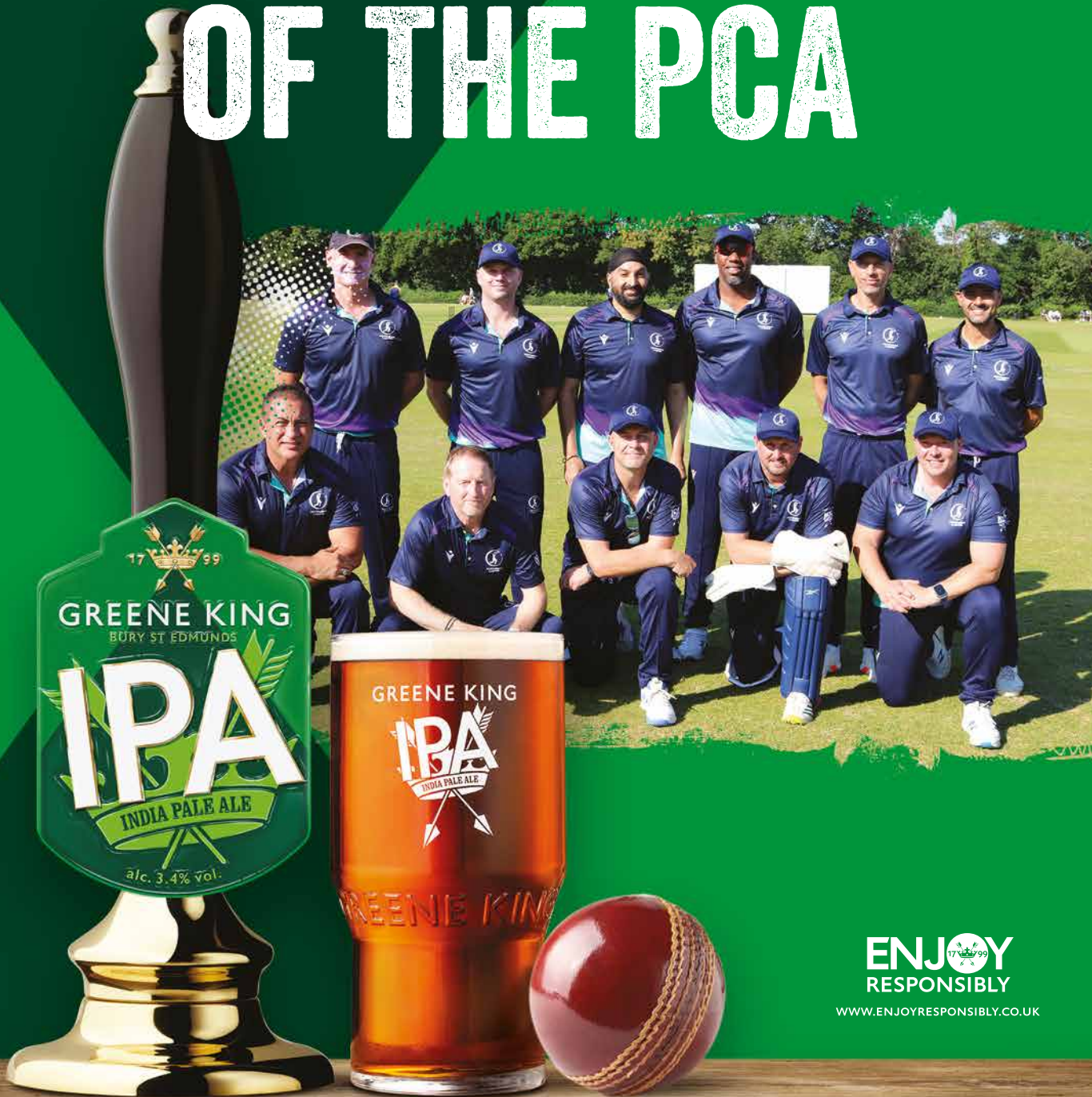
The red one where we reached the Champions Trophy final is my favourite England kit. We were number one in the world in ODIs, and I had my best year in the format which ended with the ODI Player of the Summer at the PCA Awards.



KINGS XI PUNJAB INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2009

This was my first year in the IPL and the world of cricket changed after that. In only my second game, I scored 84 against Bangalore. That kit just stands out to me. I will never forget because it was red with silver sleeves.

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