

PROFESSIONAL COUNTY CRICKET COMPETITION REGULATIONS



**England and Wales Cricket Board, Lord's Cricket Ground
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Board Discretion

The ECB Board retains ultimate discretion over these Professional County Cricket Competition Regulations (“**Regulations**”) and the Playing Conditions for ECB Competitions and is entitled at any time to amend or vary them on reasonable notice to interested parties as well as in exceptional circumstances when the ECB Board is entitled to immediately do so on notice to the interested parties.

Definitions

For the purposes of these Regulations:

Curtailment Decisions means decisions which the ECB Board is required to take in connection with the competitions listed in Regulations 4 to 8 and/or a match in those competitions not taking place as originally planned.

ECB means England and Wales Cricket Board;

ECB Competitions means the Rothesay County Championship, the Metro Bank One Day Cup Men’s Competition, the Vitality Blast Men’s Competition, the Second XI Championship, the Second XI T20 and Second XI friendly matches organised as part of the ECB Second XI fixture list;

Effective Date means 1 April 2026;

Professional County Club means any of the clubs and/or companies listed in Schedule A of the ECB’s Articles of Association from time to time and/or any county cricket club from time to time playing in the County Championship (and “County” will be construed the same); and

Unqualified Cricketer has the meaning given to it in the Competitive County Cricket Registration Regulations.

Application

These Regulations apply to all Professional County Clubs from the Effective Date.

1 ALL COUNTIES TO PARTICIPATE

Each of the 18 Professional County Clubs agrees to participate (subject to any applicable suspension(s)) in all the ECB Competitions listed in Regulations 4 to 8 and in Second XI Friendlies as per Regulation 9.

2 FULL STRENGTH TEAMS AND ARRIVAL OF TEAMS

All Counties must field a full strength team in all matches in the Rothesay County Championship, the Vitality Blast Men’s Competition and the Metro Bank One Day Cup Men’s Competition. For every match in an ECB Competition, both full teams must arrive at the venue at a time so that the match can commence at the scheduled time.

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

3 REGISTRATION

The Competitive County Cricket Registration Regulations apply in respect of the Competitions specified in these Regulations (although see Regulations 7.3, 8.4 and 9.1).

4 THE ROTHESAY COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

4.1 Title

The competition will be known as the Rothesay County Championship.

4.2 Entrants

The Rothesay County Championship will be competed for by the 18 Professional County Clubs. Each County will play 14 matches. In Division 1 there will be 10 teams each playing 5 teams home and away and 4 teams home or away, as specified by ECB. In Division 2 there will be 8 teams, each playing the other 7 teams on a home and away basis.

Division 1	Division 2
Essex	Derbyshire
Glamorgan	Durham
Hampshire	Gloucestershire
Leicestershire	Kent
Nottinghamshire	Lancashire
Somerset	Middlesex
Surrey	Northamptonshire
Sussex	Worcestershire
Warwickshire	
Yorkshire	

At the end of the season, the top two teams from the Second Division will be promoted and the bottom two teams from the First Division will be relegated.

4.3 Umpires and Match Referees

ECB will appoint Umpires and a Match Referee for all matches.

4.4 Status of Matches

Matches in the Rothesay County Championship will be considered First Class.

4.5 Regulations and Playing Conditions

These Regulations and the Playing Conditions applicable to the Rothesay County Championship will be decided annually by the ECB.

5 THE METRO BANK ONE DAY CUP MEN'S COMPETITION

5.1 Title

The competition will be known as the Metro Bank One Day Cup Men's Competition.

5.2 Entrants

The Metro Bank One Day Cup Men's Competition shall be competed for by the 18 Professional County Clubs. The teams will compete in two Groups as below. Each Team shall play the other

teams in its Group either home or away.

	Group A		Group B
1	Lancashire	1	Durham
2	Gloucestershire	2	Middlesex
3	Surrey	3	Glamorgan
4	Kent	4	Sussex
5	Nottinghamshire	5	Essex
6	Northamptonshire	6	Yorkshire
7	Leicestershire	7	Worcestershire
8	Somerset	8	Hampshire
9	Warwickshire	9	Derbyshire

The two Group winners will immediately qualify for a home draw in the semi-finals. The team finishing second in each Group will receive a home draw in the play-offs and play against the team finishing third in the opposite Group. The play-off winners will play away in the semi-finals. Semi-final ties will be as follows:

Winner of Group A versus winner of 2nd place Group B v 3rd place Group A

Winner of Group B versus winner of 2nd place Group A v 3rd place Group B

The Final will be played at Trent Bridge.

