

First Class County Competition Regulations

The Vitality Blast

Board Discretion

The Board of ECB retains ultimate discretion over these Regulations and the Playing Conditions for ECB Competitions and shall be entitled at any time to amend or vary them on reasonable notice to interested parties as well as in exceptional circumstances when the Board shall be entitled to immediately do so on notice to the interested parties.

1 All Counties to Participate

Each of the 18 First Class Counties listed in Schedule A to the ECB Articles of Association agrees to participate (subject to any applicable suspension(s)) in The Vitality Blast.

2 Full Strength Teams and Arrival of Teams

All Counties shall field a full strength team in all matches in The Vitality Blast. Both full teams shall arrive at the venue at a time so that the match can commence at the scheduled time. (See also ECB Directives).

In normal circumstances, a maximum of 30 minutes shall be allowed for a late-arriving team to prepare for the match.

3 Competitive County Cricket

The Regulations Governing the Qualification and Registration of Cricketers for Competitive County Cricket and their Qualification for England shall apply.

4 The Vitality Blast

4.1 Title

The Competition will be known as The Vitality Blast.

4.2 Entrants

Entrants to the Competition will be the 18 First Class Counties only. The Competition will be played on a league/knock-out basis.

4.3 Competition Format

The 18 Counties will play the group stage of the Competition in 3 groups of 6 teams as detailed below. Each team will play the other 5 teams in its group home and away.

North Group

Derbyshire
Durham
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Nottinghamshire
Yorkshire

Central Group

Glamorgan
Gloucestershire
Northamptonshire
Somerset
Warwickshire
Worcestershire

South Group

Essex
Hampshire
Kent
Middlesex
Surrey
Sussex

The 8 quarter-finalists will be determined as follows:

1. Best group winner
2. Second best group winner
3. Third best group winner
4. Best second place
5. Second best second place
6. Third best second place
7. Best third place
8. Second best third place

Quarter-final ties shall be:

1v8, 2v7, 3v6, 4v5

The tie-breakers for teams finishing on equal points (initially within a group and then across groups) will be:

- The team with the higher net run rate in the Group Matches will be placed in the higher position (see below).
- The team that has scored most points in matches between teams finishing on equal points (note that this only applies within a group and also that if this only separates one team when more than two teams are considered by this tiebreaker, only the remaining teams move to the next tiebreaker)

- **Wicket-taking strike rate (number of balls bowled per wicket taken)**
- In the event that teams cannot be separated by 16.11.4.1 above, this will be done by drawing lots.

Should any match in a group be incomplete, the group positions shall be determined on an average points per completed match basis. Should teams finish on equal average points, the tiebreakers above shall apply.

4.4 Semi-final Draw

Semi-finals shall be:

Winner of 1v8 versus Winner of 4v5
Winner of 2v7 versus Winner of 3v6

4.5 Venues

The Semi-finals and the Final will be played at Edgbaston.

4.6 Umpires

First Class Umpires will be appointed for all matches.

4.7 Status of Matches

Matches in this Competition will not be considered First Class.

4.8 Regulations and Playing Conditions

These Regulations and the Playing Conditions shall be decided annually by the ECB.

5 Competition Technical Committee

A Competition Technical Committee appointed by the Board of the ECB shall be responsible for making recommendations to the Board of the ECB on Curtailment Decisions (as defined below).

Curtailment Decisions shall mean decisions which the Board of the ECB is required to take in connection with The Vitality Blast and/or a match in The Vitality Blast not taking place as originally planned and/or not being completed as originally planned.