5.3 Umpires and Match Referees

ECB will appoint Umpires and a Match Referee for all matches.

5.4 Status of Matches

Matches in the Metro Bank One Day Cup Men's Competition will be considered List A Limited Overs matches.

5.5 Regulations and Playing Conditions

These Regulations and the Playing Conditions applicable to the Metro Bank One Day Cup Men's Competition will be decided annually by the ECB.

6 THE VITALITY BLAST MEN'S COMPETITION

6.1 Title

The competition will be known as the Vitality Blast Men's Competition.

6.2 Entrants

Entrants to the competition will be the 18 Professional County Clubs only. The competition will be played on a league/knock-out basis.

6.3 Competition Format

The 18 Counties will play the Group stage of the competition in 3 Groups of 6 teams as detailed

below.

	North Group		Central & West Group		South Group
1	Derbyshire	1	Glamorgan	1	Essex
2	Durham	2	Gloucestershire	2	Hampshire
3	Lancashire	3	Northamptonshire	3	Kent
4	Leicestershire	4	Somerset	4	Middlesex
5	Nottinghamshire	5	Warwickshire Bears	5	Surrey
6	Yorkshire	6	Worcestershire	6	Sussex

Each team will play: the other 5 teams in its group home and away, one team from another group at home and one team from the remaining group away, as specified by ECB.

The winners of each group and the best second-placed team will qualify for home draws in the quarter-finals. The other two second-placed teams and the two best third-placed teams will qualify for away draws in the quarter-finals.

Quarter-final seedings will be determined in accordance with Vitality Blast Men's Competition Playing Conditions. Quarter-final ties will be Seed 1 v Seed 8, Seed 2 v Seed 7, Seed 3 v Seed 6, Seed 4 v Seed 5.

6.4 Semi-finals

Semi-final ties will be as follows:

Winner of Seed 1 v Seed 8 versus Winner of Seed 4 v Seed 5

Winner of Seed 2 v Seed 7 versus Winner of Seed 3 v Seed 6

6.5 Venues

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

6.6 Umpires and Match Referees

ECB will appoint Umpires and a Match Referee for all matches.

6.7 Status of Matches

Matches in the Vitality Blast Men's Competition will be considered List A Twenty20 matches.

6.8 Regulations and Playing Conditions

These Regulations and the Playing Conditions applicable to the Vitality Blast Men's Competition will be decided annually by the ECB.

7 SECOND XI CHAMPIONSHIP

7.1 Title

The competition will be known as the Second XI Championship.

7.2 Entrants

Entrants will be the 18 Professional County Clubs. Each team will be placed in a group of 6 teams, playing every other team once, a total of 5 matches each. Matches will be of 4-day duration. The two group winners with the highest number of points will play in the Final.

7.3 Qualification of Cricketers

7.3.1 Professional County Clubs may play:

- (a) Cricketers registered or on loan to that Professional County Club under the Competitive County Cricket Registration Regulations.
- (b) Cricketers not registered for any Professional County Club but eligible to be registered under the Competitive County Cricket Registration Regulations who have completed:
 - (i) (a) the Anti-Corruption Module, (b) the Recreational Drugs Module, and (c) the Anti-Discrimination/Professional Behaviours Module; and
 - (ii) pre-participation medical screening to identify current and past medical issues that may affect the cricketer's ability to participate safely. This must include, at a minimum:
 - (1) requiring the cricketer to complete an ECG and appropriate medical questionnaire which has been:
 - a. reviewed by an appropriate sports cardiologist/specialist (which is not required to be the Professional County Club's Chief Medical Officer), a report of which must (where necessary) be shared with the Professional County Club's Chief Medical Officer; and
 - b. cleared by the Professional County Club's Chief Medical Officer; and
 - (2) requiring a documented risk-assessment, including a medical questionnaire, to be completed by the cricketer and cleared by a suitably qualified medical professional in the Professional County Club's medical team.

As part of their risk assessment, Professional County Clubs must also consider whether further additional tests are required.

7.3.2 Professional County Clubs may only play one Unqualified Cricketer in each match.

7.3.3 Players are not cup-tied by representing a team in the competition.

7.4 Discipline

7.4.1 In the event of any breach of discipline in the Second XI Championship (or 2, 3 or 4-day Second XI friendly matches), the relevant player and their captain, coach / manager (away from home) or Chief Executive Officer/Secretary (at home), will be advised by the umpire of the breach of discipline and this should be done at the end of the particular session of play or at the end of the day's play. Umpires will apply the ECB fixed penalty system as appropriate.

7.4.2 ECB Domestic Cricket Operations should also be advised by the umpires immediately of the report.

7.5 Umpires

ECB will appoint umpires to all matches.

7.6 Results of Matches

All matches will be scored live via the ECB PCS Pro scoring platform, providing real time results. In the event the match is not scored live, the match result will be filed with ECB Domestic Cricket Operations within 24 hours of the conclusion of each match.

7.7 Regulations and Playing Conditions

These Regulations and the Playing Conditions applicable to the Second XI Championship will be decided annually by the ECB.

8 SECOND XI T20

8.1 Title

The competition will be known as the Second XI T20.

8.2 Entrants

Entrants to the competition will be the 18 Professional County Clubs.

8.3 Form of Competition

The competition will comprise 18 teams, divided into three Groups as detailed below. Each team will play the other teams in its Group twice.

The three Group winners and the best second placed team will progress to the semi-finals. See the Playing Conditions applicable to the Second XI T20 regarding tie breakers.

The semi-final ties shall be determined as follows:

Best Group winner v Best second place

Second best Group winner v Third best Group winner

The winning semi-finalists will play in the Final. The semi-finals and the Final will be played on

the same day.

8.3.1 Groups

The Groups will comprise the following teams:

North Group	Central Group	South Group
Derbyshire	Glamorgan	Essex
Durham	Gloucestershire	Hampshire
Lancashire	Northamptonshire	Kent
Leicestershire	Somerset	Middlesex
Nottinghamshire	Warwickshire	Surrey
Yorkshire	Worcestershire	Sussex

8.4 Qualification of Players

8.4.1 Professional County Clubs may play:

- (a) Cricketers registered or on loan to that Professional County Club under the Competitive County Cricket Registration Regulations.
- (b) Cricketers not registered for any Professional County Club but eligible to be registered under the Competitive County Cricket Registration Regulations who have completed:
 - (i) (a) the Anti-Corruption Module, (b) the Recreational Drugs Module, and (c) the Anti-Discrimination/Professional Behaviours Module; and
 - (ii) pre-participation medical screening to identify current and past medical issues that may affect the cricketer's ability to participate safely. This must include, at a minimum:
 - (1) requiring the cricketer to complete an ECG and appropriate medical questionnaire which has been:
 - a. reviewed by an appropriate sports cardiologist/specialist (which is not required to be the Professional County Club's Chief Medical Officer), a report of which must (where necessary) be shared with the Professional County Club's Chief Medical Officer; and
 - b. cleared by the Professional County Club's Chief Medical Officer; and
 - (2) requiring a documented risk-assessment, including a medical questionnaire, to be completed by the cricketer and cleared by a suitably qualified medical professional in the Professional County Club's medical

team.

As part of their risk assessment, Professional County Clubs must also consider whether further additional tests are required.

8.4.2 Professional County Clubs may only play one Unqualified Cricketer in each match.

8.4.3 Players are not cup-tied by representing a team in the competition.

8.5 Discipline

8.5.1 In the event of any breach of discipline in the Second XI T20, the player and their captain, coach/manager (away from home) or Chief Executive Officer/Secretary (at home), will be advised by the umpires of the breach of discipline and this should be done at the end of the particular session of play or at the end of the day's play. Umpires will apply the ECB fixed penalty system as appropriate.

8.5.2 ECB Domestic Cricket Operations should also be advised by the umpires immediately of the report.

8.6 Umpires

ECB will appoint umpires to all matches.

8.7 Results of Matches

All matches will be scored live via the ECB PCS Pro scoring platform, providing real time results. In the event the match is not scored live, the match result will be filed with ECB Domestic Cricket Operations within 24 hours of the conclusion of each match.

8.8 Regulations and Playing Conditions

These Regulations and the Playing Conditions applicable to the Second XI T20 will be decided annually by the ECB.

9 SECOND XI FRIENDLIES

9.1 Regulations 7.3 and 7.4 also apply to cricketers playing for a Professional County Club in Second XI friendly matches organised as part of the ECB Second XI fixture list.

10 COMPETITION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

A Competition Technical Committee appointed by the ECB Board will be responsible for:

10.1 making recommendations to the ECB Board on Curtailment Decisions; and

10.2 determining whether a match can continue due to the reduced availability of a County's players taking into account the welfare of the players and the best interests of the match and competition.